

Minutes of the Shaping the Heart of Stroud Steering Group meeting held on Wednesday 15 April 2015 at 7.30 pm Thanet House, 58 London Road, Stroud

Present: Leonora Rozee, Hugh Barton, Camilla Hale, Andrew Grigg, Clare Mahdiyone, Steve Hurrell, Kevin Cranston.

Apologies: Simon Arundel, Fiona Mills Carlyon, Tom Rosser Smith, Michael Handford

1. Minutes of last meeting (to follow)
2. Public consultation events 7th-14th March 2015

A lengthy document had been circulated with all the responses to the 95 questions in the consultation survey both in response to the yes/no choices and the comments that people made in their own words. A bar chart had also been circulated showing the yes responses in green and no responses in red. Camilla ran through the numbers of people who had been engaged with during the week. The numbers returning the survey form were 21% of those who had participated at the Sub Rooms, the pop up shop and Lansdown Hall.

It was suggested that the results were informative but not determinative, they did, however, signal the importance of justifying what goes in the plan particularly if there is a risk of a negative reaction. It was felt that the March events were very successful, people who attended enjoyed the experience and there were interest came out of it, including new people who have not previously been engaged.

3. Draft Policies

Leonora has circulated a first version of a set of plan policies. These required further work on the evidence base and their workability. There was also a need to be clear as to whether or not there are any inconsistencies to the Local Plan. Hugh also outlined the approach being taken in the draft plan that he had circulated.

Policy 1 - Sustaining the economy of the town centre. Andrew felt that the words used needed to have a clearer meaning so that they could influence planning decisions. Hugh felt that the plan would have to survive changes to government policy on change of use. Andrew said that the policies weren't clear enough and did not get across what we are trying to achieve.

Leonora suggested that the meeting work through the thematic and zonal policies. Hugh suggested that a glossary be added to the plan.

Steve Hurrell commented that applicants would have to show with evidence that any changes in use could enhance the viability and viability of the town centre.

Policy 2 - Promoting diversity of employment opportunities. It was noted that there could be lots of different types of uses proposed. It was suggested that the words "will be approved" might be added.

Policy 3 - To increase and diversity housing provision. It was suggested that we would not want housing to be located at ground floor levels in the core zone. It was suggested that there could be something on window sizes and on energy conservation.

Policy 4 - Greenspace. This should include reference to Bank Gardens, not to Park Gardens. We need to all be referring to the correct version. We need incorporate provision of green spaces in design guide policy.

Policy 5 - Pedestrian environment and traffic circulation. It was noted that this included promotional policies. It was suggested that there was a conflict between suggesting that the plan favoured maintaining circulation patterns if it suggested elsewhere closing certain links. It was noted that there was a mixed response to the idea of shared surfaces.

Andrew said that there was nothing about the yellow lines that stop propel getting into Stroud and he felt this had to be addressed otherwise there would not be people in Stroud in order to use pedestrianisation. Leonora felt that what was being suggested was about pedestrian priority rather than pedestrianisation. It was suggested that we need to acknowledge the difficulty that people have in getting into Stroud. We need to address this and, when people are here, ways of addressing their experience.

Policy 6 - Cycling and connectivity. This needs to be divided into short and long term actions.

Policy 7 - Car Parking. It was suggested that we needed to add something addressing ways in which people should 'pop and shop' to, for example, collect goods from shops. It was felt that there was a need to address the accessibility of town centre car parks.

Policy 8 - Cultural heritage and landscape. It was reported that there had been a walkabout earlier today looking at these assets.

Policy 10 - Core of the town centre. It was suggested that inclusion of short term priorities might not be appropriate if they had been superseded by the time the plan is made. It was suggested that there was a case for reserved collection spaces and that we could press for an element of free car parking in all surrounding car parks, for example 30 minutes free or a designated free car parking area (perhaps being a very short stay part of Church Street car park).

It was suggested that a cross cutting theme was the need for pro-active engagement with the business community about how things could be taken forward. One suggestion would be include something about creating an employment with a promotional policy to establish a 'hub'.

Hugh would be working on further revision to be discussed at a meeting on 22 April.

4. Planning Application

Hugh had looked at the planning application for the creation of car parking spaces alongside the River Frome at Lower Wallbridge. He felt that we would not want permanent permission to be granted so as to keep open the possibility of a new canal basin. It was also noted that the future of the Severn Trent pumping station was under review. Hugh's comments would be forwarded to Simon Arundel.

5. Network Rail

It was noted that a meeting has been arranged with Network rail on 8 May. This would need to include the Station square, land at the back of the station, disabled access and the bridge.

6. Maps

Hugh said that an A1 map of listed buildings would be helpful. A 1:2500 base map would also be useful with property names and numbers taken off, but with the street names kept on.

7. Project Plan update

It was suggested that the plan be presented to the Town Council for its approval in October or December and that a meeting with the new Town Council being arranged for after the elections. It was felt that there was a case for two special meetings, these being one to consider the draft plan so far and the other being to approve the pre-submission draft to go to public consultation. It was agreed to book the Subscription Rooms for an event to launch the 6-week public consultation.

8. Dates of future meetings

13 May 2015 at 7.30pm

3 June 2015 at 7.30pm