



BEWDLEY
Town Council

**Neighbourhood Plan Community Steering Group
Minutes from Meeting on Wednesday 26 February 2025, 14:00 hours
at the Guildhall, Load Street, Bewdley**

Present: Group Members: Cllr Rod Stanczyszyn (RSt), Cllr Calne Edginton-White (CEW), Tony Leach (TL) (left 16:07hrs), Jock Gallagher (JG) (left 15:22hrs), Richard Brine (RB) (left 15:44hrs)

Also Present: Town Clerk Tracy Bodley (TB), Assistant to Town Clerk Lisa McGeown (LM), Senior Planning Policy Officer WFDC Sally Horne (SH) (left 14:14hrs), Neighbourhood Plan Consultant Lee Searles (LS)

1. APOLOGIES –Nicole Harper (NH)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – None.

3. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING – Minutes from the last meeting held 15 January 2025 were approved.

Due to Senior Planning Policy Officer WFDC Sally Horne needing to leave the meeting early, Agenda item 5 was discussed before Agenda item 4.

4. UPDATES FROM TASKS ASSIGNED TO GROUP MEMBERS

a) Bewdley Sports Clubs And Organisations

A letter has been sent on behalf of the NDP Group Chairman to ten Bewdley Sports Clubs and Organisation on 10 December 2025 to request the views of the sports facilities. It was reported that reminders have been sent to the Sports Clubs and Organisations, to date there have only been three replies received. LS suggested combining the findings from the replies with the basic data to understand how utilised the facilities are. LS to consult WFDC to obtain more data for pitches and facilities and record this in the Neighbourhood Plan.

b) Tourism Accommodation Report

LS to write up the plan to include the data in the table provided by Cllr Harper. LS to confirm with Cllr Harper the number of beds stated in the table for clarification purposes. It was suggested that group members include parking, camping and caravan sites in the tourism data. LS to include within the plan promoting of visitors from West Midlands Safari Park to visit the town.

c) Local Housing Requirement

WFDC Planning Policy Manager has provided LS with figures for the Housing Requirement for Bewdley, currently standing at 15 dwellings. The report was **noted**.

d) 2021 Census Profile

LS has provided the group members with a report for the 2021 Census Profile. It was commented that Bewdley have figures for one and three bedrooms lower than the local area, and figures for two and four bedrooms higher than the local area. LS commented that this may be due to building conversions and that there are a low number of flats and apartments in the area. It was reported that there are 4,400 households in Bewdley. LS to include the data in the plan and confirmed that the data for transport was taken during the pandemic.

e) Central Business Plotting

RB reported that the spreadsheet containing the information for the Central Business Plotting has been extended to include planning class and residences above the shops. RB will explore the information required from Freeholders and submit this to be included in the plan. LS suggested that there may be differing views from owners and tenants on the requirements needed. LS commented that more availability of parking would assist workers in Bewdley town centre and free up spaces for visitors. Any future provision of markets should give consideration to the impact on local traders and benefit the economy of the town. LS suggested that preserving parking spaces for Bewdley visitors in order to keep the town thriving for traders. It was proposed by group members that questions would be formulated on Central Business Plotting to present to LS for the next meeting to be held 16 April 2025. LS proposed that the plan should recognise the desire to keep the quality and design of the buildings in a good state to ensure that a high quality is maintained in the conservation area. It was proposed that the group send a letter to West Midlands Safari Park to request visitors to complete a questionnaire to obtain information on visiting the town centre.

f) Car Park Information and Usage Figures

Data has been provided for the number of car parks within Bewdley and the allocation of spaces. It was noted that the number of spaces taken up increases with the improved weather. LS suggested that the group members look into the availability of additional parking within the area. Group members discussed utilising the car park by the Rowing Club which is currently being used by the contractors working on the flood defences. CEW is to provide data for the private parking area behind the farm shop.

g) Employment and Tourism Figures

A letter has been sent to local employers of 50 or more staff, on behalf of the NDP Group Chairman to establish a breakdown of employees, approximate visitor numbers and anticipated future plans. It was reported that there have not been any updates received to date.

h) Community Facilities

CEW and TL presented a report to the group to establish the facilities within the community. LS advised the group on the formatting required for the report. LS suggested that the report contained information on quality and context of the buildings and if they are fit for purpose. It was suggested that codes to be used i.e. P for parking, T for toilet facilities, in the report to condense down the amount of information provided. LS suggested that the range of provision of the facilities to be included, how well used the facilities and provisions are and standards to be included in the report. The group discussed the inclusion of open space land now used by The Bewdley School; however it was felt it was not appropriate due to safeguarding requirements. LS stated that accessibility audits can be carried out to include disabled facilities to include parking, access, pavement width etc. the information is to be included in the plan. LS suggested not to carry out further work looking into facilities for organisations that are not required.

JG left the meeting at 15:22 hours.

i) Open Space and Green Infrastructure

TL reported that a meeting was held with Wyre Community Land Trust. TL provided a summary of the work carried out by Wyre Community Land Trust. LS provided group members with an example of the criterion required, LS to check the strategy and present to the group at a later stage. LS suggested that the criterion be used to identify areas in the parish to focus on nature areas, preservation and improvements for bio-diversity net gain. It was proposed that the green infrastructure could be catalogued and included as a policy. CEW and TL to complete the catalogue of green infrastructure. LS to check the WCC information and report back to the group.

RB left the meeting at 15:44 hours.

j) Flood Risk Supporting Information

CEW reported that there is plentiful information available from the Environment Agency regarding flood risk. LS proposed the group focus on the evidence to show flood occurrences and limit the policy to maintaining information on flood events and to include photographic evidence and dates. LS suggested requesting WCC take into account the NDP information presented to navigate the flood risk

LS to work up all of the information presented into the draft Neighbourhood Plan and present to group members.

5. WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW 2025 – 2028

WFDC Planning Protection Officer SH provided members with an update to the Local Development Plan and the potential implications for the Bewdley Neighbourhood Plan. It was reported that evidence gathering over the next twelve months is to take place with Regulation 14 taking place in Autumn 2025. SH reported that a review of the WFDC Development Plan would be ready at the end of 2026 or early 2027, SH provided a timescale for key milestones as set out in the table below:

Key Milestones	Timescales
Evidence gathering	From June 2025
Issues and Options Consultation (regulation 18) (8 week period required)	June 2026
Analysis of consultation responses and plan writing	July 2027 to August 2028

SH reported that WFDC has to complete the initial plan by 2027 and allocations will be included and assessed, it was reported that WFDC may need to draw up a new plan before the inspection stage. It was noted that the Government are updating the regulations around local plan making. Group members agreed that SH would be kept informed of BTC Neighbourhood Plan. RSt remarked that the conservation area appraisal timetabled for the end of 2025 would require a BTC response as a consultee. – The report was **noted**.

Senior Planning Policy Officer WFDC Sally Horne (SH) left the meeting at 14:14 hours.

TL left the meeting at 16:07 hours.

6. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next NDP Steering Group Meeting would take place on Wednesday 16 April 2025 at 14:00 hours in the back room of the Guildhall.

Members agreed the following dates for future meetings to be held in the back room of the Guildhall:

- 16 April 2025 at 14:00 hours
- 04 June 2025 at 14:00 hours
- 16 July 2025 at 14:00 hours
- 03 September 2025 at 14:00 hours
- 15 October 2025 at 14:00 hours
- 03 December 2025 at 14:00 hours

The meeting concluded at 16:16 hours.