

MARKET LAVINGTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2
STEERING GROUP MEETING 15 January 2025/001 – MINUTES

1. **PRESENT:** Gerald Milward-Oliver (GMO) - Chair, Jacky Macqueen (JMac) – Vice-Chair, Ian Macqueen (IM), Penny Shearcroft (PS), Trys Negus (TN), Duncan Poole (DP) – Market Lavington Parish Council, Vicky Goddard (VG) and Carol Hackett (CH) - Clerk, Market Lavington Parish Council, secretarial support.

Five members of the public.

APOLOGIES: Tony Archer (TA), Jack Mason (JM), and Chloe Stevens (CS - was hoping to attend the meeting but was held up at a preceding meeting – apologies received after meeting).

It was noted that the Parish Clerk had written to Richard Clark to clarify his resignation from the Steering Group. With no response received within the designated time, it was assumed that this was the case.

GMO welcomed everyone to the meeting, including new Steering Group member Vicky Goddard, and invited Vicky to introduce herself. Vicky noted her interests in the village which included involvement with the local football club.

2. **Conflicts of Interest declared by those present**

Those members who had previously declared an interest confirmed that their interests remained the same: PS (owns SHELAA site 3627 off Drove Lane (5.5 acres).

3. **Minutes of Steering Group**

The minutes of the Steering Group meeting held on the 3rd of December, having been previously circulated to members, were approved and signed as a correct record.

4. **Adjournment for Public Participation (1)**

Member of the public present circulated a document to Steering Group members detailing the reasons why he considered that the Steering Group's Terms of Reference were illegal. The Chair acknowledged receipt of the document, noting that it should primarily be directed to the Parish Council, but agreed that the information would be reviewed and responded to at the next Steering Group meeting. The member of the public also made reference to the Parish Council's Standing Orders in relation to this as well.

ACTIONS – Document to be passed to the Parish Council for their consideration.

5. **Matters arising from Market Lavington Parish Council (MLPC) meeting on 17 December 2024:**

- a. Amendment to Terms of Reference – GMO noted that the request from the Steering Group for its designation to be changed from a 'sub-committee' to a 'working group' was unanimously approved by the Parish Council.
- b. Resolution of issue re: previous consultant – GMO noted that a mutually acceptable solution was reached between the Parish Council and Anthony Northcote, and the matter was therefore resolved.
- c. Process for appointment of replacement consultancy – GMO reported that the Parish Council had approved the proposed process for tendering for a new consultancy, with agreement given for three consultancies to be approached for quotes.

6. **Recruitment of Consultancy. Proposals from Place Studio and Master Land & Planning.**

CH reported that following the Parish Council meeting on the 17th of December she had sent invitations to three consultancies to tender for the work (ONH, Master Land & Planning, and Place Studio). ONH very

quickly responded declining to quote, leaving just the two consultancies to respond by the 13th of January. Both remaining consultancies were then invited to meet with a sub-group from the Steering Group (PS, DP, JMac, GMO, CH – admin support). The purpose of the meeting was for both consultancies to introduce themselves and ask questions prior to the submission of their quotes and proposals. By the 10th of January final proposals were received from both consultancies, which were circulated to all Steering Group members for their consideration.

DP reported that following the in-person meeting a weighted scoring system was devised by GMO in consultation with CH and himself to be used as a means of comparing the two consultancies. The sub-group members were provided with a copy of the scoring sheets and independently, and without exchange of views, completed a full assessment of the two proposals submitted, concluding with completing the scoring sheet. On the 14th of January the sub-group then met in order to discuss the proposals and their impressions of the two consultancies after the earlier meeting. It was only when the members of the sub-group met at this meeting that any of the sub-group members knew the results of each members assessment and scores. In this way the assessment and resulting recommendation now before the Steering Group can be shown as dispassionate and free of external influence.

Five criteria were considered in the scoring system and weighted as follows:

- relevant experience and expertise (20%)
- response to the brief & the focus on local Market Lavington requirements (30%)
- proposed methodology & approach (25%)
- team qualification & availability (15%)
- cost & value for money (10%)

DP noted that although GMO was present at all meetings and gave feedback, he abstained from scoring on the basis that he has known and worked with Place Studio for a number of years and therefore felt it was inappropriate to participate further (as he has previously advised the Steering Group and the Parish council).

Based both on their scoring and their overall judgment, DP noted that the other three sub-group members unanimously agreed that Place Studio should be appointed. He noted that they were both very professional organisations, who presented well, with the closeness of scores reflecting this. The final scores were:

Place Studio — 38.0

Master Land & Planning — 36.7

DP noted therefore in conclusion, that the sub-group recommended to the Steering Group that it should recommend to the Parish Council that it should appoint Place Studio as consultants to Market Lavington Neighbourhood Plan 2 at its meeting on the 21st of January.

GMO asked if the other Steering Group members wished to make any comments – IM noted his acceptance of the scoring system used to compare both consultancies.

