

**Shaping the Heart of Stroud
Stroud Town Centre Neighbourhood Development Plan**

**Minutes of the Steering Group meeting Wednesday 3rd December 2014
7.30 pm Thanet House, 58 London Road, Stroud**

Present: Michael Handford (MH), Fiona Mills Carolyn (FMC), Camilla Hale (CH), Hugh Barton (HB), Simon Arundel (SA), Kevin Cranston (KC), Leonora Rozee

In Attendance: David Wilson (DW), Ruth Davey (RD), John Bloxsom (JB)
Project Administrator

1. Apologies: Tom Rosser-Smith, Andrew Grigg, Steve Hurrell, Clare Mahdiyone

2. Declarations of interest - there were no interests declared

3. Minutes of the last meetings held on 22 October and 5 November 2014 - Minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2014 had been circulated and were agreed as a correct record. It was noted that formal minutes of 5th November 2014 had not been written as this was a brief catch up discussion prior to the visioning event.

4. Matters Arising - none that do not appear elsewhere on this agenda.

5. Progress report on Community Consultation review

1) *review of 15th November event*

LR invited CH to introduce this item. CH felt that this was an active lively event. The children's corner was good. It was disappointing that nothing visual was provided regarding the Market Tavern proposals. Newlands Homes were very busy and appear to have found the event useful. There were lots of questions about the 'vision survey' that was handed out and some people were felt it was a bit meaningless and were rather aggrieved whilst others appeared not to appreciate that it was about what Stroud would be like in 20 years time not what it is like now..

2) *consider consultation outcome and vision*

LR felt that, nothing withstanding those point, the results, that had been circulated, broadly validated the framework set out in the vision statements.

HB commented that, in looking at the summary sheet on responses, this was even clearer if those with 'no view' were not shown, when the support for the vision statement showed even stronger.

It was noted that the event was held on Saturday daytime and that there was an appetite for a further event to be organised that traders can come to.

KC noted that it was not just "the usual suspects" who attended.

LR noted that we did not have any information on what had drawn people to the event. We had delivered newsletters to all households and individual covering letters to all businesses in the NDP area.

There was a feeling that there had been good conversations on the day and that participants understood that it was a listening exercise. LR commented that the feedback would help the work of Thematic Groups to move on.

RD said that the day had been busy, with a good cross section present, but drew attention to the need to engage young people in other ways.

DW said that he was impressed by the attendance and had found the event personally interesting. He had similar reservations about the vision questionnaire. He felt that models, physical and digital, could be a good way to engage young people.

6. Update on communications

In addition to the above CH pointed out that it was Goodwill Evening On Friday 5th December. It was agreed to have a table with some simplified questions and invite people to complete 'post it' solutions to "how can we ...?" questions.

7. Update on Thematic Groups - work programmes

LR invited HB to talk about where we are and the next steps. We now have a wealth of data about attitudes and aspirations that are well supported but some of which are also in conflict.

Where do we want to get to? We will need to focus on decisions on some tensions, for example the extent of pedestrianisation. We need to take into account costs of proposals and the potential for things to happen. We need to present quite concrete options or, if not options, indicate that this is the direction of travel that we want to go in.

It was agreed that we need to work to the next public event in late February or early March 2015 where options would need to be tested and that this needed to be more than a one day event.

The interim stage would be to engage volunteers and businesses including evening meetings where there could be debate. Mixed groups could evaluate different areas where questions need to be asked, strategies devised and choices made. HB could co-ordinate that process. A date of 4th February 2015 was agreed for an evening workshop where the Thematic Groups would present their findings for discussion.

HB outlined three key aspects to further work:

- 1) refine our ideas, goals and issues
- 2) options to be developed covering policies, projects and promotional agendas

3) evidence on what we need to know, source reports, existing policies and strategies, consultation with key organisations together with some observational exercise and surveys.

HB said that he would produce a short paper outlining what he had said regarding the next steps.

