

Swaffham Bulbeck Neighbourhood Planning
Minutes from the meeting of the Steering Group at Martin House, 1 Station Road
on Monday 25th March 2019 at 7.30 pm

Present: Mark Bretscher (MB), Tim Harvey-Samuel (THS), Guy Marsden (GM), Sally Pearson (SP), Peter Raby (PR), Sue Romero (SR), Mary Smith (MS), John Trapp (JT) - Chair for this meeting.

Also in attendance: George Ballard (GB) - on behalf of the village Community Land Trust (CLT).

1. Welcome and apologies: Jamie Goodland (JG), Nick Froy (apologies till September 2019).

Appointment of Chair: John Trapp agreed to Chair for this meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising: from the meeting on 11th. February 2019 - minutes previously circulated.

2.1 The minutes were noted and accepted as a true record of the meeting.

2.2 - The traffic figures have not been reviewed as yet;

- SP had liaised with Toni Rogers who was happy to be a link with the primary school to encourage families to engage with the Neighbourhood Plan. A community orchard was a suggestion that came out of initial discussions.

SR added that a while back she had had discussions with the Headteacher who was supportive and wished to be kept informed of developments.

3. East Cambs Draft Local Plan 2018 withdrawal and the implications for the Neighbourhood Plan

3.1 SR introduced this item and explained that East Cambs DC (ECDC) had withdrawn from the process of adopting the Local Plan 2018 and reverted to their 2015 Plan. The main reasons included the inspector rejecting a number of ECDC policies particularly with regard to individual villages.

3.2 In Swaffham Bulbeck's case this included rejecting policies designed to respect the local character of the village, such as buildings, and protect the green core of the village. The current development envelope is that shown in the Local Plan 2015 but carrying limited weight in any planning decisions at this point in time. The envelope shown on the now-withdrawn Local Plan 2018 has no status. The draft site allocations (without planning permission) now have no formal planning status and are outside the development envelope. The Hillside Mill, Quarry Lane site has planning consent and this remains in place. ECDC has previously published evidence (now also withdrawn) which indicated that all three sites are suitable for development. Therefore, the two sites without planning permission could be incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.3 Parish Councils have been provided with a briefing paper on the implications for Neighbourhood Planning following the withdrawal of the draft Local Plan 2018 although the full implications are not yet clear.

3.4 Our proximity to Cambridge and the A14 means the village will be vulnerable to possible planning applications for the next 13 months when the current Local Plan 2015 becomes 5 years old and the past lack of delivery by developers gets wiped clean. In April 2020 the development envelope once again becomes secure. In the meantime this has implications for the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) and the CLT.

3.5 GB outlined the position with regard to the CLT and the partnership with landowners and Laragh homes. It was noted that progress was extremely slow and concern was expressed about the possible impact of the Local Plan 2018 withdrawal with regard to the CLT partnerships.

3.6 Further information will hopefully become available but in the meantime the NP Steering Group needs to be aware from ECDC of the number of houses Swaffham Bulbeck is expected to propose in its NP. It was also noted that a recent court decision now requires site Environmental Assessments where a NP proposes housing development. The Planning Authority appears to rule whether this is necessary and additional funding is available for this work. **ACTION 1: SR** to contact Ed Dade to establish: a) the approximate number of houses our NP might be expected to provide; and b) seek clarification on the need for Environmental assessments of potential sites.

3.7 The contradictions in planning permissions granted versus houses completed when reviewing Local Plans were noted. The viability and potential profitability of a development seemed to be the real impetus for starting any building on a site. The Group concluded that the uncertainty with regards to potential planning applications over the next 13 months means that completing the NP as soon as possible becomes more pressing.

4. Update on questionnaire and next steps

4.1 46 questionnaires have been completed which represents approximately 13% of households in the village. It was noted that a return between 10 and 15% was typical for a survey of this type.

4.2 Jane Goodland had kindly offered to analyse the questionnaires. It would be appropriate to give a summary feedback on the questionnaire results at the Annual Parish Meeting (APM) in mid-May as part of an update on NP progress **ACTION 2: SR** to liaise with Jane on timescale and the Parish Council on the agenda for APM.

