

## Stonehouse Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Group held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015

1. Present: Alastair Shankland (AS), Carol Kambites (Chair) (CK), Terry Webb (TW), Vicky Redding (VR), Nick Chase (NC), Chris Cowcher (Notes) (CC), Hugh Garai (HG)
2. Apologies: Claire Sheridan, John Jeynes, Rob Waite, Ollie King
3. Declarations of interest: None
4. Accuracy of the minutes: No mistakes
5. Consultancy proposal for progressing specific sections of the NDP:

NC invited to the meeting and introduced Stuart Todd, as a potential consultant who could be available to work with the group to progress specific sections of the NDP. Stuart has a background in the public sector, and has spent the past 3-4 years working as a consultant supporting multiple groups in relation to the Localism Act 2011, and associated strategies. Stuart's clients are predominantly parish/town councils but he also works with Local Authorities.

Since setting up as a consultant Stuart has worked with approximately 20 – 24 parish, predominantly in the South West of England to assist the development of their local NDP documents. The support has varied between Stuart providing the support solo, and also with associate partners (it is about a 50:50 split). The work done to date has involved working with groups at different stages of the process, at their pace and utilising different approaches to suit the group:

- Sole lead, where Stuart simply writes the documents and hands them to the community for checking
- Guidance role, Stuart provides communities with templates and guidance documents so that they may develop the documents themselves
- Mentoring role, where the community leads on all activity and Stuart offers a 'checking' service and advises on alterations

Stuart is a member of the Locality board of consultants in the South West. The usual format is for Stuart to draft a proposal, with appropriate quotations for work and then this to be agreed by the community.

Stuart remained for the rest of the meeting, contributing to discussion and also to obtain a greater idea of what he could assist with.

6. Discussions about key areas of activity require progression:
  - Fact finding activity, and the consideration for further consultation activity. There is a need for extracting the information relating solely to Stonehouse from the current information provided for the whole cluster (as it is displayed in the local plan).
  - Housing numbers, housing need, call for sites activity. Do we simply agree with local plan policy, referencing as such in the Stonehouse NDP? OR do we need to develop Stonehouse specific policy? – Stuart advises that potentially consideration could be

given to developing criteria based policy (focussing on activity such as in-fill) without the need for allocating sites. Also no need for a Housing Needs Survey, when likely outcome will be low.

- Research around demographic and market need is required. To influence a developer the Stonehouse NDP should include guidance in relation to Tenure, Type and Size of property required locally.
- Strategic environmental assessment (which is required when allocating sites) – VR/CC progressing activity by engaging with Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust about some mapping activity. It is beneficial to have own policy, rather than reference Stroud. If there are specific elements and areas of Stonehouse that are supported for protection, a sustainability appraisal could be used.
- AS raised the need for having a strong windfall policy, to retain local distinctiveness – this activity will involve endorsing the existing Design Statement for the town so that it becomes supplementary planning advice (SPA) in relation to planning applications.
- Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – the group need to be influencing Stroud District Council now, by developing a key infrastructure list for the town. This could include aspirational changes to the town such as the re-opening of the Bristol Road railway station – all must be backed by evidence
- Eastington NDP – Stonehouse to make a response to the document raising the concerns that it does not meet the housing need of the cluster. Eastington plan currently with examiner, AS has a hard copy of the document for Stonehouse reference.
- Employment land/economic strategy work. **ACTION:** Meeting with GFirst (LEP) to be discussed at the meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June (with set of questions to be asked agreed at this meeting)
- Transport strategy. Little influence as this is a Highways Authority activity and falls outside of planning. However we should be considering how to 'improve local distinctiveness' – AS point – especially focussing on the links from any new development in to the town.
- Contact with service infrastructure providers (youth work, CCG, health providers) and ask what are their plans for the next 5 – 10 years. Potential for running some topic based workshops. **ACTION:** CC to discuss potential with GRCC for facilitation support.

#### 7. Scope of consultant activity:

Having discussed the overview of current activity it was decided that the following should be supported by a consultant in order to progress the NDP:

- Engagement with SDC (further to the great work already carried out by JJ and others)
- Sign off aims and objectives of the plan
- Develop the framework for the document
- Develop specific policy development

Activity to broken in to four stages:

- 1) Evidence: Identifying the gaps

- 2) Understanding what else is around that supports the Stonehouse evidence base:  
Identifying the gaps and researching background concepts
- 3) Drafting the policies
- 4) Writing the plan

**ACTION:** Stuart Todd to submit a costed proposal to the group w/c 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 for discussion at the NDP meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> June 2015.

- Assurances given that invoicing from Stuart would suit out budget and capacity to process.
- Stuart's day rate is £500 (plus VAT) but the Town Council can claim the VAT back.

8. Funding:

- Still some money left from initial Locality grant, likely to be used to support some of the Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust mapping and also initial consultancy costs (pre second grant application submission)
- Second Locality grant application requires 6 months costing from any proposed consultant
- **ACTION:** Contact Stroud to ask for the formal screening opinion on whether we need a do a SEA/HRA – Are we required to? This will be then dictate if we need support on sustainability activity.

9. Any other business:

It was requested that the group share their phone numbers so that people are more easily contactable. Collated so far:

Name	Mobile	Landline
Chris Cowcher	07507 602724	01453 827521
Clare Sheridan	07570 780931	01453 827286
Hugh Garai		0208 133 4451
Vicky Redding	07940 877027	01453 822933
Terry Webb	07764 408300	01453 821935
Nick Chase	07989 533941	01453 824693
Alastair Shankland	07779 047920	

**ACTION:** Please add numbers not included thus far.