



NEWPORT (Shropshire) TOWN COUNCIL

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NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANNING – UPDATE FOR PLANNING COMMITTEE 1 MAY 2013

BACKGROUND

Newport Town Council is a NDP Frontrunner – a pilot scheme that has received £10,000 of direct funding from central government. The opportunity arose out of the implementation of the Localism Act 2011.

A steering group has been set up comprising:

Cllr Tim Nelson – Newport Town Council - Member
Cllr Terry Spooner – Newport Town Council - Member
Cllr Phil Norton – Newport Town Council – Member
Cllr Nigel Borrett - Newport Town Council – Member
Lee Jakeman – Newport Town Council - Clerk
Claire Frances – Telford & Wrekin Council – Planning Dept
Rachel Walmsley - Telford & Wrekin Council – Planning Dept

An indicative timeline (for the major elements) of the project has been produced by the Clerk, a copy is attached.

UPDATE

The formal application (endorsed by the Town Council at its December meeting) to request that the parish of Newport be designated a NDP area (boundary approval) was submitted on 14 January 2013.

A Formal Public consultation notice, covering the period 18 Feb to 5 April, was produced in the recent Town Council Newsletter and displayed in the Guildhall and the Library as well as on line. We have been advised by Telford & Wrekin Council that they have received no responses to the consultation.

The matter will go before Telford & Wrekin's cabinet on 30th May, following which the Boundary Approval stage (Designating a neighbourhood area) will continue on into July 2013; there is another 6 week publicising period after Cabinet approval (if that is their decision)

DISCUSSION

The creation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) will require much consideration and the acquiring of much planning policy knowledge. The Town Council (preferably thru the planning committee) will need to dedicate sufficient time (of councillors and staff) and other resources (e.g. staff costs, consultancy costs and

training costs) if it is to produce something of sufficient relevance and benefit to the residents of Newport.

The work of the Town Plan steering group and the collection of data and opinion will contribute in some significant way to the credibility of the NDP. However, the 2 'plans' have distinct and separate functions and it is important that this is understood by all members of the Council.

Understanding the appropriate legislation and identifying specific elements of the NDP for Newport will need commitment and knowledge. I regularly hear misinformation and/ or the use of Parish Plan topics misused as NDP topics or goals.

It is also considered important that members of the planning committee undertake independent research into 'Shaping Places' – the local plan. Again this is a separate (but related) activity that needs to be well understood in order to avoid confusion.

Furthermore, it is considered that the current planning committee members (by the fact that they have practical experience of considering planning applications) are likely to best placed (and best informed) to shape the Neighbourhood Development Plan. It would be most beneficial if all the current incumbents put themselves forward to remain on the planning committee for the forthcoming municipal year (which begins on 8 May). The committee has run 'one-light' all year so there is an opportunity for another councillor to join without any current member having to step aside.

The steering group will shortly be looking to widen its membership to include appropriate community groups – however the plan will be that of the Town Council and subject to approval by referendum. A firm vision needs to start becoming clear.

SUMMARY/RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure clarity of purpose members should pay particular attention to and understand the differences between:

- Town (parish) Plans
- The Local Plan (shaping places)
- Neighbourhood Development Plans

It is recommended that current members of the Planning Committee put themselves forward for committee membership at the Annual meeting on 8 May 2013, to provide a reasonable level of continuity and consistency.

A significant element of the training budget for staff and councillors should be directed to Neighbourhood Development Plans.

Lee Jakeman
Town Clerk
For Newport Town Council