



**THE TOWN COUNCIL
OF
ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA**

TOWN HALL, THE PARADE,
ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA
WARWICKSHIRE CV32 4AT

T: 01926 450 906

E: clerk@leamingtonspatowncouncil.gov.uk

www.leamingtonspatowncouncil.gov.uk

ROBERT NASH ACIS DMS
Clerk to the Town Council

Our Ref: RN/

Your Ref:

26th August 2015

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN COMMITTEE** will be held in Meeting Room 5A, Town Hall, Parade, Royal Leamington Spa on **TUESDAY 1ST SEPTEMBER, 2015 at 10.00 am.**

The business will be as set out below.

Yours faithfully,

CLERK TO THE TOWN COUNCIL

To Councillors: Cllr Janet Alty, Cllr Sarah Boad, Cllr Judith Clarke, Cllr Daniel Howe
Cllr Ann Morrison and Cllr Andrew Thompson.

(All other Members of the Town Council – Agenda for information only)

AGENDA

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN
2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Committee are invited to declare any interest they may have in items identified for discussion at the Meeting.

4. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN PROCESS

The Committee will receive a presentation on Neighbourhood Planning from Me Neil Pearce of Avon Planning Services.

A copy of the report presented to the Policy and Resources Committee at the meeting on 8th January 2015 is enclosed for the Committee's information.
(Report No. 4)

REPORT TO A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON 8TH JANUARY 2015

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide the Committee with further information on the Neighbourhood Planning process.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 At the meeting of the Committee on 30th October, a preference was expressed that the Town Council should initiate a Neighbourhood Plan under the provisions of the Localism Act 2011. Initially it was agreed that the views of the Warwick District Council should be invited on the designation of separate Neighbourhood Plans for Old Town (South Leamington) and the Town Centre of Royal Leamington Spa.

2.2 Following subsequent discussion at the Council meeting on 18th November and the meeting of this Committee on 26th November, it was agreed as follows:

- (i) that work is commenced on defining a single Neighbourhood Plan for Leamington Spa based on the Town Centre together with elements of the area of Old Town comprising the Brunswick Ward;
- (ii) that a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is established with membership to include Members of Council and co-option of representatives of stakeholders;
- (iii) that the Town Clerk investigates the options for professional external support and reports his findings to the next meeting of this Committee;
- (iv) that a list of all potential stakeholders in the planning process is prepared; and
- (v) that the report is received and noted.

2.3 This Report provides the Committee with further progress in relation to the above specific areas.

3. DEFINING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA

3.1 An initial approach to the District Council has been made regarding the Council's decision to commence a neighbourhood planning process.

As indicated at the Council meeting in November, Warwick District Council is about to embark on work to develop a Vision and Master Plan for the town centre and the adjoining areas to the south. This is intended to cover the area south of the river and north of the railway line (the proposed area for the Cultural Quarter that was outlined in the presentation to the Council meeting) but also the Old Town area south of the

railway and north of the canal and the areas around the station, broadly the same area as envisaged in the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan exercise. There is the obvious concern that two separate planning exercises may be duplicitous and lead to confusion.

3.2 It is perhaps best to consider the District Council Master Plan as an exercise to develop a strategic overview of the area with a focus on the utilisation of public space and the potential redevelopment of key publicly owned assets. Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan will inevitably take account of these issues, it is submitted that it is primarily an aspirational document that should begin with a grass root view of the Town, taking account of a wider range of issues that impact on life in the area. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan may possibly identify matters that may not be addressed within the District Council Master Plan such as:-

- *The development of housing (location, type, tenure etc.)*
- *Local employment and opportunities for businesses to set up or expand their premises.*
- *Transport and access issues (roads, cycling, walking etc.)*
- *The provision of leisure facilities, schools, places of worship, health, entertainment, and youth facilities.*
- *The protection and creation of open spaces, (nature reserves, allotments, sports pitches, play areas, parks and gardens).*
- *Installation of renewable or alternative energy solutions.*
- *Protection of important buildings and historic assets.*

(extract of key issues from Broughton Astley Neighbourhood Plan)

A Neighbourhood Plan will need to have regard to other planning documents but its remit need not be limited by them.

3.3 Work on precisely defining the area to be the subject of the Neighbourhood Plan needs to be prioritised and this clearly will be an immediate task for the Steering Group.

