

# **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP**

## **Minutes of the Inaugural meeting held on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2014 .**

**PRESENT:** Chris Raine (Chair), Marion Law (Secretary, temporary), Trevor Tarran, Bob Vincent, Robert Harrop (Shifnal Town Council), Andy Mitchell (Shifnal Town Council), Mac Sandal (Clerk, Shifnal Town Council), Liz Bourne (Project consultant), Andrea McWilliam (Shropshire Council, Community Enablement Officer)

### **1. INTRODUCTIONS**

Chris Raine introduced herself, followed by the other members of the group.

### **2. APPROVAL OF CHAIR**

There were no other offers or nominations for the position of Chair. It was therefore agreed that Chris Raine would fill that role.

### **3. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Chris had drawn up the proposed Terms of Reference based on a template provided. She said that the Neighbourhood Plan is `a new type of Planning policy document which will relate to the use of land or spatial matters within the defined area` and it would need to address the future of developments in Shifnal during the next 10-15years and possibly beyond.

The work would be done on behalf of Shifnal Town Council who had agreed delegated responsibility to the Steering Group.

Two members of the Town Council had been appointed to the Steering Group, the Mayor and Deputy Mayor and they would be responsible for reporting back to the Town Council on progress. Noted that there may be the need for the co-option of other members of the Community(eg Jayne Owen who had led The Town Plan Steering Group and production of the Shifnal Town Plan document).

Noted that the Plan was a legal document and would be assessed by an Examiner (appointed by Shropshire Council) and was required to pass a Referendum by the electorate of Shifnal before approval.

Chris highlighted that communication with the residents/business/community/social groups/schools/youth groups etc. would be very important.

Chris had been in contact with Rev. Chris Thorpe Chair of Shifnal Forward with a view to future working together.

Input to the Neighbourhood Plan from the Business and Retail Sectors was important as well as from Residents of Shifnal. It was noted that the Business Forum and Trades Council would be good organisations to contact for their views.

Robert Harrop pointed out that land which had been identified for potential future employment/business had been removed by the housing developments already granted permission, although retail business in Shifnal was doing well.

The area designated by Shropshire Council to be covered by the Plan was the three wards of Shifnal.

The Town Council Officers would maintain a record of the budget/expenditure for the Steering Group. There was a grant of £7000 from the Community Development Foundation available to be spent on supporting the development of the Neighbourhood Plan(NP).

The Terms of Reference were accepted.

### **4. SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS**

Sheila Offland had agreed to be Secretary to the group but was currently on holiday. Thanks to Marion Law for offering to come and take notes for this meeting.

## 5. PROCESS AND TIMELINE/POSITION STATEMENT AND TIMELINE

Liz Bourne, Project Consultant, appointed by the Town Council to support the development of the NP had drawn up a draft process and timeline (copy tabled). The target date for completion of the Plan is December 2015. This date had been set by the Town Council earlier this year. Noted that there was no legal deadline and this date was a local matter.

This was a tight timescale, but Liz thought it was potentially achievable, although there was a great deal to do on public consultation in the next few weeks leading up to the Christmas period.

**Developing the Position Statement and Vision Statement:** She said that there was a lot of excellent existing information in The Shifnal Town Plan and other planning documents, which would enable her to prepare a draft Position Statement- 'the where are we now' and a draft Vision Statement – 'the where do we want to be?' These would be available to the Steering Group by the 31<sup>st</sup> October.

The draft Vision Statement then needs to go out for community consultation during November. Liz said the Steering Group need to plan to hold a 'drop-in' event towards the end of November. A questionnaire based on the Vision Statement will also need to be developed, distributed, collected and then analysed.

Public Consultation is the key basis for the Plan and there needs to be a 'spike' in activity on this Consultation and Engagement of the community in these first weeks up to say mid-December. Liz emphasized that it was vital to keep a dated record of all consultation, informal as well as formal, as part of the evidence. The consultation held in respect of the Town Plan could be included.

The Position Statement must be evidence based, in line with the statutory objectives of the Local Plan. It must comply with national planning policy, human rights legislation, equal opportunities, etc., and include a statement of sustainability and of statutory consultation.

**Identify any potential sites:** list the sites for potential future development and any areas for protection. Some may already be known, but others unidentified as yet. Must look at the whole area. Use the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA).

