

Neighbourhood Plan

Notes of Fourth Housing Topic Group

Morpeth Town Hall, 12th February 2013

1. Present:

Cllr. David Parker (MTC and Chair), Ian Campbell (Consultant to MTC), Simon Cox, Hugh Edmundson, David Holden, Alan Jones, Anna Jones, Martin Laidler, Tim Nichol, Cllr. Alan Sambrook (Pegswood Parish Council), Peter Scott, Joan Tebbutt, Henry Warne (GMDT),

2. Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 12th February 2013

The minutes had been prepared but not circulated so agreement was deferred.

4. Discussion re the route map and associated actions.

IC had circulated a document upon which to focus the discussion.

The consensus opinion had been that we want to be inclusive but to undercut any possible conflicts and not be sucked into developers' agendas so we would speak to the HBF as a representative and, possibly meet with some individual developers at a later stage. It was suggested that we ask the HBF to enquire of other developers before they meet with us. For the sake of openness, DH pointed out that in his role as Chair of the South Morpeth Coalition he is in dialogue with the HCSA, Persimmon and Bellway. The group agreed that this was understood and satisfactory.

It was agreed that the main provider of social housing in the Plan area is ISOS and could give a good overview. Whilst we wish to be transparent and not leave other providers out, we cannot be too generic or waste time. At a later date we could meet with any niche groups

In respect of a Community Profile, IC showed an example of a Locality Profile done by Northumberland Infonet, but which is now out of date. It can be found at northumberlandinfonet.org.uk. We need socio economic data from the 2011 census so we can look at how this affects current housing need. NCC is looking at population and housing forecasts.

We are talking about housing numbers that need a lot of land, so we need to look at bringing together small brownfield sites and larger sites together plus a policy to cover all sites e.g. brownfield first. We need to ensure related community facilities are addressed and also look at sites that already have planning permission.

HE referred to a Parish Council called Denmead in Winchester, who have a list of criteria to measure sites against and give them a score. It was agreed that we could use the Lock report's suggested format for this. However, it was agreed to wait until after the workshop on 4th March to do this so we are in line with the thinking of other Topic Groups. It was agreed to ask Colin Haylock how he is going to tackle this so we can prepare beforehand.

As regards infrastructure, we need to understand the constraints providers face and the capacity implications. We need to check with the other Topic groups about who they are meeting so there is no duplication. If the Environment Agency or Northumbria Water are meeting with other groups perhaps we could join in. DP and IC to look into this.

The following programme was agreed:

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| A. Draft Objectives/Development Principles | 21 st February 2013 |
| B. Meet with Key Partners i.e. providers: | |
| ○ Charles Robinson, local Estate Agent and | Possibly |
| ○ Representative of HBF | next week |
| ○ HCA and | Possibly |
| ○ ISOS | 12 th March |
| C. Preparation of a Community Profile | HW volunteered |
| D. At some point between B above and E below, meet with | |
| ○ Northumbria Water and | |
| ○ The Environment Agency | |
| E. Location of new housing | To be reviewed after
Workshop on 4 th March |
| F. Form a Working Group to prepare
A Technical Report | SC, HE (Convenor), DH,
ML and JT volunteered |
| G. Group "signs off" the Technical Report | Mid April |

5. Housing Objectives and Development Principles

Each group member had received two helpful documents, one from IC and the other from A&AJ. There was a lot of discussion around the two lists with a great deal of re-ordering and re-wording, so the following is a first attempt at finalising the debate:

- a. Acknowledgement of Morpeth's role as a main settlement and, as such, will be a focus for growth.
- b. Development on brownfield sites should be prioritised where viable.
- c. Further development should not damage (*but enhance?*) the environment and the heritage features that give Morpeth its special character. The compactness of Morpeth as a settlement should be maintained and encroachment into the open countryside should be minimised.
- d. *ML is to provide some wording about the need for development to provide a range of homes to create a balanced community.*
- e. The integrity of the villages of Hepscoth, Hebron and Mitford should be retained. However, Pegswood should be positively promoted through development that maintains and strengthens the role of the settlement as a service centre. In all cases coalescence of the settlements should be avoided.
- f. Housing development must be linked to investment in employment, commerce, transport, infrastructure (*and community facilities?*) to ensure:
 - i. local services are of sufficient capacity to make the development sustainable; and
 - ii. The role of the settlement as a service centre is maintained and strengthened.
- g. Effective use must be made of the existing housing stock e.g. through addressing energy efficiency and permitting conversions to housing, including conversion of some commercial premises in order to future proof the town centre.
- h. New development on areas liable to flooding should be avoided.
- i. Acknowledgement of the influence the Morpeth Northern Bypass will have on future development.

The groups expressed our thanks to A&AJ for preparing such a useful document.

6. Questions to be posed to Charles Robinson

The following questions were agreed:

- How is the current housing market performing?
- Is there one Morpeth housing market or a series of discrete geographical markets across the plan area?
- Are there different markets operating in relation to different housing types?
- Can affordable housing be delivered in Morpeth?
- Is there an overprovision or underprovision of certain house types in the plan area?
- What are the factors driving demand in Morpeth?
- What are the factors driving demand in Pegswood?

- What might be the impact of the Morpeth Northern Bypass on the housing market in Morpeth/Pegswood?

7. Questions for ISOS

- What is your current/past involvement in the plan area?
- How do social housing providers now operate and how does this differ from pre 2010?
- What housing needs are you aware of and can social housing providers meet those needs?
- What challenges are there in delivering in Morpeth?
- Can affordable housing be delivered without a grant in Morpeth or elsewhere in the plan area?

8. Next steps

DP will contact Charles Robinson and the HBF and also the HCA and ISOS.

9. AOB

DH had sent group members a document on housing numbers. It was agreed to defer discussion of this document until a later meeting.

10. Dates of Future Meeting

It is hoped that we will be able to meet with Charles Robinson sometime next week and it is also hoped we will then be able to meet with the HCA and ISOS at the meeting already arranged on 12th March. Another meeting will be needed in the 2nd or 3rd week of March to look at Location. DP will inform us of progress in arranging this. All meetings will be at 7pm in the Town Hall.