

MELKSHAM COMMUNITY AREA PARTNERSHIP

**Steering Group Meeting
Wednesday 13th January 2010
Melksham Divisional Police Headquarters**

Minutes of the Meeting

In attendance:

Sarah Cardy, Graham Ellis, Lee Emery, Colin Goodhind, Davina Griffin, Pauline Helps, Chris Holden, Tim Jalland, April Law, Jim Law, Mel Rolfe, Jim Sherry, Brian Warwick, Jerry Wickham, Miriam Zaccarelli

1. Apologies	Effie Gales-Sides, Abbi Gutierrez, Ali Morley, Thelma Carr, Mavis King, Laura Pictor	
2. Spatial Strategy Responses	<p>Chris welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Jim Sherry, a spatial planning officer from WC as the main purpose of the meeting was to compile responses to the Core Strategy. We have submitted an initial response for the January 31st deadline with more details to follow. There were no further responses from the Steering Group (SG) and Jim was asked to explain the parameters for gathering responses from the public.</p> <p>Jim explained WC's willingness to listen to issues that concern people most and the need to be honest. WC have outlined their preferred option which is undecided and want feedback on the thinking process. Because the town will produce more people the Council thinks that will equate to the need for 400 more houses and wants to know if people are comfortable with that and where they could go if not in the proposed places.</p> <p>Jim Law raised the issue of Snowberry Lane and Jim Sherry explained that if houses are provided, roads and schools are needed and concerns about roads can be expressed to the Council.</p> <p>Jim Sherry explained that the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West was a draft strategic plan by SWR Assembly, with Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury as strategically significant with the greatest weight of development. The next tier of towns include Melksham and get the next level of development. Seend, Steeple Ashton and Atworth are in the third tier. The government has not changed the strategy, only increased planned buildings based on population increase. Conservatives have said if they are elected they will rescind the spatial strategy.</p> <p>Sarah highlighted the SG's need to work out the key questions to ask to the public in order to put a view forward. A public consultation will be held on Jan 23rd where we will put up the boards of the Council's proposals for Melksham and gather responses.</p> <p>Brian raised the issue of the A350 and a strategic approach to communications within the community and a Core Shopping Policy that can control retail development. JS explained that it is the Council's aspiration that A350 should be improved. In terms of a core shopping policy, guidance on how to protect the town centre is welcome.</p> <p>Jim Sherry explained that this consultation is a continuation of a process started</p>	<p>BW to submit Core Shopping Policy to SG</p>

with the previous 5 authorities so an idea of key issues was already known. Since 20th October after involving the Area Boards, consultation began with the Spatial Plan in libraries and on line, press coverage and a half day exhibition in Melksham town centre. There will be other chances in the year before it is finalised to give feedback. It was emphasised that WC want people to be as open and 'blue sky thinking' as they like.

Jim Sherry clarified that the council are happy to collate the responses, and a difficulty will be that there will be opposed points of view, which is to be expected as the CAP represents many different groups and opinions.

Jim Sherry asked that we look at the 10 strategic objectives in the core strategy and see if we agree with them. Jerry stated that Keevil is a tiny village and it is unlikely that any area will have sufficient employment to stop commuting. It was agreed to be simply a state to aspire to.

Jim Law spoke about the 70 people he had spoken to in his area and their objections regarding Snowberry Lane. 20% are in favour of more trains and would use it. Chris highlighted the need not only to ask if people want something but to ask if they will use it and how often. Jim Sherry clarified that accommodating a population of a certain number involves joint strategies in terms of health and care for elderly people etc.

It was requested to see the results of the consultation that the Council carried out in Melksham on November 26th and Jim Sherry agreed to forward a copy of the comments to Miriam who will send it on to the SG.

Graham asked if there would be confirmation of receipt of the comments already submitted on the January 31st deadline and Jim explained that they are being translated into a system called Limehouse, which, once input, will send an automatic confirmation.

Jim Sherry summarised responses received so far for the Melksham Area:

- too many houses planned
- building not desired on the new Spa
- town centre and inadequate shops
- joining up Bowerhill and Melksham
- that adequate infrastructure be in place
- that new jobs match new housing
- that the railway station needs trains that actually stop

Colin stated that people will often only consider their own street and need to be informed so they can see the big picture.

Jim Law spoke about people wanting a Wilkinsons in Melksham, and it was explained that the Council cannot bring in retailers as they go where they make a profit, and similarly businesses cannot be prevented from setting up. It was also pointed out that the road at Snowberry is already in place and we should not give people the impression that we can reverse things.

Lee spoke about Melksham's need to identify its character and USP, as it seems to have developed around a single employer. Does its identity come from being a commuter town, and employment hub, having a great night life? Consideration needs to be given to the possible closure of local manufacturers and employers

JS to forward comments to MZ. MZ to send on to SG.

