

Ilminster Neighbourhood Plan Development Group

Notes of Meeting held on 23rd September 2020, using Skype

Present – Stuart Shepherd (In the Chair), Michelle Gunn, Colin Hyde, Annie Murdoch, Jim Sainsbury, Liz Shepherd, Henrietta Van den Bergh, Scott Waldie, Tony Walker, Martha Covell (ECA), Hayley White (Town Clerk), Julie Earp (Deputy Town Clerk).

Apologies – Matt James.

238 – Notes of July 2020 Meeting – The notes of the meeting held on 29th July were agreed as a fair record.

239 – Text of Plan to go out for Consultation – Henny supported by her Documentation Sub Group colleagues, gave an update on their work, which had not deviated from the policies previously agreed, and was in line with the work done by ECA, including the maps etc. The expectation was that the penultimate draft of the text would be available to all Group Members by 25th September, to allow comments to be returned by 2nd October. The final text would then be sent to Martha to enable her to coordinate it with the other papers that would be part of the consultation process (as detailed in minute244). The Documentation Group would also work on producing an executive summary of the Plan, which would be available in the papers circulated to the Town Council on 13th October. This was clearly an extremely tight schedule.

240 – The Plan Design Brief – The Documentation Group would also prepare the design brief, bearing in mind the Town Council policy on quotes. Martha's advice was that we should keep it simple.

241 – Town Council Meeting on 20th October - Hayley would circulate all the relevant papers by 13th October. The site allocation proposals remained as previously agreed, although as Tony pointed out, a small amendment needed to be made in respect of reference to the Gooch and Housego site. Annie still remained concerned that we had not had sufficient dialogue vv site 28, which matter needed to be finally resolved between the Housing Sub Group and Martha. The crucial presentation to the Town Council meeting, seeking approval of the Plan, would be made by Martha.

242 – Consultation Procedure – It was now evident that rather than pursue an attempt to go out to consultation in November 2020, it was more realistic to target January 2021, in order for us to deal with design and any other outstanding issues.

243 – Government Policy on Planning and Local Planning Structure –The recently circulated SSDC briefing paper was duly noted, as was progress on redesigning Local Authority structure in Somerset. For the most part, the support for Neighbourhood Plans looked positive, but there was still a need to press ahead, before other factors adversely affected us.

244 – ECA Report to the Meeting – Martha presented her latest update report, which most importantly referred to the five papers and supporting evidence which were essential to the consultation package, and included the Strategic Environmental Assessment , and the Habitats Regulation Assessment Reports. Comments on these two reports were invited, particularly from Colin.

245 – Life of a Neighbourhood Plan – Concerns were raised as to how frequently Neighbourhood Plans should be revised. On paper our Plan would last until 2036, but there was a worry that it could

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become fossilised, outdated and obsolete well before then. The view was expressed that it needed to be very much a “live” Plan. The contrary argument was that if it were subject to too frequent reassessment and reappraisal, it would begin to lack status and authority. Perhaps Henny summed this up best, in saying that we should recommend to the Town Council that the Plan should be reviewed in a “timely” manner.

246 – Date of Next Meeting – Given the almost impossibly tight schedule (see minutes 239 and 241), it was agreed that the next meeting should be scheduled for 7th October at 6pm on Skype, even though Martha was giving her apologies in advance,

Jsgw/24/09/20