

The following report was made to the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 24th November 2011. The minute number that agreed the recommendations at the end of this report is 220.

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

The group continue to meet regularly and have since the last report to this committee, conducted and analysed the survey results from the Town Wide consultation that took place between 8th and 31st October.

Town Councillors are thanked for their support in manning the stations at Wickendens, Queens Walk and Sainsburys. Additionally surveys were handed out at the railway station on the morning of 7th October and the online survey has received a steady stream of responses. In total around 1500 surveys were handed out and 640 replies received.

The Survey asked how far certain statements were agreed with on 7 areas that will be expected to feature in the forthcoming plan. These areas were:

Statement Area	Top Priority	Rank
Housing	54	5
Highways	135	2
Business Development	124	3
Leisure/ health	13	7
Environment	94	4
Town Centre regeneration	204	1
Sustainability	16	6

Overwhelmingly the statements were agreed with, however the final question was which one element is the most important to you. This was answered as shown in column two above and column three therefore gives the overall priority that this area should have in the plan.

The Group have met with the Senior Planning Officers at MSDC who have given advice on the infrastructure requirements that have been asked for and advised of the development of the District Plan. The District Council have agreed to provide data to assist in determining the housing need in the Town and continue to offer support to the Town's neighbourhood Plan. The District have also signed off the Councils bid for the front runner status funding. A response is expected before January to advise if the bid has been successful. Haywards Heath and a number of Mid Sussex parishes have also applied.

The Group have written to residents and business groups in the town to ask that they send in their collective views that they would like to see incorporated. They have been sent a copy of the questionnaire in order to help structure the replies. They have been asked to reply by the end of November 2011.

The next steps for the group are to meet with developers, the District and County Council to discuss areas of the town that could be developed and to understand the priorities and restrictions therein. Following this the Group will bring forward the next stage of consultation due for the end of December to propose a set of options, with impact statements of these. For example, to be able to improve the road in area A by introducing a flyover we would need to introduce this number of dwellings, to improve the area by diverting the road we would need to introduce this number of dwellings and displace field C. Etc. Setting out the options that could be done but how they would be financed and other implications that may be a result. These will then go out to consultation.

In the meantime the group would like to change the approach of the working group. The detail is such that the existing group will not be able to gather all of the necessary evidence and drawing up of policies, and therefore would propose that each Town Councillor be assigned one of three working groups to report back to the current group which will act as a steering group for this project.

Taking the headings from the recent survey the areas of work are suggested to be split as follows:

Town centre regeneration and business development (Cllr Wyan)

Environment, sustainability and Leisure and Health (Cllr Mrs Beckford)

Highways and Housing (including infrastructure needs) (Cllr O'Brien)

Committee is Recommended :

- (1) To set up three groups including all councillors to feed in to the steering group. The groups composition to be determined by each Councillor declaring a preference and then considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Chairman.
- (2) To note the remainder of the report