

# **NOTES OF THE MORPETH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP MEETING**

## **MONDAY 10<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2014 AT 2pm** **IN THE CORN EXCHANGE OF MORPETH TOWN HALL**

### **Present**

Councillor Nic Best  
Councillor Bob Robertson  
Councillor David Parker  
Councillor David Cowans  
Peter Fuller (arrived at 2.04pm)  
Councillor Mike Sharp  
Councillor David Woodard  
Councillor Ashmore  
Colin Pearson

### **Representing**

Morpeth Town Council – Deputy Chairman  
Morpeth Town Council  
Heritage Topic Group  
Hepscott Parish Council and Housing Topic Group  
Transport Topic Group  
Mitford Parish Council  
Pegswood Parish Council  
Hepscott Parish Council

### **In attendance**

Ian Campbell  
David Rowlinson

Project Co-ordinator  
Northumberland County Council (NCC)

### **Clerk**

Miss Gillian Turner  
Miss Louise Davey

Morpeth Town Council (MTC)  
Morpeth Town Council

The meeting commenced at 2.02pm.

### **1. Welcome/ Apologies and Introductions**

Apologies for absence were received from, Cllrs Ken Brown, Joan Tebbutt and Andrew Kelly and also David Lodge and Graeme Trotter.

### **2. Notes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2014 and matters arising**

The notes of the previous meeting were approved.

#### **a. E-bulletin**

It was requested that any proposed material for future issues of the bulletin be passed to Graeme Trotter and copied to Gillian Turner, Louise Davey and Ian Campbell. It was noted that the frequency of the bulletins remained undecided.

#### **b. Morpeth Transport Review**

Cllr Robertson gave an update on this review and advised that there was more information on the County Council web-site. The timescales to complete the review were questioned. It was however noted that the workshop held on the 7<sup>th</sup> of February 2014 had identified that NCC would be carrying out the remaining wider aspects of the review 'in-house' and the NCC officers involved were ready to work with the NP process..

The matter of whether the Morpeth Neighbourhood Plan (the MNP) SG would be making representations to the Planning Inspector for the Northern Bypass Inquiry was raised. In principle, it was agreed to provide a general letter of support without going through the proposed consultation mechanism.

Action: Cllr Best, Ian Campbell

**3. MNP – Preparation of Pre-Submission Draft / Feedback from PPG Meetings**

**a. Feedback from PPG Scoping the Plan Workshop**

The PPG and Topic Chair workshop was held on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014. This was planned and facilitated by Simon Cox and Alan Jones, the emerging work programme was based on the 16 weeks to the preparation of the draft plan. It was requested that thanks to them be expressed in the minutes.

**b. Town Centre Workshop 13 January 2014 – Feedback**

It was confirmed that a draft summary had been circulated to all attendees with the concluding remarks on the Town centre, the MNP shape and promotion of change, tourist and promotional strategies and the further development of Morpeth as a key retail Town.

**c. Strategic Environmental Assessment – Draft Scoping Report for consultation**

Cllr Brown had been given delegated power to sign out the draft report. In his absence this action was taken by Cllr Best. It was noted that appreciation be given to the County Council Officers as the report was produced to a very tight timescale.

**d. Update on Developer Engagement Group**

Cllr Robertson re-stated the objectives of the Group and confirmed that at the first meeting on the 21<sup>st</sup> January 2014 Les Starkie was elected as Chair. A letter has been sent out to known interested developers inviting them to participate in a workshop. It was noted that there was an article in the Morpeth Herald, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2014, inviting other interested parties to participate and this was considered adequate publicity in terms of the Plan's engagement process. The deadline for responses is the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

**e. MNP Risk Register / Project Plan v 3.2**

It was confirmed that the PPG had reviewed the risk register in the light of comments from David English. Amendments were proposed especially regarding the support from NCC and that the risk identified related more to development control decisions having to be made in the absence of an up to date Core Strategy or the Neighbourhood Plan (the policy "vacuum" referred to) rather than any lack of support for the process. The register will be re-circulated when amended.

**Action: Cllr Best**

**f. NCC Administration Proposed Disposal of County Hall**

Concerns were raised that the disposal would propose a significant risk to the MNP. Morpeth Town Council (MTC) had debated a motion on the disposal and it was agreed to put an e-petition on the NCC website. It was proposed that the Steering Group send an e mail inviting addressees to review the petition and sign if appropriate. Cllr Best advised that if a petition had more than ten signatures this would need to be debated at NCC Full Council.

**Action: Louise Davey**

#### **4. Mechanism for co-ordinated responses to future NCC and other relevant consultations**

A paper on this mechanism was tabled at the meeting. It was requested that all parish and town councils nominate two representatives as soon as possible with delegated powers to draft and approve combined responses as and when required. Any working group operating under these arrangements must have a minimum of one representative from each council and a maximum of ten members. The final combined response will be reported back to the parish and town councils.

The finalised mechanism will be brought to the March Steering Group meeting for final approval.

Action: Cllr Best

#### **5. Resources and Support**

An application is to be submitted for grant funding for the next consultation stage and graphic skills for the draft report.

##### **Action – Ian Campbell**

NCC invited representatives of the MNP to a meeting on an “introduction to neighbourhood planning” aimed mainly at county councillors. It was proposed that this offer be declined and the Cllr Best would write to confirm that the MNP is well advanced and offer to share our experience to date with the county councillors

##### **Action – Cllr Best**

#### **6. NCC Update**

The NCC Senior Lead and central point of contact for Morpeth Town Council for general and service-related issues has been confirmed as Ruth Bendell. Cllrs Parker and Horton and the Town Clerk are to attend an initial meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2014. It was noted that Parishes are to be grouped for the same purpose and have their own dedicated contact point.

This is entirely separate from the Neighbourhood Plan support provided by NCC, for which David Rowlinson remains our point of contact.

Responses to the Core Strategy Consultation are on the NCC web-site. These have been collated to pull out the main issues. Cllr Sharp understood that there were plans to accelerate the timescale for the next stage of the plan. David Rowlinson was not aware of this and the next stage was consultation at the end of May 2014.

It was noted that the joint appeal for South Loansdean will be heard in mid-March. It was also noted, that Barratt's submitted an appeal against non-determination of the South Stobhill application on 31<sup>st</sup> January. The NCC Planning Committee will still consider the application on 20<sup>th</sup> February, but will only be able to give a ‘minded to...’ decision. The appeal will be handled by the Planning Inspectorate in due course.

David Rowlinson requested to be kept informed if there are MNP or parish responses to major planning issues.

#### **7. Any other business**

It was noted that a number of people had already signed up to the e petition about County Hall.

It was confirmed that free car parking had received final approval by the NCC Policy Board on the 11<sup>th</sup> February 2014.

**8. Date of next meeting Monday 10 March 2014**

The next meeting is 3pm on the 10<sup>th</sup> March 2014 in the Town Hall Corn Exchange.

The meeting concluded at 16.12pm.