

**Middlewich Town Council
Victoria Building
Lewin Street
Middlewich
CW10 9AT**

Minutes of a Special Meeting of Middlewich Town Council, held in Room 3A, Victoria Buildings, Civic Way on Monday 5th March 2018, commencing at 6.30pm

Part One

Present

The Town Mayor, Councillor SL Moss and Councillors CL Bulman, J Eaton, PJ Farrell, MA Hunter, JK Kingston, DJ Latham, SN McGrory (from 6.36pm), B Walmsley and W Walmsley

Council Officers:

JPA Williams, Town Clerk and DJ French, Assistant Town Clerk

1. To receive and approve apologies for absence

An apology for Absence was received from Councillor JD Parry (family commitments).

Part 2

To make a resolution to move into Part Two session and exclude the Public and Press from the Meeting to enable an open and free debate on the draft Plan prior to public consultation

Resolved 8034

That the meeting be moved into Part Two session for the remainder of the business.

2. Draft Middlewich Neighbourhood Plan

The Council considered the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Councillor Hunter expressed his concern at the lack of time between receipt of the large document (75 pages plus appendices) and the timing of this meeting 3 days later.

Members agreed to hold an additional meeting on 15th March to give Members more time to consider the Plan and send in any views.

Councillor B Walmlsey, Chairman of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group explained that approval was sought for the Plan to go forward for informal public consultation. There would be 2 public consultation sessions held alongside sessions organised by Cheshire East Council (CEC) on the Eastern Bypass. The Plan had a thematic approach. It was very much a Work in Progress hence seeking approval for public input.

The Town Clerk explained the process to get to this stage. The Council had received support from Cheshire Community Action in the initial stages and more recently had received a great deal of guidance from Tom Evans at CEC. Alison Eardley had previously undertaken a Town Centre study and assistance had also been given by Becky Mather of Aecom towards a more recent town centre study. The draft plan had been updated to its current format by Louise Kirkup of planning consultants Kirkwells. All assistance had been paid for by grant funding.

The Plan had been developed in the context of the CEC Local Plan, National Planning Policy Guide, HS2 and the Eastern Bypass. There were some parts in the Plan where the Council needed to add in information or consider what information to include and these were marked in red. There were also photos to be added in and the cover would be professionally designed.

The Plan was not to be a wish list and must deal with planning matters. It was not intended to be used to block development but rather to guide it towards the best outcome for the town.

The timetable for finalising the Plan would be:

- informal consultation up to April;
- consideration and approval of any amendments;
- formal consultation early summer;
- consideration and approval of any amendments;
- submission to CEC (provisionally late summer);
- formal consultation undertaken by CEC;
- Independent assessment;
- referendum.

Members asked about the format of the consultation? This had not been finalised but would include a questionnaire available in paper and online and be widely available at the library, Town Council offices, consultation events etc. Publicity would include banners outside the offices. Members agreed that publicity was very important to ensure comments were received. It was suggested that all households be leafleted at a later stage. Councillor Bulman suggested signposting was important within the document to enable consultees to find the parts in which they were most interested and perhaps the Plan could have some form of colour coding. It was also suggested that the policies could be extracted and put on display at consultation events.

Councillor Hunter asked for clarification regarding “opportunity sites” and it was explained that this referred to sites that were not allocated within the CEC Local Plan but sites the Town Council may wish to see developed should the opportunity arise and subject to certain criteria to ensure benefit to the town. The example of the Tesco land was discussed and clarification would be sought as to whether or not this was included in the CEC Local Plan.

Resolved 8035

That:

- (a) the draft plan be approved in principle as the basis for informal consultation subject to further consideration at the next special Town Council meeting on 15th March;
- (b) the public consultation dates of 28th March and 14th April be approved;
- (c) any views on the draft Plan be emailed to the Clerk and Assistant Clerk as soon as possible;
- (d) consideration be given to signposting or colour coding the Plan to ensure it is as easy to navigate as possible and policies be extracted and put on display at consultation events;
- (e) clarification be sought in time for the next meeting as to whether or not the ‘Tesco’ land is included in the CEC Local Plan; and
- (f) the consultation processes be advertised as widely as possible including on social media, the website, posters, leaflets and banners to enable as many contributions as possible.

The Next Meeting will be on Thursday 15th March at 6.30pm in Room 3A.

The meeting concluded at 7.25 pm.

Councillor SL Moss
Town Mayor

Signed.....2018

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