It was suggested that we need to breakdown aspirations into how we can make some of these things happen. LR and HB would review the vision statements and try to provide more advice on what is needed to turn these into a meaningful plan

Evidence: Existing documents and plans would help to identify some of the evidence. The responses to the initial consultation (what do you like?; what don't you like? and what would you change?) are relevant and there is a lot of recorded evidence in local authority information, policies and strategies.

Wallbridge: In relation to Wallbridge the Canal Trust felt that the context had to be appreciated, namely the SDC commitment to future proceeds from land disposal being used to support canal regeneration. KC felt that this view might now be out of date, since SDC had taken the land, its future would be determined by them.

Movement: The movement group now has about 20 people engaged as volunteers with sub groups on canals, car parking, pedestrians, buses and trains and cycling. The group are to meet next on 7th January 2015. They were reminded by CH of the need to think about disability and buggy access. MH confirmed that they would do so.

Aesthetics: HB reported that Tom Rosser-Smith had done a lot of desk top work on aesthetics/quality. Rachel Russell is looking at listed buildings. Ben Spencer has agreed to co-ordinate the group. It was also noted that Tim Mars had knowledge to offer the group.

RD queried whether or not quality/aesthetics was the subject for a standalone theme or something that ran through everything. It was made clear that the themes all interrelate but are broken down to enable work to be made manageable

Environment: There had been a meeting of the Environment Group which identified two broad themes: firstly relating to specific sites e.g. their character, quality, biodiversity and access and secondly to broader environmental themes e.g. the ecological impact of the town and its future role e.g. energy reduction, renewals, energy efficiency, emissions, etc.

Sites: Work is being co-ordinated through Chris Brain (CB). Alan Ford is keen to get involved. HB is seeking to contact CB.

Social: Alexis Greenwood has done work on the characteristics of the NDP area. HB has met with Cllr Caroline Malloy, who has particular interests in housing and health. RD is more interested in cultural aspects. LR suggested that a 'think piece' on how to develop a cultural strategy would be helpful, including how to make it happen, the links to businesses that are already here and to development sites.

Economic: FM-C expressed her concern about how to make progress. LR advised her that she and HB would provide more detailed guidance once they had reviewed the vision statements.

Statutory consultees: LR and JB are drawing up a list of Statutory Consultees who must be consulted. Guidance from SDC is being sought to assist in identifying these consultees and check on any ongoing discussions that SDC are involved in with these parties.

Options workshop It was agreed to run a workshop on options with all volunteers on, 4th February commencing at 7pm. The Thematic groups will need to bring their evidence and options ideas to that meeting and time will need to be provided for viewing plans and proposals beforehand.

8. Feedback on meeting with SDC Neighbourhood Planning Officer and Head of Planning - this meeting is now schedule for 16th December 2014

9. Report on RAU conference on localism and neighbourhood planning, 27 November 2014 - JB had attended and run two workshops on our NDP as a case study which had been attended by about 30 people in total. A weblink to the conference presentations will be circulated when the organisers make this available.

10. Local meeting (GRCC facilitated) for local councils engaged in neighbourhood planning, 15 December 2014 - LR and HB would be attending this meeting, called by GRCC, for all the local town and parish councils in the district who are engaged in preparing NDPs.

11. Update on budget - a budget statement as at 1 December 2014 had been circulated and was to be reported to next week's Town Council. There was particular need to ensure that all eligible expenditure related to activity funded by the Locality grant was expended by 23 December 2014.

12. Risk management - LR stated that she wished to add an additional risk related to the business referendum issue. There was a need for SDC to make an expressed decision on whether or not there should be a business area designated as this was an area vulnerable to legal challenge. SA asked JB for an up to version of the Risk register. In discussion some present felt that there was merit in there being a business area designation.

13. Any Other Business

- 1) It was noted that LR had circulated a template for making notes of meetings held in connection with the NDP.
- 2) CH is co-ordinating the presence at Goodwill Evening.
- 3) DW and RD were invited to consider their preferred areas of involvement within the NDP process.

Future meetings: 7 January; 28 January; 4 February (Workshop); 4 March; 1 April; 13 May