**Minutes of a meeting of Newbury’s Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Steering Group**

**Held via Zoom**

**24/08/2022 at 7:00pm/19:00**

**Present:**

**Newbury’s NDP Steering Group:**

1. Newbury Town Council (NTC): Councillors Nigel Foot (Chairperson), David Marsh, Vaughan Miller (Joint Project Manager), and Gary Norman
2. Members of the public: Ian Blake, John Brownell, Anthony Pick, and Kim Whysall-Hammond (Joint Project Manager)

**Other Attendees:**

Jeremy Flawn (Bluestone Planning) and Darius Zarazel (NDP Secretary and Democratic Services Officer, Newbury Town Council)

**71. Apologies**

Apologies received from Councillor Marth Vickers and Louise Sturgess.

Councillor Martin Colston and Paul Millard were absent.

John Brownell joined the meeting at 7:25pm/19:25.

Councillor Gary Norman joined the meeting at 7:34/19:34.

**72. Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

**73. Minutes**

**Proposed:** Anthony Pick

**Seconded:** Councillor Vaughan Miller

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting of the NDP Steering Group, held on 20/07/2022, be approved.

**74. NDP Questionnaires**

**74.1** The Steering Group received feedback from Mr Jeremy Flawn (Bluestone Planning) on the NDP Questionnaires. Overall, Mr Flawn agreed with the minutes of the last meeting and the points made. In addition, he believes that the questionnaire is generally fit for purpose.

Superficially, on the full questionnaire, Mr Flawn made a series of suggestions that were then discussed by the Steering Group members:

1. Would be better to put the section heading in the questionnaire
2. Numbers for the questions would also help
3. Could add an open box for ‘other’ for some questions, such as for questions like ‘What do you like about living in Newbury?
4. Could remove reference to parking from the ‘Community Facilities’ section and leave them in the ‘Transport & Access’ section
5. There are lots of questions about sports and recreation and they are asked in different ways. Every question should be phrased in the same way so as to avoid the perception of bias.

Specifically, some questions about Rugby club are statements so rephrasing them to saying, ‘does it need more/less’ or ‘do you think the facilities are adequate’ would avoid leading questions.

1. On types of housing, some reorganising of the categories might be helpful. Several types of affordable housing are presented separately but could be combined or alternatively, a category could be shared ownership.
2. Some questions could be deleted due to potential repetition. For example, ‘Development should be in keeping with the character, design, and materials of surrounding buildings’ and ‘Development using good, contemporary design that is in keeping with existing buildings should be supported’. Keep one of the two, combine them, or add comments section.
3. Question in Heritage section about ‘Development should aim to not add any carbon dioxide to the atmosphere’ could be moved to the renewable section or removed.
4. Having a question about important views is necessary, however it was recommended to add a comment box to ask what views people find important rather than agree/disagree. In addition, a similar question about green spaces could be included.
5. On the ‘non-designated heritage assets’ question, it was recommended to change the question into plain English. One potential option raised by the Steering Group was as ‘Are there any properties, open areas, or green spaces in Newbury that can be identified for their Heritage value’.
6. There are two questions about leisure facilities in Newbury, combine these into one.
7. Regarding the question about ‘Major refurbishments of existing buildings should go above and beyond current minimum building standards’ in the Sustainability & Climate Change Section, it was agreed that this needed to be explained or simplified as people might not understand what they are being asked.
8. There is a missing sentence on the online questionnaire at the beginning of the ‘Biodiversity & Wildlife’ Section that says: ‘Thinking about biodiversity’ and wildlife in Newbury, how important are the following to you? (Please answer all)’.
9. There is potential duplication of question in the ‘Economy & Enterprise’ section over co-working spaces. There are 6 questions could be condensed into 1 or 2. Some questions are best responded to with a yes or no, not the opinion-based options presented.

The first question could be ‘Do you use co-working spaces’ and the second ‘Would you use co-working spaces if they were available in my local area’ and then an open question box for ‘Any other comments on co-working space’.

1. On the question ‘There is a need for high quality office space in Newbury’, this is also about demand as well as supply. This question could be removed or amended to be a question about encouraging more businesses into the town or a comment box about ‘how should we encourage business into Newbury’.
2. The two conversion of office space questions could be condensed into one.
3. There are two questions about Newbury being a ‘great place for businesses’. Members mentioned that this is not how people think. It was agreed to change the wording to ‘attractive’ or ‘good’ place instead. A potential replacement question was raised as ‘Should Newbury be attractive to businesses’ or ‘What improvements can be made to make Newbury attract more business’ as an open question.
4. There is a question about the Newbury Market in the middle of a series of business questions and it was agreed to move this question to the top of the ‘Economy & Enterprise’ section.

Finally, Mr Flawn confirmed to the Steering Group that he believe that the questionnaire does reflect the Vision and Objectives.

The Steering Group agreed that respondents should be able to submit a partially completed online form. This could also be made clear to people before starting the questionnaire.

In addition, the ‘About You’ section was also agreed to be moved so it would be the last section.

Finally, an option to fill out or skip sections based on an initial question for each section was also agreed to be included.

**74.2** The Steering Group agreed to confirm the final Questionnaires at the next meeting once the corrections have been made.

**75. Initial NDP Consultation**

**75.1** The Steering Group then asked Mr Flawn about what consultation methods could be used in the initial public consultation.

Mr Flawn said the consultation methods used was up to the Steering Group but that he would provide a helpful document from Locality about consultations and public engagement.

At this stage, Steering Groups publish the questionnaire and try to reach as many people as possible through the normal outlets – social media, print news, local news, etc. Some groups choose to hold face to face events, or informal displays such as drop in events, but some choose not to.

An informal drop in event was considered as a medium between nothing and formal events. A pile of physical questionnaires could also be provided for these events. There needs to be evidence that the Steering Group tried to reach broad elements of the Newbury community including the young, businesses, and community groups.

In terms of response rate, Mr Flawn said he would not be disappointed with 10-15% but went on to emphasise that these questionnaires are more about trends and issues raised by the public, rather than lots of responses.

Mr Flawn informed the Steering Group that the normal timeframe for this type of questionnaire would be about 4 - 6 weeks. The higher end of this timeframe was recommended for the Newbury NDP initial public consultation.

**75.2** The next steps in launching the initial NDP consultation was agreed to be decided at the next meeting alongside the finalising of the questionnaires.

**76. Forward Work Programme**

The tasks to be completed by the next meeting were agreed to be:

* DSO to make amendments to the Questionnaires.
* Mr Flawn to forward notes and Locality document to DSO for circulation.

**77. To fix the date of the next meeting**

The next meeting was agreed to be held on 20/09/2022 at 7:00pm/19:00 via Zoom.

**There being no other business, the Chairperson declared the meeting closed at 20:36 hrs.**