

SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM MEETING

23RD MAY 2017

Cllr Mike Hibbs (Chair)*	Douglas Kent*
Sue Flynn	Cllr Sam Goddard*
Cllr Sharon Morris	Isabella Warren
Tom White*	Cllr Paul Gadd*
Coby Richardson*	Dan Starr*
Stephen Rapkin**	

*Present

** Present part-time

In attendance:

Sue Belo, Neighbourhood Plan Coordinator (taking notes)

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received Sue Flynn, Lisa Courtney, Sharon Morris and Isabella Warren, and from Stephen Rapkin for late arrival and early departure.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed subject to the correction of a factual error in that the Little Walden Road land (affordable housing, playing fields, community use land and flood protection area etc) was all sold to Persimmon in 2012 with the exception of the site subject to the current planning application for 31 units which is under option to Persimmon but still owned by Audley End Estate.

Once Persimmon have completed all their S106 obligations satisfactorily, the playing fields, community use land, flood protection area etc are transferred back to Audley End Estate's ownership and the long lease to SWTC completed.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Planning Matters

Paul Gadd had made an FOI request for the terms of reference for the Sustainability Appraisal – Sue had followed up Paul Gadd's request but Paul requested that Sue Belo make a further FOI request.

Action: Sue Belo

UDC has claimed that the Transport Assessment being carried out by Essex Highways has been scrapped along with the Air Quality Analysis.

Last night, councillors were given a few draft Development Management Policies as part of a presentation from Gordon Glenday.

Action: Sue to contact Gordon Glenday on behalf of the NP team and ask him to present to us with DM Policies so that we can use these as a foundation for developing Neighbourhood Plan policies.

A PPWG meeting is scheduled for 22 June when the draft Local Plan will be presented to PPWG. The Sustainability Appraisal for the new settlement sites are scheduled to be presented on 29 June.

5. Walden School

The Walden School's demise is said to be due to the end of the Assisted Places Scheme and a lack of overseas student applications. Douglas Kent said that there are a couple of misconceptions – firstly, Essex CC have said that they are not in a position to commit anything. Also, purdah means that no decision can be made for some time. There is a great deal of concern that the site will be swamped with housing and the Victorian building demolished as it would have massive conversion costs. The building is not listed. Someone has approached UDC to get it listed but UDC dismissed it out of hand. It was agreed that it should be locally listed in the Neighbourhood Plan at the very least.

A press release has been issued by the campaign group to save the school saying that they should be able to offer funding to ensure survival of the school. Currently the assets are owned by a charitable trust set up in 1879. They could, however, sell off some of the land for housing which would allow the school's continued viability. The school has a potentially good business plan and options for funding.

It was noted that there are several sports clubs, e.g. Saffron Seals and Saffron Tri who already use the sports facilities at the school and would have problems finding new facilities.

Mike Hibbs and Sam Goddard said that the NP could try to safeguard the site for education.

The parents' group which is trying to save the site would really like the school listed. Mike Hibbs said that he would not see listing as a way of preventing the site being used for development. Dan Starr said that there are three options:

Option a) is for the school to carry on

Option b) site is used for housing

Option c) becomes a state school which could mean the school is knocked down and a new one built. If building is listed then you might preclude some of these options.

It was agreed by the team, however, that the site should be listed.

Action: Doug Kent to ask parents if they support the application for the school to be listed and advise Sue Belo.

It was agreed that NP team should recommend to the Town Council that it should approach Historic England to make a case for the Friends School to be listed. The site is quite large and many of the buildings are not historic. The view of the school from the road is iconic.

Action: Sue to liaise with Doug and advise the TC accordingly.

It was agreed that the site should be preserved as a site for educational and sports use as part of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Action: Mike and Sharon to note for their policies.

It was noted that Mark Hayes has sent an email with a statement by Caroline Derbyshire about the school closure. Essex CC has said that it is not in a position to take over the school but it could be that it is hoped that the DfE will step in so that Essex does not have to fund it.