4. STEERING GROUP

4.1 All members of the Council have been invited to indicate their interest in taking part in the work of the Group but thus far only Councillor Stevens has responded. The approach to Membership of such a body varies from one neighbourhood to another but it suggested that at least two or three Members of the Council would be a suitable level of representation in view of the Council's lead status.

4.2 The purpose of the Steering group is to oversee the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan for Leamington Spa ensuring that all issues are addressed properly with high levels of community engagement to maximise the potential that the Plan will be supported at the local referendum. Membership of the Group should therefore be open to representatives of the Community to ensure a broad based approach.

5. PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

5.1 The majority of Neighbourhood Plans prepared thus far have benefited from varying degrees of external professional support. This may take the form of any one or a combination of the following:-

- (i) the co-opting of local expertise where a degree of local knowledge is desired
- (ii) the appointment of external consultants
- (iii) the assistance of the Local Planning Authority in terms of practical assistance and "hands on" assistance
- (iv) on-line resources such as those available through dedicated websites as <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/>
- (v) sharing of best practice through the increasing body of community planning developing in this area
- (vi) assistance from dedicated community planning bodies such as Planning Aid

5.2 Initial discussion with Warwick District Council indicates that it presently has insufficient resources to provide direct assistance to the Town Council with the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. This is principally due to the commitment of resources to the examination in Public of the District Local Plan which is not anticipated to complete until the autumn of 2015.

5.3 Financial assistance is however available through the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) for neighbourhood planning for the period 2015-18. DCLG is currently seeking a partner to deliver this programme. While details of the programme are still to be finalised, the intention is:

- All groups demonstrating a need for grant support will be eligible to apply for up to £8,000;
- Some groups facing more complex issues will be eligible to apply for a further £6,000 in grant and specific packages of direct support where needed. (These groups are likely to include those in high growth areas, deprived areas, business areas, areas over 25,000 population or clusters of parishes, neighbourhood forums, or groups preparing neighbourhood development orders); and
- An advice service and a range of online resources will provide detailed technical support.

6. STAKEHOLDERS

6.1 Early community engagement is essential in developing consensus, avoiding misconceptions and creating confidence in the process. This is especially important for Neighbourhood Plans which are subject to a public referendum.

The possibility of a 'no' vote is greatly reduced if people are aware of the plan, understand its scope and limitations and have had the opportunity to participate in its production. Good community engagement helps to create a sense of ownership by the public.

- 6.2 In developing a vision for the Town, reference will be made to the Town Council's previously agreed Objectives which form a useful starting point for a Neighbourhood Plan. The direct engagement of interest groups, representative bodies and the general public in the development of an agreed vision and accompanying objectives will help to add reassurance that the objectives are broadly based and sound.
- 6.3 An initial list of potential stakeholders in the Planning process is enclosed at Appendix 1.

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan is a sequential one that is identified in the various sources of good practice that are now available to Local Councils and Neighbourhood Forums. The earliest step in the process is the designation of the area of the Neighbourhood on which a Plan is to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for formal acceptance.
- 7.2 The Town Council is the responsible body for a Neighbourhood Plan in Leamington Spa therefore there is no requirement to establish a separate Neighbourhood Forum. However to ensure good governance and develop community ownership of the Plan, it is desirable to ensure that the interests of a cross section of those living and working in the Town are taken into account at all stages in the process. Representation of these interests on a Steering Group is therefore recommended.
- 7.3 The Report identifies some other key issues that will need to be addressed as part of the planning process such as the resourcing of the Plan and the use of external advice and expertise. The process for sourcing professional support and obtaining external financial assistance will need to be established as part of a detailed project plan.
- 7.4 The Report is for general discussion and the Committee is invited to put forward further suggestions to progress the Neighbourhood Plan.

APPENDIX 1

List of Stakeholders – Neighbourhood Plan – Leamington Town Centre and South Leamington

Representatives of Warwickshire County Council (Elected Member)

Representatives of Warwick District Council (elected Member)

Leamington Business Improvement District Ltd

Old Town Team

RLS Chamber of Trade

Independent Traders (incl Licensed Trade)

Royal Priors Ltd

Regent Court Shopping

Leamington Society

Resident and Tenant Groups

Local Residents

Town Centre and South Leamington Safer Neighbourhoods Teams

Leamington History Group

Network Rail

Waterways Trust

Council for Protection of Rural England

Allotment Societies

Hybrid Arts

Motion House

Loft Theatre

Transition Town Leamington

Stagecoach

Chiltern Rail

Age UK

Places of Worship

Schools

Warwickshire Community and Voluntary Action

Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs

Warwick University

