

**Westbury sub Mendip Neighbourhood Plan Working Group**  
**Minutes 18<sup>th</sup> February 2025**  
**8 Lodge Hill**

**Present** - Mick Fletcher [MF], (chair), Chris Langdon [CL] , Ros Wyke [RW], Sue Isherwood (SI), Alistair Hood (AH), Tony Westcott (TW) Penny Colwill (PCo)

**1. Apologies** (Dave Maguire [DMg], **Absent** : Adamos Euripidou, Guy Timson

**2. Minutes.** The minutes of the meeting held on 13 Jan were agreed.

**Action:** MF to post copy of minutes on the PC website.

**3. Matters Arising**

Green spaces – Green spaces need to be strategic and meet criteria, very few new ones will qualify. Other NPs have widened context and developed green infrastructure plans. RW has prepared paper which will be circulated. Views in summary that we don't have the resource to develop a green infrastructure plan and given this, should probably proceed to add one or two spaces that meet criteria – eg the strawberry line MUP

**Action. RW** – Map of Green Spaces and submission of one or two new areas to be progressed by next NPWG meet

Pre-app on community land. Clerk has confirmed no action yet taken to submit pre-app. CL confirmed all docs ready to issue (previously circulated to NPWG). Suggestion CL submit via planning portal and copy PC members in so they can see what submitted.

**Action CL** – Submit previously prepared pre-app plans and summary for community hub on RL community land

Meeting Highways. SI confirmed meeting with Highways agreed for 2pm on Fri 28<sup>th</sup>. Attendees from WsM to be SI, DMg, RW, CL. Attendees from SC side – Jon Fellingham, Emma Meecham, Amelia Elve. NPWG to review requested agenda and key questions prior to meet.

**Action CL** – Agree objectives and questions prior to meet

RL Advised Transport Assessment Response - Draft letter from PC written by David Mason (DMs) giving commentary on RL Transport Assessment circulated. All present agreed this to be issued to highways and others. Noted that DMs makes it clear WsM have indicated Dark skies policy does not prevent lighting for pedestrian crossing as required. A previous review of the written policy confirms there is flexibility in the wording if required.

**Action – CL** Confirm Dark Skies Policy flexibility. See para extracted from 2021 policy below

"The requirement for any external lighting should be restricted to areas of specific concern and may include: Road safety in areas where there is a very specific risk to pedestrians and cyclists; deterring criminal activity; lighting entrances to building

used after dark; lighting for evening sporting or recreational activities; supporting the night-time economy including lighting for farmers needing to work at night.”

**Action CL** - Agree draft 2 of response to TA with David Mason and issue to Highways and others on behalf of PC- copying in clerk and PC

#### **4. Response to Stuart Todd's (ST) advice**

Housing - Two unresolved items remain – controlling scale and pace of housing in WsM over next 15 yrs (after Roughmoor Lane) and the community wish for smaller developments versus also providing for affordable housing. Should we accept ST advice and set aside any policies trying to address these issues. Suggestion that we should test an approach to limit scale and pace of housing as a high priority for many in village. Build best argument and test with planners. Broad agreement that we cannot square the Affordable housing / small development circle and set aside policies addressing this objective.

**Action - MF** to work up draft policy limiting scale and pace and the justification. ST informed we need to make the best argument as a high priority for village. Suggestion the limit is circa 30-35 houses over 15 years plus windfall?

Transport & Pedestrian Safety - David Maguire (DMg) has confirmed he is content with ST amends to policy wording subject to understanding some wording. General agreement we accept as written once clarified as requested by DMg. RW noted that the SC Transport & Active Travel plan was due for publication in next month or two and we should check to see what influence this might have on proposed policies. Bandwidth to do this at late stage is low but RW to circulate draft and DMg and CL to review / check with ST ref impact on WsM / draft policies.

**Action – DMg** to receive clarification from ST in next iteration of policy wording issued and coordinate with CL. DMg and CL to review Transport Plan influence.

Settlement Character - There was a view held (CL and Ralph Ward) that first version of policy wording by ST was not strong enough on leveraging the Village Character Assessment. Draft 2 issued back to ST therefore presented a much more detailed policy wording citing VCA in a number of sections. ST comments seen by Ralph Ward and CL and no big issues arise but copy to be slimmed down and St advice considered (no conflict should arise)

**Action – CL** to work with Ralph Ward to re-write Settlement Character policy wording to reflect ST advice

Landscape & Environment TW confirmed broad agreement with policy wording for this section, ST suggested some minor tweaks. Main change proposed in draft 2 had been from CL to bring into focus the Permitted Development clause that allows review of visible impact of agricultural development on small plots and seek to ensure real agricultural need and also seek for NP to require that planners apply this PD clause within context of sensitivity of the landscape. ST has advised we cannot rewrite PD regulations (but we are not re-writing, only asking the clauses that allow review of need and visible impact to be applied with context of sensitive landscape).

**Action – TW** to review draft 3 copy after CL has challenged ST on agricultural dev using PD clauses

Community Facilities - PCo has asked for some help to consider the existing policies and the writing of the justification text. (Any volunteers?)

**Action – MF** . Source some support for PCo to progress.

Sustainability Agreement that some priorities around sustainability not picked up in other policies. Surface water flooding being main one which needs to be covered by specific policy. ST has advised that most other objectives (Solar, EV points, SUDS ) are picked up in existing policies. RW challenged this view. We need to push back / check.

**Action – CL**. To review policies with ST and issue a draft 3 and justification text to reflect conclusion for further review

Employment Not discussed (GT not present)

Unsolved priorities - The need to ensure continuation of WM1 policies to cover Roughmoor Lane development that might still be taking place once existing local plan expires. ST advises this not necessary as new SC plan may carry them fwd. However views of meeting was there is no guaranteed this will happen and so The WsM NP should seek continuation of the WM1 policies in situation where new SC local plan does not carry forward for sufficient time – all only referring to Roughmoor Lane allocation

**Action – CL**. To agree wording with ST

**5. Next steps** (meeting NPWG timetable of informal issue to planners by 31 March 2024)

The group confirmed the previous decision to prepare a draft suitable for initial discussions with planners by the 31st March and to that end group members were asked to propose specific drafting amendments rather than offer more general comments on what was needed.

Agreement that topic leads (MF, CL, TW, DMg, PCo, GT) will finalise justification and policy drafts for issue to ST by mid-March for revision and issue to planners by end of march. RW suggestion that we also give heads up to planners that this informal draft for NP is due to arrive and request some assessment time is made available (during April and May?)

**Action – MF, CL, TW, DMg, PCo, GT** – final drafts of justification and policy texts to CL by 15 March

**Action -CL** – notify planning policy teams of upcoming informal drafts and ask / check that assessment resource made available

**6. Date of next meeting Wed 19<sup>th</sup> March 8pm (Old Ditch Farm)**

