

MORPETH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Minutes from Local Economy group meeting 4th December 2012

Present

David Lodge – Chair	(CEO Greater Morpeth Development Trust)
Ian Campbell- Project Officer	(Consultant for Morpeth Town Council)
Doug Phillips	(CEO Greater Morpeth Development Trust)
Ken Reed	(Local business)
Carol Robinson	(Local resident/ freelance consultant)
Doug Cockburn	
Tim Nichol	
Josie Donaldson	(Local resident)
Eric Fletcher	(Local resident/ retired policeman)
Julie Stephenson	(Representing Pegswood Parish Council)
Keith Raine	(Local resident/ involved with regeneration projects such as 'Go Wansbeck')

Apologies

Cameron Scott

David agreed to write up the flip chart discussions for this evening's meeting.

Previous minutes and appendices agreed

Three key agenda items:

1. Attempt to summarise the feedback from the initial launch events to develop key focus areas and ensure the issues/opportunities identified at the previous meeting were incorporated.
2. Review maps of the town and surrounding areas to identify existing designated areas for economic development and any Greenfield/brownfield areas of potential development.
3. Identify gaps in the working group in terms of skill and expertise that we would like to engage with the process as part of the development process.

Context

David and Ian gave an introduction to the context of Neighbourhood Planning (NP) being a community- led process. Morpeth is working with adjoining parishes which see Morpeth as their main service centre. NP is an opportunity to help shape future growth and development in the town for the next 15-20 years. It will sit within the County Council's overall strategic framework.

Local Economy in Morpeth

- Defining what Morpeth is:
- " A Rural Service Town ?"
- " A dormitory Town?"
- "Town Centre acts as a hub to the surrounding parishes"
- "A strong sense of identity as an historic market town"
- What does Morpeth offer Young People – art projects / migration issues due to high cost of housing

Key Focus Area's from first meeting and launch feedback

1. Retail Offer

- Strength of Independants
- Town Centre provision focus (rather than out of town)
- Support for Sandersons Arcade
 - o Somme thought too upmarket?
 - o Spacial Implications (Newgate Street)
- Bulky Goods Gap (Coopies Lane?)
- Empty/ Charity shops & Boared up premises (Benfield Garage etc)
- Market is a USP
- Retail Mix
- Town Heritage Initiative (shop fronts etc)
- Highley Gate (out of town attractor)
- Housing Development Strategy and implications to retails needs / mix
- Pop Up shops (youth / opportunity / HMV etc)

2. Parking / Traffic Management

- Charging
- Mix of parking stay durations (short/long/drop off)
- Traffic Lights
- Aggregate Survey (proposed by Environment Group)

3. Heritage/ Tourism USP's (Unique Selling Points)

- Need for a museum ?
- Promotion of crafts / food
- Accommodation requirements – B&B's / Hotels
- Leisure Centre (quality / offer)
- Carlisle Park
- Mix and quality of restaurants (Develop food theme ?)
- Communication strategy – utilising different media (Inside Morpeth, Web, social media etc)

4. Business Accommodation

- Start up / Incubator
- Town Centre Offices
- Redundant Building in Rural areas
- Relocation of business

5. Pegswood

- Ian Campbell to circulate note of feedback from launch events

Potential future development

Where could a future development site be located? Stobhill or Northgate seem the obvious places. Caution against 'urbanised sprawl'. Fairmore & Northgate Developments.

Group discussed various properties and sites in the neighbourhood area:

Ian Campbell provided area maps and discussions around designated and potential locations was undertaken – a map will follow the minutes which will highlight the areas discussed (technology allowing)

Sites to be considered and further research to be carried out:

1. Registrar building / old Grammar School
2. Telephone Exchange
3. Benfield Site
4. Davidson Garage site
5. Police Station
6. Court House
7. Cottage Hospital
8. Old Gas Works
9. Willows/Library site
10. Health Centre Gas House Lane
11. Fire Station Gas House Lane
12. Sorting Office
13. Pumping Station Mitford
14. Field next to Old persons Home (St George's ?)
15. Pegswood Welfare (Bothal Estates landowner)
16. Pegswood Club / Pit canteens
17. Old Colliery site
18. Hepscott park (outside geographic boundary but close proximity needs consideration)
19. Northumberland County Council owned sites in neighbourhood

Actions

- 1) **Ian** to access relevant strategies and distribute these. Ian Campbell to circulate note of feedback from launch events
- 2) **All**- identify who else we need on this group.
- 3) **David** – circulate the Market Town Welcome report
- 5) **All** – email David in terms of availability to commit time between meetings to research , meet stakeholders and help drive the process. Thanks to Carol, Ian and Eric for delivering actions from previous minutes.
- 6) **All**- Identify issues to consider before the next meeting – email to David to help establish next agenda.

Proposed Next Meetings for 2013

7.00 - 8.30pm on Tuesday 22nd January at Morpeth Town Hall