	<p>and the effect that might have. This may be a point for the community plan.</p> <p>Davina described the town as a rural industrial town but with industry outside of the town the heart seems to have gone. GE spoke of the many businesses and successes of Melksham which it was acknowledged need publicising. Melksham's location within a tourist area was discussed, with emphasis on utilising the river for tourism.</p> <p>Jim Sherry explained that WC will feed back to the Community Areas on what was said during consultation and will target people who have responded in Easter time. By September the full draft of the subsequent plan will be presented for comments.</p> <p>He explained that Steeple Ashton, Seend and Atworth are suitable in size for limited development while the smaller villages will not be suitable. Visits with maps to villages to work out where exactly houses should be has not happened.</p> <p>Brian stated that some villages may die if housing is not provided for young people, perhaps with infilling, and that some of the 400 houses could be absorbed into villages. Accessibility will also be essential. He noted that the agricultural industry would be dying if it wasn't for the wives providing the tourism.</p> <p>Tim observed that the lack of relevance in the Spatial Plan to the villages means they are not interested in responding. It was noted that villages have very different issues than the town. It was agreed that communication with the villages is important and Tim will write to parishes to explain about the consultation.</p> <p>Jerry spoke about the differences of opinion in Keevil, that some want it to remain the same while others are keen to see it develop. He made the point that everyone's house was new once.</p>	<p>TJ to publicise consultation to Parishes</p>
<p>3. Update from theme groups</p>	<p>As the theme groups are not fully formed yet, this will be dealt with in the next meeting.</p> <p>Colin gave an update on the website which is incomplete but has a holding page which can link to the online survey for the time being. There will be a page for each village and each theme group with a back office for uploading minutes and agendas of the various meetings.</p> <p>A photo competition to generate parish involvement was discussed for images for the website. Tim voiced his concern about getting past the Parish Councils in some parishes as well as being unable to generate interest in some villages. It was agreed that the PC are not always the best route to reach all the people and that flyers might work better. Lee suggested that we go to the villages to present the point of the website, and that if they already have a website then they can link with ours.</p>	
<p>4. Public Consultation</p>	<p>The public consultation will be held at Melksham Town Hall on Saturday January 23rd from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Colin stressed the importance of the SG's role in promoting the 23rd event as the CAP's effort to non politically engage the community and the need to agree the mechanism for that and the publicity that will build up for that event.</p> <p>Davina suggested that interactive methods are used to engage the public.</p>	<p>DG and SC to prepare maps and colours.</p>

	<p>Publicity for the event was discussed. Miriam will make flyers and Mel will arrange for them to be put on village notice boards. Village maps will be reproduced so people can draw their ideas for their villages at the consultation. SC highlighted the networks of communication already in place including pubs and post offices. Press coverage will also be secured.</p> <p>Lee will provide copies of the town centre booklet produced in 2006 and Jim Sherry will send Miriam a blank Melksham map to be reproduced for drawing on.</p> <p>Sarah outlined a plan in which the consultation would draw people in to the Town Hall gradually, starting with overall County issues which then narrow down to Melksham Area specifics.</p> <p>Lee will reproduce the consultation questions into a corresponding online survey. A small working group of Davina, Sarah, Colin, Chris and Miriam was set up to work out the details of the event.</p>	<p>MZ to make flyers. MR distribute.</p> <p>MZ to write to press</p> <p>LE to create on line survey</p>		
<p>5. Agree Meeting Dates</p>	<p>The proposed meeting dates were agreed by all present and are as follows:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="300 846 1331 1088"> <tr> <td data-bbox="300 846 826 1088"> <p>2010 March 11th May 13th July 15th September 16th November 18th</p> </td> <td data-bbox="826 846 1331 1088"> <p>2011 January 13th March 17th May 19th July 14th September 15th November 17th</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p>They are all Thursdays between 7pm and 9pm.</p> <p>Discussions about holding SG meetings in the villages concluded that unless the villages shout loudly about wanting to host CAP meetings, it might be better to keep it central and the Police HQ is suitable as it is not in the town centre. Tim suggested to start with those parishes that are represented on the SG and then widen it as parishes seek to be involved. Chris stated that Melksham Town Hall have given the partnership 6 free meetings but they want to see us using other village venues as well.</p>	<p>2010 March 11th May 13th July 15th September 16th November 18th</p>	<p>2011 January 13th March 17th May 19th July 14th September 15th November 17th</p>	
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<p>6. Agree a Logo</p>	<p>Discussion of the proposed logo designs included moving away from the colour green as it is seen as the colour of the Council and to remove the design that highlighted Melksham's centrality. Tim suggested opening the logo consultation to the public at the consultation which was agreed.</p>	<p>MZ prepare logos</p>		
<p>7. Any other business</p>	<p>Graham noted that the previous minutes were incorrect as they indicated that he would be leading with Paul Johnson on the economy and finance theme group. Miriam will change the minutes.</p> <p>Chris clarified that some theme groups would already be covered by existing groups – economy covered by chamber of commerce etc. - and that instead of creating new groups it makes sense to plug into what already exists and simply represent them. It was agreed that theme groups would be addressed in March.</p>	<p>MZ amend</p>		
	<p>The meeting concluded at 9.00pm</p>			