

Swaffham Bulbeck Neighbourhood Planning
Minutes from the meeting of the Steering Group at Martin House, 1 Station Road
on Tuesday 30th April 2019 at 7.30 pm

Present: Mark Bretscher (MB), Sally Pearson (SP), Peter Raby (PR), Sue Romero (SR) - chair for this meeting, John Trapp (JT)

1. Apologies from: Jamie Goodland (JG), Nick Froy (apologies till September 2019), Tim Harvey-Samuel (THS), Guy Marsden (GM), Mary Smith (MS). **Welcome and Appointment of Chair:** Sue Romero welcomed everyone and agreed to Chair for this meeting.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and matters arising: from the meeting on 25th March 2019 - minutes previously circulated. These were noted as a true record of the meeting.

Agreed 'actions' from the last meeting:

2.1 ACTION 1: SR had received a response from Ed Dade followed up with a phone discussion:

a) Numbers of dwellings: Ed Dade explained that he had created a formula based on policies set out in the Local Plan 2015 and using the best data available as at 1st April 2018. The number of dwellings was based upon an average number per village with the assumption that all villages would have some development. (The Local Plan 2015 allocates the greatest share of housing to Soham, Littleport and Ely.) The Local Plan 2015 covers the period 2011-2031 and Ed has calculated that Swaffham Bulbeck Neighbourhood Area will require a minimum of 41 houses over this period. Between 2011 and 2018 there were 13 net dwelling completions. Villages in the south of the East Cambs District Council (DC) area and close to Cambridge and the A14 may come under pressure to provide significantly more dwellings than the minimum and may be vulnerable to developers. As the Local Plan 2015 is out of date, it carries little weight when planning decisions are made so a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is even more important to provide protection from unsuitable development. (Eg National companies are exploiting loopholes to acquire large agricultural fields and gaining planning permission for large scale developments by winning appeals.) Ed Dade advised that the best way to ensure the village had a proportionate number of new dwellings in the preferred locations was to complete a NP. Indications are that with the three sites originally in the withdrawn draft local plan included in the NP and perhaps a couple of small additional sites in the Swaffham Bulbeck neighbourhood area, the parish area would be identifying sufficient sites for housing until the year 2031. If a NP exceeds the target number of dwellings the National Planning Policy Framework indicates that this would help to protect Swaffham Bulbeck from other developments. The consultant's landscape assessment may help to identify some small additional sites appropriate for development sometime in the future. The government planning inspectorate has recently turned down two appeals where NPs had carried out and included professional landscape character assessments.

b) Clarification on the need for environmental assessments on sites: If the Neighbourhood Plan included the three sites identified in the withdrawn draft local plan then no further environmental assessment would be required as this had already been considered as part of their inclusion in the the draft local plan. If any further sites were identified for Swaffham Bulbeck then it is the decision of the DC on whether an environmental assessment of the sites is required. Ed Dade said he would provide strong support for our NP in the first instance. It was noted that there is a separate technical grant fund which can be used to fund an assessment if it is considered necessary.

2.2 ACTION 3: JT would contact JG about helping with the doorstep interviews in areas where there were low returns from the questionnaire.

2.3 All other 'ACTIONS' from the previous minutes are on the main agenda.

3. - Key outcomes of questionnaire

- Presentation at Annual Parish Meeting (APM) 21st May

3.1 The group expressed their thanks to Jane Goodland for the analysis of the questionnaire returns. It was noted that there were more completed questionnaires from the older age groups and considered whether this may bias outcomes. It was pointed out that older people formed the highest proportion of the village population. The group identified one or two typos in the results and needed further clarification on some of the bar graphs. Following further discussion the group concluded that they needed more time to absorb the results and to pick up any amendments or clarifications. **ACTION 1: All** - Group members to read the questionnaire analysis and forward any comments, amendments, clarifications to SR or the clerk to the group

3.2 SR asked group members to note that the NP would be one of the key agenda items for the APM on 21st May. SR said she would present an introduction and set the context of NP. The group felt it would be helpful if THS could outline the work so far and some of the issues emerging.

ACTION 2: PR to contact THS to confirm that he would be willing to present at the APM.

ACTION 3: SR to contact Jane and Jamie Goodland to ask whether they would be willing to present a summary of the questionnaire returns at the APM.

3.3 SP suggested that awareness of the NP could be raised by a presence at the village street market on the Denny on 29th June perhaps via a display. SP was also liaising with parent at the village primary school about the possibility of a competition or project for children which may help to raise the profile of the NP and engage their parents. **ACTION 4: SP** to draft a Beacon article updating NP progress and sign-posting to the questionnaire results.

4. Commissioning a Landscape Character Assessment

4.1 There was overwhelming support for appointing Lucy Batchelor-Wylam to carry out this work and the group would wish to take up Lucy's offer of meeting the group in order to clarify roles and a clearer terms of reference for the work. **ACTION 5: SR** to establish with the group two possible dates for the meeting and liaise with Lucy about the arrangements

5. Evidence gathered from published documents

5.1 The group noted the purpose of the exercise which was to put together a 'picture' of the village using our gathered data and this would then contribute to the NP or form part of the appendices to the NP and village policies. Three first draft sets of information have been gathered so far: (i) village profile summary; (ii) transport and (iii) sport and recreation. MB acknowledged that much of his document on transport contained personal opinions rather than evidence based data and he agreed to review the information. **ACTION 6: MB** to review transport report

5.2 **ACTION 7: PR** agreed to research and assemble sources of historical data about the village.

6. Draft Project Plan

6.1 GM had given apologies because of work commitments and the group will need to consider this at a later meeting.

7. Applying for Grant Funding

7.1 Following the meeting with Lucy the group will get a clearer picture of costs and be able to ensure a tranche of grant money remained for professional policy writing.

7.2 The group felt that they should start the process of applying for £5000 for the initial work which was the indicative figure given by Lucy in her earlier email. **ACTION 8: SR** to make further enquiries and start the process of making a grant application

8. The date of the next meeting will be notified by email - At present SR is awaiting confirmation from Lucy about either Wednesday 5th June or Tuesday 14th May 2019 both at Martin House, Station Road - see paragraph 4.1 above.

SR was thanked for chairing this meeting which closed at 9.06pm.

ACTION SUMMARY

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