

MINUTES OF THE TOWN PLAN PARTNERSHIP STEERING GROUP

Held on Monday 2nd July 2007 at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Nigel Clarke (Chairman)
Cllr Neville Chard
Cllr Danny Cracknell
Cllr Christine Ford
Damian Heywood
Jenny Newham
Brian Walters

IN ATTENDANCE: Terry Simpson, Town Clerk
Ros Bowles, Project Officer
Jo Stannard, Deputy Town Clerk

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Brian Terry, Cllr Jacqui Terry, Frank Cloke Peter Gray and Jon Grant.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Project Officer reported that the Chamber of Trade had a full list of businesses in the town and it was therefore not now necessary to purchase an address list from Thomson's Yellow Pages.

AGREED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2007 be approved as a correct record.

3. Progress Report

The Project Officer referred to her Progress Report (*Annex 'A'*) and said that drafting of the Town Plan was now well underway. The Environment and Transport & Accessibility sections had been drafted and would be discussed later in the meeting. The Economy section was in the process of being drafted. However, this was partly dependent on the results of the ongoing Business Survey, which would enable completion of the worksheets. The Community and Social section was also in the process of being drafted and the Group had also to complete its worksheets. Ideas for the format of the Town Plan would be available for the next meeting.

It was noted that Connexions had agreed to facilitate a meeting with the hard-to-reach group NEETS (Not in Education, Employment, Training or School) and the New Forest Youth Forum. It was proposed that a lunchtime 'pizza and coke' meeting be arranged in early August and expected that between 12 and 15 young people would attend. Costs would be nominal.

AGREED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That approval be given for the young people to be provided with pizza and coke at the consultation meeting to be arranged in early August.

4. Signage

The Deputy Town Clerk gave an update on work carried out by the Signage Project Group, as follows:

Signs on the A31 – the Highways Agency had agreed that the existing signs were "rather small and insignificant" and were looking into suitable alternatives.

Pedestrian Signs – Hampshire County Council had agreed to fund a full feasibility study based on the Group’s proposals for improved pedestrian signing. Consultants had now been engaged and the work would be carried out during the summer.

Pictorial Map – 5 locations in the Furlong Car Park, adjacent to parking meters, had been agreed with New Forest District Council. A draft map board had been produced using the map owned by the Chamber of Trade. However, this had not achieved what the Group was hoping for and there were concerns about the accuracy and detail of the map. It had therefore been agreed with the Chairman of the Group and the Town Mayor to rethink the approach to this project and to look at the bigger picture, bearing in mind other projects that may arise from the Town Plan process. It was agreed that it would be of great benefit to the town to have a map produced that the town had ownership of and could be used for many different projects. A meeting had been held with Walking Distance, a company that produced maps for New Forest District Council and had recently completed a re-branding project in Botley, which included producing new maps and map boards. Examples of this work were circulated and it was agreed something similar should be produced for Ringwood. It was noted that this project could still be achieved within the Town Council’s budget for signage. However, it was hoped that New Forest District Council would make a contribution and sponsorship could be obtained.

Welcome to Ringwood Signs – it was noted that a new sign to replace the Ringwood – twinned with Pont Audemer sign at the main entrance to the town could be produced for approximately £600. The possibility of including the Fairtrade logo and constructing a flowerbed at the base of the sign was also being investigated. If sponsorship could be obtained for the pictorial map, this new sign could be delivered using the Town Council’s budget for signage.

AGREED: That this information be noted and work of the Signage Project Group be supported.

5. Training

It was noted that the following free training courses were available:

12th July – one day training event organised by Community First New Forest for organisations that work with volunteers, looking at best practice in attracting, supporting and valuing volunteers.

10th July – one day Skills and Knowledge Training Programme for Market Town Partnerships organised by South East Rural Towns Partnership.

11th July and 4th October – two one-day workshops organised by Hampshire Learning Network for Town Centre Managers.

It was noted that the Project Manager would be attending the latter two courses on behalf of the New Milton Town Partnership. No members of the Steering Group wished to attend but noted the availability of training, which may be required once the Town Plan had been completed.

AGREED: That the Project Officer report back to the next meeting on the training courses she would be attending.

6. Environment Group

Cllr Ford presented the draft Environment section of the Town Plan (*Annex ‘B’*). Members agreed that they liked the overall way this section had been written and approved the layout, with the exception of the SWOT analysis, which was to be removed from the body of the text and included as an appendix to the Town Plan. A SWOT analysis would be produced for each section. It was also agreed to move some of the preamble to the introduction to the Town Plan.

There was some discussion regarding the level of house building in the town and it was agreed to amend the text in the first paragraph of the housing section to “At present, lack of available land and constraint of the Green Belt policy has resulted in about 30 new properties a year being built, which does not keep pace with demand.” It was also agreed to include details of the estimated time local people could expect to wait to reach the top of the housing waiting list, currently 11 years for a two-bedroom property.

The following amendments were proposed to the List of Projects to Fulfil the Vision:

- Include photographs of examples of street clutter and areas needing improvement.
- Explain “Green Zone” – an area where no litter would be tolerated.
- Delete the word ‘included’ from ‘Where new development is proposed, ensure there is sufficient green space included’ as the green space may not necessarily be provided on the same site as the development.
- Include graffiti in ‘Look at ways of tackling litter and vandalism’.
- Move ‘Organise a Sustainable Business Roadshow’ to the Economy section.

It was agreed not to list the projects in order of priority, as this would be determined through public consultation on the draft Town Plan.

The Town Clerk reminded members that the list of issues should not only include those that had been highlighted formally through consultation, but also issues that had come up in conversation or that members had been made aware of through other avenues. It was noted that there was a wish for the cycle path to be extended from Blashford to Fordingbridge.

AGREED: That the changes agreed at the meeting be incorporated into the Environment section of the Town Plan.

DH left the meeting at 7.00pm.

7. Transport & Accessibility Group

The Project Officer presented the draft Transport & Accessibility section of the Town Plan (*Annex ‘C’*) and explained that the Group had made many changes to this document since the first draft was produced. As a result, the writing style was different from the Environment section. All agreed that there was a need to ensure consistency throughout the Town Plan and this would need to be taken into account when the final document was edited.

It was agreed that the text relating to the A31 and Strategic Road Network should be included in the preamble as this helped to set the scene.

It was also agreed that project number 16 should include reference to other railway stations, such as Bournemouth and Christchurch, and Bournemouth airport.

AGREED: That the changes agreed at the meeting be incorporated into the Transport & Accessibility section of the Town Plan.

8. Community & Social Group

Cllr Cracknell was concerned that it appeared nothing was being done for the young people of the town. The Town Clerk said it was important to include in this section of the Town Plan details on what was currently provided for young people, what was proposed and who should be delivering those proposals. It was felt that one of the most important facilities to be provided was an informal drop-in facility in a central location that was open in the evenings, at weekends and during the school holidays. BW suggested that a one-day conference be organised to bring together young people and representatives from all relevant organisations to identify needs and provide solutions.

9. Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 6pm on Monday 3rd September 2007.

Prior to the close of the meeting, members thanked the Project Officer for all the hard work she had put into producing the draft Town Plan to date.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.