

# NOTES OF THE MORPETH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP MEETING

MONDAY 10<sup>th</sup> August 2015 at 3pm  
IN THE CORN EXCHANGE OF MORPETH TOWN HALL

## Present

Councillor Joan Tebbutt  
Councillor Nic Best  
Councillor Philip Ashmore  
Councillor Alison Byard  
Councillor David Cowans  
Councillor David Parker  
Councillor Bob Robertson  
Councillor Mike Sharp  
Councillor David Woodard

## Representing

Chairman  
Vice Chairman  
Hepscott Parish Council  
Morpeth Town Council  
Heritage Topic Group  
Morpeth Town Council  
Morpeth Town Council  
Morpeth Town Council  
Mitford Parish Council  
Pegswood Parish Council

Gillian Turner

Clerk

## 1. Welcomes/Apologies/Introductions

Councillor Joan Tebbutt welcomed all present.

## 2. Notes from PPG held on 7th August

Councillor Best presented the notes of the PPG meeting highlighting the following:

- i. There was a last minute flurry of responses and NCC is collating and converting them to Word or PDF files before passing them to the examiner by 5<sup>th</sup> August.
- ii. Examiner is surprised by the number of responses (all developers known to NCC have responded) and is acquainting himself with the background information i.e. Core Strategy, Northern Bypass etc.). He is categorising responses and identifying those that need further detailed assessment,
- iii. It was noted that any judicial review would be of the examination process and decision making **not** the Plan itself.
- iv. It was confirmed that the examination is about the soundness of the Plan and not it's content.
- v. There is a "no surprises" approach in that NCC Strategic Planning Officers are in continuous engagement with the examiner providing background info
- vi. No action can be taken until the examiner has decided if a hearing is necessary, topics to be covered and parties to invite.
- vii. Any hearing would start with written representations and proceed to a round table Q & A session led by the examiner – no cross-examination involved.
- viii. Coal Authority Concerns – NCC have made the following arguments that the Coal Authority has not objected to:
  - The identification of St Georges Hospital as a strategic location in the Core Strategy
  - To the Northern Bypass planning application

And that

- Coal sterilisation is a strategic issue that should be addressed through the Core Strategy
  - The site is too near built-up areas for open cast to be viable
  - There has been no interest from extracting coal from the site in the decades since St George's Hospital was closed
  - The area of land and amount of coal involved are relatively small
- ix. The next iteration of the Core Strategy is likely to be approval for consultation in mid-September.

### **3. Issues Arising During Consultation**

- Whilst the list of protected open spaces within the MNP document is correct, the proposal map is missing some areas. A revised submission has been sent to the examiner.
- Coal Authority – concerns had been raised that the MNP document does not take into account mineral sterilisation, coal under the St Georges site or land instability. A note is within the plan about taking these factors into account which had been missed by the Coal Authority.

### **4. NCC Consultation – List of Responses**

The Group was updated as to the number of responses received, 7 from Developers and 8 from Land Owners. It was noted that comments made by Mitford Estates had been forwarded onto Sasha White QC. It was agreed that GT would circulate all of the responses to group members.

### **5. Representation at Hearing**

Members considered which representatives should attend a hearing. It was agreed to wait until information is received from the examiner. It was also agreed to concentrate on proposed textual amendments.

### **6. Challenge to the MNP by Mitford Estates**

It was noted that should a judicial review take place, this would not stop the progress of the MNP. The challenge would need to be about the Examination Process not the Plan itself.

Several planning applications have been put on hold until the determination of the plan is known.

The Core Strategy consultation process is due mid-September and this will add weight to the emerging Core Strategy and the MNP, as the principles of the MNP are closer and more aligned to the Core Strategy.

**7. Statement of Common Ground**

Members were advised that the Coal Authority had suggested this process. However, it was felt it was too formal a process and members agreed to wait until the examiners views were published.

**8. Community Actions**

The Chair informed the group that MTC were forming a working group to establish an action plan which would include the community actions as identified. It was also noted that the masterplan for the St George's site was beginning to see some movement.

**9. Date of next Meeting**

The date for the next meeting of the Steering Group was agreed, being Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August at 3.30 pm and a provisional date of Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> September at 3 pm was also agreed in case the first meeting has to be postponed due to the timing of the information from the examiner.

The meeting concluded at 4.00 pm.