Great care and diplomacy is needed in approach, maybe guidelines available in advance, emphasis that this is about the future. Emphasis on how new development could improve Shifnal. There will need to be Focus groups in January to check the viability of the sites long list. There may also be a need to seek advice from Shropshire Council re certain sites.

It was noted that the Steering Group can engage with potential site owners, which Shropshire Council cannot do.

**Outline plan:** By May/June 2015. Noted that outside planners or consultants on specific areas (eg. Environmental) might need to be engaged if advice is needed on any specialist issues.

**Final plan:** Drafted by September 2015. Then it goes to Independent Examiners appointed from outside Shropshire.

Referendum of electorate in Shifnal is needed, with 51% in favour to accept the Plan.

Robert Harrop asked about the Position Statement. This had to present the facts and describe Shifnal now and include the facts that there will be changes to the population/household base of Shifnal coming with the new housing developments.

**Green Belt:** Trevor Tarran explained that the land between Wolverhampton and Telford was currently designated Green Belt. It was noted that Shropshire Council would be reviewing their 'core Strategy in a few years therefore it was desirable to try to preserve the existing green belt by finding alternative sites for any future development proposals.

Chris asked Trevor if he could provide a written note on his commentary on the Green Belt for members of the group and Liz Bourne for future reference.

## **6. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Chris had asked Bob Vincent to lead on the Consultation and Engagement Strategy. There was some helpful information from the previous survey for the Town Plan in 2008 when there had been a good response.

There will need to be a questionnaire carried out based on the Vision Statement which is distributed to the local community to give up to date information for the NP. The survey questions need to be limited and focused. A summary of the Vision Statement can be used for display at the drop-in day.

An Information leaflet needs to be put together, printed and distributed as widely as possible in Shifnal in advance of the questionnaire to raise awareness of 'What is a Neighbourhood Plan and why do we need one?'.

It was noted that there is currently considerable negative feeling about development in Shifnal because of all the recent planning applications for housing development that have been approved and this needs to be acknowledged as there was a lot of concern about the potential impact of the development. It was also noted that the housing developments would bring CIL monies to the town for community projects and this was a positive. Having an approved Neighbourhood Plan enabled Shifnal to receive an additional 10% of CIL monies.

Chris said that she hoped the Plan could also be used to help bring together the existing and the new residents of Shifnal to create a cohesive community and attractive and vibrant town for all residents and visitors to enjoy for the future.

Sources that can be used for getting publicity out into the community are: Radio Shropshire, Shropshire Star, Shifnal In and Around, Celebrating Shifnal event on 19th October at St Andrews Church, etc.

Good distribution of the leaflet etc via Shifnal Forward, Local joint Committee, local groups and organisations local businesses, GP practice, Christmas lights switch on, firework night events? Pubs, shops the Library, Town Council Noticeboards and website.

Social media could be considered if any expertise in this locally, especially to target younger people, make available online if possible.

### Action Needed:

- Develop and Information leaflet about Neighbourhood Plan for distribution at events etc; Bob Vincent to lead
- Identify a date/venue for drop in day, eg. Village Hall, Trinity hall, Fire Station, etc; Bob to lead.
- Set up a dedicated email address. Chris offered to do this.
- Liz offered to provide ideas/examples of publicity materials and Consultation Strategy for members of the group via Mac.

## **7. NAME FOR THE PLAN AND LOGO**

Several ideas were suggested, eg "Your Town - Your Future". "Your Town ~ Your Choice" "Shaping the Future for Shifnal". The preference was for use of the Your Town ~ Your Choice. Chris would forward the name of a local Shifnal based graphic designer to Bob Vincent to contact to ask about producing a logo, maybe incorporating railway bridge. This was agreed. Maps, written text, photos and visual material would be needed for the final Plan document.

## **8. COMMUNICATIONS WITH THE STEERING GROUP**

Liz asked the group if they used DROP BOX which was an internet system for data storage of reports etc. group members were not familiar with this and said they preferred to use email for the time being.

Chris gave members of the Group her landline phone no. for contact should members of the Group wish to talk to her about any matters outside of the actual meetings.

## **9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

Friday 31<sup>st</sup> October; Friday 21<sup>st</sup> November; Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December. 10.00am at the Old Fire Station

