

Action Minutes of Totnes Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Wednesday 16 December, Totnes Guildhall, 7pm - 9pm

Present - Tony Whitty, Frances Northrop, Chris Balch, Peter Rees, Robert Vint, Jacqi Hodgson, Lindsay Garner, Andy Garner, Graham Swiss, Mary Popham, Robert Baddley, Helen Gilhespy

Apologies - Thea Platt, Paul Bennett, Teresa Lakeman, Chantelle Norton, Ian Franklin

Chair - Mary Coughlan-Clarke

Task/Issues	Detail
<p>Minutes of last meeting and matters arising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved • No general matters of note
<p>Writing energy policies with Devon Accelerator funding (Mary Popham)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mary gave an update to the SG as follows: • The energy group is a focussed working group co-ordinating the development of an energy plan for the Dartington and Totnes NPs and reports to the environment groups of both NPs. • The Totnes NP applied for an accelerator grant from DCC administered from Regen South West • A grant for just over £4,000 (just under the maximum funding available) will be received • The grant has not yet been spent as the first step is for the group to gather what information is out there at a parish level in terms of current energy use, installed renewable capacity, and potential capacity. This involves talking to experts in order to gain an understanding of where the money will be best spent • Totnes Town Council is administering the grant • The grant will be put toward gathering all the necessary additional information, and towards workshops to form and shape the emerging policies. • Regen South West have quoted for collecting baseline information at parish level and for scoping the potential renewable energy capacity in the 2 parishes and the energy group is proposing spending part of the grant on these initial pieces of consultancy. • The group is trying to understand the potential for renewable energy supply • Chris Balch interjected that any scoping work should ideally cover seeking out information that will help us shape actual energy policies for the NP • Jacqi Hodgson commented that the beauty of this piece of consultancy will act as a great evidence base in that the findings of the research will act as solid baseline evidence • The SG asked if there is an end date to this piece of the project and Mary Popham replied that the grant needs to be spent by the end of March.

Task/Issues	Detail
<p>Writing energy policies with Devon Accelerator funding (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The SG were happy for the energy group, reporting to the environment groups, to spend the grant as they judged appropriate.
<p>Draft Housing Topic Paper (Chris Balch)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chris updated the SG with the progress of the (draft) Housing Topic Paper (and circulated hard copies) • Chris talked through the draft paper and clarified that the results of the Housing Needs Survey are not yet reflected • Chris emphasised that the new Local Plan is time critical from the point of view that the government will be driving the need for more housing and threatening that if local planning authorities don't get their plans passed in good time (by 2017) that the government may intervene to produce a plan which might be in conflict with what local people want • Starter homes and affordable housing will be a big topic both from the standpoint of national policy and local opinion. • To give the SG an idea of new housing needs, Chris explained that in 2006 approximately 4,000 new homes were planned to be built by 2016 in the South Hams with Totnes being given a target of 400 new homes • Graham Swiss, on the subject of how Totnes will shoulder the need for new housing sites in the South Hams said that of the major South Hams towns, Totnes came out 'top' as to what was deliverable, commenting that Ivybridge has had significant growth recently and wanted breathing space, and that Dartmouth and Kingsbridge have had difficulty in bringing forward developable sites • Of the new recent Totnes sites, approximately 30% were being delivered in the 'affordable housing' category. • Tony Whitty remarked that in reality we have stopped talking about 'affordable housing' and that it is now more accurate to term it 'social housing' • Robert Vint commented that he is very keen to ensure the NP looks at alternative models of housing - community land trusts, etc, but also that what is needed is to ask developers to contribute to this alternative model if they are to be granted planning permission in Totnes • Robert went on to explain that the current model does not accommodate the local need for affordable housing and that the NP has to include policies that supports the need for an alternative housing model - something that not just Totnes, but the South West is in great need of • Chris described the current housing market in Totnes as a two tier housing system – one for locals and one for people coming in to Totnes that can afford more expensive housing

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<p>Draft Housing Topic Paper (cont.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frances Northrop commented that we should not forget that on a practical level those behind the NP are local which is a great advantage and that there is a real opportunity to develop sites that a developer may not have knowledge of. It is therefore of great importance that we continue to draw on this local knowledge • Chris drew out a map of Totnes and explained it is perhaps more manageable to break down how we look at Totnes into achievable sites, those sites being; the centre of town, Follaton, Bridgetown and the area to the north of the town (which • include the KEVICC and ATMOS sites) • Mary suggested that in order to support Chris the rest of the SG should absorb the housing topic paper and feedback comments to Chris by the end of January • Action: Chris to send the updated copy of the paper to Helen to circulate to the SG)
<p>Key Dates for January</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steering Group Meeting: Wednesday 20 January, 7pm-9pm • Sites meeting: Thursday 28 January, 9.30am - 11.30am • Task Group Lead Meeting: TBC • Neighbourhood Plan design Meeting: TBC
<p>AOB</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frances Northrop is stepping down from the SG but will continue to be a valued supporter of the project • There was some discussion on alternative members of the SG (Thea to approach the relevant people)