

## Minutes of meeting of Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group held on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2018

The meeting was held in Lisa Courtney's absence. Isabella Warren kindly agreed to take the minutes.

Present: Isabella Warren, Jane Gray, Sam Goddard, Mike Hibbs (Chair), Sharon Morris, Tom White, Sara Eastham, Graeme Loudain, Dan Starr, Paul Goddard

1. Apologies: Stephen Rapkin, Judith Rodden, Lisa Courtney, Paul Gadd  
Paul Goddard was welcomed to the meeting, to talk on the need for walking, footpaths and green spaces. Graeme Loudain was thanked for agreeing to take on the leadership of the Business group.
2. Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.
3. Matters arising:
  - Walden School. DS had emailed Gibson House. Savilles have made a selection. It is an educational bid, but no further information has been forthcoming. The deal should be concluded by the 6<sup>th</sup> of March. The site is now secure.
  - MH reported that AECOM are impressed by the standard of the Character Assessments carried out so far. Bruce Tice has been thanked for his help with this.
  - Active Uttlesford: PG reported that Essex have issued a statement saying that Health and Wellbeing is being promoted and funded. MH said the NP is about proposing sites rather than applying for funding, but the Town Council could take this up.
  - JG reported that footpaths are high on the agenda and that there are grants. SM said there is only £10k across Uttlesford.
  - DS said Dropbox is now tidied up and ready to use for sharing documents.
  - Conservation Areas. DK has not had a response from Angharad.
  - Relief Road. This is a sensitive issue. MH has asked the Mayor to take the subject forward to the Full Council for guidance as to how the NP should proceed.
  - Arts. IW reported that there would be a consultation meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> February
  - Green spaces. SG is reviewing progress. PG would like to attend Green Spaces group as this is his area of expertise. MH reported that he is meeting with the Chairman of the Ramblers Association to discuss footpaths and would report in due course.
  - Business. GL has completed 1<sup>st</sup> draft.
  - Contacts. It was agreed that MH should ask the Town Clerk to prepare a list of team leads, including Graeme Loudain, and a list of all contributors. DS will prepare an Alias list on the website.
  - JG has produced a policy on Housing. The team should review.

#### 4. Planning Matters

New dates for the Local plan were given. Mid-June would see a 6 week consultation, by Autumn 2018 the Plan should be submitted to the Secretary of State, with the Local plan examination in Spring 2019. The Council is expected to adopt the plan in Autumn 2019. The key date for the NP is therefore mid-June.

DS reported that UDC is making slow progress and probably dates will slip. He had attended public consultation on Braintree Plan, and it was apparent that the issue of new settlements was going to involve a huge amount of work. The Braintree Plan was praised, but the finances behind it were questioned. UDC had not sent anyone to the meeting, despite it

Signed as a true and accurate record .....

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being inextricably linked to the UDC Local plan. DS said that UDC might lose the settlement (1,000 houses) west of Braintree. Even if it goes ahead it will take 7 years before the housing starts to be delivered.

MH added that the Government was raising the numbers of houses required to be provided in the Local Plan. The legislation allows for Neighbourhood Plans to determine where housing should go, in the absence of a Local Plan. However, District Councils have been given the power to change NPs if they are in contravention of Local Plans. MH expressed disappointment that UDC had not addressed the detailed comments made by the NP team on the Local Plan. However, this could be raised later.

5. Proposed improvements to London Road

DS reported that ECC says that junction will reach capacity, and therefore they are replacing the mini roundabout with traffic lights. Borough Lane will be one way. This will mean lorries have to use the High Street/George Street/East Street because of the 22t weight limit on Debden Road. In answer to a question MH explained that the Slade culvert does not run under George Street, but there are brick storm drains in the High Street that are being distorted by lorries and by tree roots. DS referred to the AQMA and the need to reduce pollution levels which are above the legal limit. The proposed improvements will add to the pollution levels. MH pointed out that the NP could not take a contrary stance as it must be in compliance with the Local Plan but could question the proposal if evidence can be gathered.

It might be possible to fund a transport study. MH to ask Rachel Hogger if funds are available.

SG asked if a narrow study was a good use of funds and suggested the study should include more research and the idea of a relief road. MH reported Howard Rolfe's comments at the PPWG meeting that the NP should take into account the need for access to Carver Barracks, if it is developed for Housing.

DS stated that the New Homes Bonus would have paid for a relief road. MH said that the NP could have a policy supporting a relief road, but this would mean accepting more housing. At the moment ECC are saying that roads cannot cope with more housing. A relief road could lead to 2000 more houses, because this is the figure the Government wants to add to the total required in Uttlesford.

JG said that electric vehicles should be preferred, to improve air quality. IW pointed out that this would not reduce congestion. PG raised the issue of damage to historic buildings. MH said that one benefit of a relief road would be that Audley Road's one-way system could be reversed, taking lorries out of the town centre. GL was uncomfortable discussing proposals that haven't happened. SG would like to see strategies to address the issues. DS stressed the need to manage air quality and get people out of cars. The meeting agreed that the proper response was to seek evidence on the form of a Highways Assessment.

6. Heritage and Character Assessments.

MH has identified areas of concern – local industry (gas works, water works), WWII relics (air raid shelters), railway relics (bridges) and green areas, and this has been passed to AECOM. With regard to Local Listing and any further nominations. SG felt the matter should be referred to the Heritage team, now led by Douglas Kent.

7. Plan Progress

No reports were given, but Business and Housing are progressing and will report shortly. Housing: JG is collating documents and producing policies. MH restated importance of development staying within the 'bowl' formed by surrounding hills. Traffic and flooding need to be taken into account.

Business: GL has reviewed UDC Business Study, and also reports on retail issues for 10 similar towns. Opening Hours are the biggest factor in success. He has written background and has written some draft policies. IW has met with Louise Scott-Richter and offered to feed back to the Business Group. SM stressed that it is important to keep in mind past discussions and that meeting as a team is the best way to formulate policies.

8. Engagement of 3<sup>rd</sup> parties.

In the absence of the Town Clerk this matter was postponed.

9. AOB.

The Mayor had asked the NP to consider the proposal that a bond be required as part of Section 106 agreements. DS strongly supported this. There was general agreement that the NP should adopt such a policy. Rachel Hogger to be approached to comment on any statutory issues.

Community led housing: A number of members will be attending and will report back in due course.

JG suggested comments should be paired with policies. This could be done on Dropbox.

10. Date of next meeting

Heritage is meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup> February, and Arts on the 13<sup>th</sup>. The next Team Meeting is on the 20<sup>th</sup>.