It was then proposed by JMac, seconded by DP, and unanimously agreed to recommend to the Parish Council the appointment of Place Studio as consultants to Market Lavington Neighbourhood Plan 2 (GMO abstained from the vote).

GMO noted that if the Parish Council approves the recommendation from the Steering Group, things will need to move quite quickly, with the first task being to get admin approval from the grant funding providers, Locality, to change the details of the Consultancy and the expected cost of work which can be undertaken prior to the 31st March funding use deadline i.e. any unspent grant funding already received would need to be returned. He noted that whilst there was still uncertainty as to whether grant support

would be available for 2025/26, Locality have posted a statement on their website from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) which gave some indication that they intended to sign a new contract in April 2025 which would run to 2027, with the new services to be open from July 2025, although this was yet to be confirmed.

GMO noted that if the appointment of Place Studio is approved by the Parish Council, the consultancy have suggested front-loading a range of actions, so that we can use their services to the maximum before the end of March, within the restraints of what we need, and are able to do.

The initial grant offered by Locality was £10,000 (of which we applied for and received £9,893). Any of this unspent grant as at 31/3/25 would be need to returned. If the same arrangements are put in place for 25/26 any remaining money up to £10,000 could then be re-applied for. There is also currently an additional £8,000 available for those plans allocating sites, which we will be doing.

GMO also noted that a request would be made to the Parish Council to apply for the Technical Support available from Locality, however applications would need to be submitted quickly to meet the 31st of January deadline. This support is particularly important for the 'site assessment' process and can also cover 'housing needs assessment' and 'design codes' and a handful of other core elements. The Technical Support is provided by AECOM who are employed directly by Locality i.e. we receive the service (or not) and there is no exchange of funds. If the Parish Council agrees, we will then need to urgently liaise with Place Studio regarding the applications.

GMO noted that until we get approval from Locality for the change of Consultancy etc. we can't spend any more of the money we already have. However, it was hoped that the approved Consultancy would be open to some initial support and advice. A request was made from a member of the public present to put the funding information just detailed on the website. GMO confirmed that the information would be incorporated into the meeting minutes.

7. Report from Gerald Milward-Oliver re: website; creation of sub-groups for housing; creation of sub-group for infrastructure to come

GMO noted that he was keeping the website updated, including details of the meeting agendas and minutes, and it had been used by people wishing to make contact. It was anticipated that when we get into full consultation mode and the selected consultancy is in place, a full review of the design and content of the site will be undertaken to make sure it fulfils its role of keeping the village informed and up to date, whilst at the same time having the facility for storing any archived and relevant documents.

GMO noted that a sub-group for Highways and Infrastructure to be led by Jack Mason would be set up shortly and noted he had been contacted by someone via the website offering to help on the sub-group who had a wealth of relevant experience.

8. Sub-groups: Gerald Milward-Oliver on housing sub-group; Jacky Macqueen on consultation sub-group

GMO noted that a further Housing sub-group meeting had been held on the 10th of January (members: PS TA JMac GMO JM). The responses from the call for sites exercise were talked through, and for the moment, the decision had been made to keep the details confidential to the sub-group until we are in a position to begin the assessment and ensure we have all the correct processes in place, not least as a duty of care towards the landowners. He did note that the call for sites exercise had been satisfactory.

JMac noted that the Consultation sub-group were looking forward to working with the new Consultancy, who could provide support and guidance on the most effective consultation methods. She had attended an on-line 'Community Engagement' webinar hosted by the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) which had proved very insightful, in particular with regards to the changes post-Covid in the most

effective methods of communication etc. JMac noted that she continued to develop as many links as possible with people in the community for that personal contact.

There were no further comments regarding the sub-groups from other members of the Steering Group.

9. Any other business

TN noted that he had resurrected the old 'Market Lavington Neighbourhood Plan' Facebook page, starting to re-fresh it, with links to the website and putting some new content on. He noted that the page needed to be 'fed' to ensure it remained active on viewers feed, suggesting that even posting photographs could then lead to further information being posted. Members of the Steering Group were encouraged to send any suitable photos or information to him. GMO questioned whether it might be appropriate to remove any comments relating to the previous Neighbourhood Plan so as not to confuse people, and TN thought this would be possible. He encouraged members to engage with the Facebook page to raise its profile in other viewers' feeds. It was questioned why we weren't starting up a new Facebook page, to which it was noted that the current page already had 180 followers.

10. Adjournment for Public Participation (2)

There were no comments or questions from members of the public.

11. Date of next meeting/s

Tuesday 4th February at 7pm in the Old School (then 4th March, 1st of April and 6th of May). GMO noted that he hoped to invite representatives from the newly appointed consultancy to meet the Steering Group as soon as possible.

JMac noted that she forgot to mention during her Community Consultation item that she was trying to encapsulate what is important about Market Lavington, and what brings it all together.

12. Closure of meeting

The meeting was closed at 7.31pm.