4.3 The meeting noted that there were no questionnaires returned from specific areas of the village and JG had offered to do some door to door interviews in those areas to try and gain a wider range of views. The Steering Group thought this was an excellent idea and thanked JG for his offer. **ACTION 3: JG** to carry out some doorstep interviews on the NP questionnaire

5. Draft report headings for gathering evidence

5.1 GM had circulated his analysis and resulting draft report structure in advance of the meeting. He explained that he had used completed NPs, and NPs nearing completion, combined with the report from the Advisory Group on NPs as a basis for the draft report structure. GM noted that each Plan seemed to approach necessary work in quite different ways.

5.2 The Steering Group thanked GM for a thorough and very helpful piece of work which will form an excellent basis for gathering evidence.

5.3 Based on the draft report structure the following member to gather published information already available - **ACTION 4:**

a) Community Facilities/Well Being - **SP**

b) Housing - **JG; MS; JT**

c) Environmental - **JG**

d) Transport and Infra-structure - **THS; MB**

e) Sport, recreation and leisure - **PR**

f) Historic development; Village Form and the Built Environment - **GM**

g) Report structure section 1 village profile summary - **SR**

5.4 The meeting noted that the usual final report form normally comprised the context and issues followed by the appropriate policy. Where Steering group members start to write up their findings it would be helpful if they annotate any sections where their evidence has a potential to impact in other areas of the report.

5.5 MB confirmed that he had spoken to Martin Rushworth who has an extensive range of village photographs which will help to illustrate specific issues and enhance the report significantly. As evidence gathering progresses it may be important to consider residents outside of the Steering Group who have a particular skill or expertise in specific areas.

6. Forming a Project Plan

6.1 In the light of concerns expressed in item 3 (above) the meeting concluded that the Steering Group should set an ambitious target finish date of April 2020. Using Fordham's timeline as a basis for project completion and a plan **ACTION 5: GM** to assemble a project plan timeline.

7. Commissioning a Landscape Character Assessment

7.1 SR had contacted both Cambs ACRE and Ed Dade and had assembled a list of four potential consultants who could carry out an appropriate assessment. Once the cost had been established this could be paid for by making a grant application.

7.2 It was agreed that we write to all four consultants, including a map of the parish, in order to obtain quotes and make a grant application. The letter to also ask for an example report they have completed and any estimates we receive to be circulated via email for initial comments.

ACTION 6: SR to draft a letter and send email to consultants.

8. Applying for Grant Funding

8.1 The basic grant could be up to a total of £9000. It can be used for engaging consultants for assessment reports and policy writing - the most common uses - and for example for printing and room hire.

8.2 The process starts via a preliminary enquiry form followed by an application which must be for a minimum of £1000 and include estimates/quotes for the work envisaged. A successful grant would be held in a ring-fenced Parish Council account and must be returned after a certain period if the funds are not used.

9. The date of the next meeting is Tuesday 30th April 2019 at Martin House, Station Road

JT was thanked for chairing this meeting which closed at 9.01pm.

ACTION SUMMARY

ACTION 1: SR to contact Ed Dade in order to establish:

- a) the approximate number of houses our NP might be expected to provide; and
- b) seek clarification on the need for Environmental assessments of potential sites

Questionnaire analysis:

ACTION 2: SR to liaise with Jane on timescale and Parish Council on APM agenda

Covering the areas with no questionnaire returns:

ACTION 3: JG to carry out some doorstep interviews on the NP questionnaire

Evidence gathering based on the draft report structure - **ACTION 4:**

- a) Community Facilities/Well Being - **SP**
- b) Housing - **JG; MS; JT**
- c) Environmental - **JG**
- d) Transport and Infra-structure - **THS; MB**
- e) Sport, recreation and leisure - **PR**
- f) Historic development; Village Form and the Built Environment - **GM**
- g) Report structure section 1 village profile summary - **SR**

ACTION 5: GM to assemble a project plan timeline

Landscape Character Assessment:

ACTION 6: SR to draft a letter and send to consultants.