6. Plan Development

Heritage & Character Assessment: At the consultation event, two members of the community asked why they hadn't been contacted as had been agreed. It was agreed that we should get all volunteers involved as far as possible but that we should ask AECOM to take over.

Action: Mike to meet with Bruce to agree what has been done on the H&CA and get a status report.

Action: Sue to contact AECOM to arrange for them to take over the H&CA.

Policy Workshop: There is a policy writing workshop scheduled for 15th July so team leads should come to the day with a draft of the policies they want. Sam Goddard said that he may have harvest commitments but will try to get his section ready earlier in preparation for the session. It was agreed that team leads/key teams should all work on their sections in the meantime so that the workshop can be as productive as possible. If anyone is unable to attend then they should ensure that their section is written up before 15th July and circulated to team members beforehand.

Action: Sue to send format for sections to all team members asap.

Feedback from consultation: There is the question of Edward Gildea's comments on sustainability which need to be reviewed. All policies need to demonstrate how they meet the requirements of the NPPF in terms of sustainability. Also, there have been comments from Karmel Stannard who has criticised the space standards for green infrastructure and gardens. Coby said that she feels saddened by the problem of the government's interpretation of sustainability and the lack of power the NP has. Mike Hibbs said that sustainability should underpin all our policies.

Dan Starr said that 4,500 houses plus ring road would be sustainable although the majority of people at consultation were against this option.

Plan Timetable: It was agreed that the timetable should get the draft plan ready for consultation by 1 September. An initial draft should go to stakeholders and statutory consultees such as Environment Agency, Historic England, and Natural England by 1 September with a view to undertaking Reg 14 Consultation by 1 October 2017.

7. Consultation and Engagement

It was agreed that the May consultation days were successful and worked well. It was agreed that this consultation should continue as the more feedback we can get, the better. There are several opportunities for this:

24th June – Armed Forces Day - we will only have room for a small stand so it was agreed this should be an awareness event, asking people to complete the consultation online. We will have post-its, pens and bugs as giveaways.

15th July – Family Day at Carnival – we have agreed to have a stand at this but Dan Starr said that he thought that we should attempt to re-run the May consultation at this event.

Action: Sue to find out whether it is possible to have a large stand area in the main marquee. Otherwise Dan is prepared to lend his scouts marquee as well as the display equipment. Lisa has offered to man a stand on the NP team's behalf with "a n other". Mike Hibbs said that he felt sure we could find someone who would be prepared to help out. It was agreed that the consultation needs little overall management and runs itself.

Future Consultation/grant requirements: Sue Belo said that the team needed to apply for a new budget as there was now a new funding period. It was agreed that a brochure would be needed summarising the plan plus a leaflet delivered to every household. We should also budget for posters plus equipment for the Town Council to use plus possibly tablecloths. We should also produce at least full page adverts in the local press. The cost of a wrap-around cover should be investigated.

Action: Sue to check cost for Walden Local timed for late September

We will also need to repeat of the consultation events in October.

Online marketing: a sum of £250 was agreed – e.g. boosts on Facebook. It was agreed that Dan should boost the post for the online consultation now.

It was suggested that there should be stakes on all the entrance gateways into Saffron Walden plus a banner across the High Street. Sam Goddard said that it was quite labour intensive to do and required volunteers as the stakes needed to be removed afterwards.

Action: Sam to find out mechanics of doing these.
We will need to get permission from Highways which could take several weeks to arrange.

Action: Sue to get Terry to sort.

Sue to contact AECOM to ask them for suggested questions to for the 24th June day.

Possibly ask a question on what buildings should have a local listing and have a list of listed buildings at the event.

8. Next Meeting – 6th June

It was agreed that the planning policy presentation should be deferred to the next meeting on 6th June. If Mike Hibbs is unable to attend due to other commitments then Sam Goddard will chair the meeting. Paul Ainscough should also be invited to join the core team.