

Abingdon-on-Thames Town Council

Draft Notes of the Abingdon NHP Steering group Meeting held on Wednesday 31st March 2021 at 7.30 pm via Zoom

Present:

Louise Brown	Community Services & Events Officer for ATC
Richard Eastham	Feria
Cllr Grace Clifton	Abingdon Town Councillor
Jim Driscoll	
Hester Hand	
Simon Hills	
Angharad Saunders	
James Wigmore	

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Paul White.

2. Notes

The Committee received and considered the notes of the meeting held on 4th March 2021.

It was agreed the details of the 5 task groups would be added to the minutes. The task groups were identified as:

- Culture
- Green Spaces
- Town Centre
- Hidden History
- Neighbourhoods

It was **RESOLVED** that, with the addition of the above, the notes of the meeting of the Abingdon Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 4th March 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. Matters Arising

It was agreed the details of the task groups would be added to the minutes of the previous meeting.

It was confirmed that the Bios had been sent to the Community Services & Events Officer and were now displayed on the website. Members had also sent a list of contacts over for Audit trail purposes.

4. Engagement with local schools

It was confirmed that Hester Hands and Cllr Grace Clifton had worked with schools and had arranged for work sheets to be sent to the following three schools: Thameside, Long Furlong and Rush common. These then went out with the children prior to the Easter holidays for completion. These will then be collected and collated W/C 19th April.

Richard Eastham confirmed there had been a Zoom meeting with DAMASCUS Youth Project on Monday 29th March and felt it had been very successful with some useful engagement with young people in Abingdon. There would be further Zoom sessions organised to continue this engagement and to expand on the ideas raised.

Once the school worksheets were back and the sessions complete, Fera would be in a position to include this feedback and findings into the Interim report.

5. Interim Report

Richard Eastham confirmed that his team had been busy transcribing the Zoom sessions and working on the Ordnance Survey map with the idea of separating out the layers to make it a very easy to use, one stop visual map.

All the findings so far would be collated into the Interim report which would then be shared with the steering group members as soon as a working draft was ready, (this was estimated to be available W/C 19th April). Then this could be published with the view to encourage further engagement from the public.

The report would include a vision statement and the main policy themes.

Cllr Grace Clifton asked at what stages the report would need approval from full council and Richard Eastham confirmed that this would be required ahead of the draft plan but that currently the Interim report only needed to be shared with the Steering group.

Members discussed whether the draft report needed to be completed before the task groups could begin, it was decided that we should provide feedback to the individuals who had attended the Zoom sessions to provide an update so far and to encourage their continued involvement in the Task groups, confirming that people could attend more than one task group if interested.

Richard Eastham and Simon Hills would produce this to be sent over to participants.

6. Engagement with Vale of White Horse

Richard Eastham confirmed that once the draft of the interim report was complete, contact would be made with the Vale of White Horse District Council to set up a meeting where the findings and results could be shared with them.

Cllr Grace Clifton would contact the Chair of Planning at the Vale of White Horse District Council to identify the best contact for this.

Hester Hands also suggested that the Cabinet member for community engagement might be a good person to speak to.

Cllr Clifton felt that this was a good time to be contacting the Vale and felt optimistic about their involvement as the Version 2 of the Local Plan had just been adopted. This can be found [here](#). with the most relevant bits for Abingdon at pages 57-75.

Richard Eastham reminded members that when the Neighbourhood Plan was finished it becomes a Vale of White Horse District Council document and is part of the local development framework which is used to inform planning application decisions.

7. Next Phase Consultation

Richard Eastham confirmed the steps that had taken place so far:

1. Inception Meeting & Site Visits
2. Prepare Consultation Materials
3. Series of Consultation Events (these were switched to Zoom rather than real world)
4. Develop Interim Report, Policy Themes & Supporting Vision Text

And then ran through the next steps and the possible timeline for completion confirming the aim was to have the draft plan ready by Autumn 2021 which would allow for the 6-week consultation period to be completed by the end of 2021.

5. Refine Policy Themes & Vision May/June 2021
6. Public Exhibition & Engagement Event July 2021
7. Further Refinements & Create Draft Plan Sep 2021
8. Public Exhibition & Engagement Event Oct 2021

9. Prepare Regulation 14 Draft Plan Nov 2021
10. Six Week Formal Consultation Nov 2021
11. Prepare Regulation 16 Draft Plan Jan 2022
12. Six Week Formal Consultation April 2022
13. Prepare Plan for Examination Mid / Late 2022
14. Professional Advice During Examination & Referendum Early 2023

Simon Hills asked Richard what he would consider 'good engagement' and Richard felt that increasing the network of people and seeing new faces engaging and providing feedback would be a good aim.

Richard confirmed there would be a questionnaire off the back of the report to encourage new views and feedback on the findings.

Hester Hands confirmed that while the Community free space isn't open as it previously was, they are looking at hopefully restarting this as an 'Urban space' and suggested this might be a good location for a public engagement event.

Alternatively, Hester also mentioned the possibility of a gazebo or stall on the Market place or under the museum that could be manned by members of the steering group or volunteers from the task groups.

The Community Services & Events Officer confirmed that there could be publicity through the Town Councils Website/Social Media/Noticeboards and Printed media (Town Crier).

8. AOB

Simon Hills asked Richard Eastham what stage of engagement Feria would be involved until, Richard confirmed that they are currently commissioned to the end of stage 4, but that they have put in a proposal to be involved up until Stage 14, this is currently being considered by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and would be decided soon.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Members agreed the date of the next meeting would be communicated out once it had been decided.

Meeting closed at 8:40PM