

DRAFT MINUTES

Steering Group Meeting Tuesday 25th July 2017 at 8pm, The Parish Church Room

Attended: Peter Topping, Martin Livermore, Rob Foden, Tim Stone, Alan Oswald, Pam Freeman, Arthur Greaves, Emma Powlett, Ashley Arbon, Sophie O'Hara Smith, Jo Denny (Administrative Assistant)

Apologies: Ken Winterbottom, Amanda Thorn

1. Approve last meetings Minutes

Approved, save AO has an amendment to the reference about the Walled Garden. He will email this to JD.

2. Vision/Objectives Update following SCDC comments.

Comments of SCDC reviewed. SG Felt our objectives should remain as there are as no significant amendments suggested save to remove "and surrounding areas" from objective 5 as the policies that will lead on from this objective can only include Whittlesford.

No change to vision as advice was only a preference.

JD Do we want to add "Heritage" for completeness to the vision as objective 1 refers to this? This had also been raised by EP previously. Current Vision 1 below, (bold is added wording),

Whittlesford Parish will remain an attractive and desirable place to live, meeting the housing needs of all ages with a community seeking to provide a good quality of life for all residents in a rural village environment.

*It will be a thriving and sustainable community, supported by appropriate infrastructure, offering a range of employment opportunities and maintaining **heritage assets** and green areas that are a haven for wildlife.*

TS Raised the issue of what type of village does Whittlesford want to be? Originally villages were where local people lived and worked, but then as railways were invented, people could work anywhere and villages became commuter villages. In the South of England towns were built specifically for commuters. Three options for Whittlesford, firstly we are happy with a little development, in which case we have to decide exactly how much by 2031, secondly we could say we want to remain small; a village building only for people who have a close connection with Whittlesford and not interested in commuters or thirdly are we prepared to accept

lots of development, particularly at the station end of village. There is likely to be an application for a second story at the carpark and the county council will develop their site. There is the possibility of an attractive development at the station but current planning rules make a comprehensive development of the area almost impossible. With a comprehensive plan we could encourage commuters, get better infrastructure, shops etc. that might be good for Whittlesford.

A discussion followed in which it was concluded that the third option of encouraging a lot of development was not the outcome of discussions at the various meetings with residents. Most residents like Whittlesford as it is, and any development should not impinge on the character of village, but recognise some additional housing needed including affordable (ML). In addition District policy clearly states what type of village it is, a group village that won't really grow (SOS). Residents chose the vision where there is to be limited growth

Further comments from discussion:

PF Enquired whether young people have been consulted enough. ML Yes in housing survey and invited to all group events. We have all presented to year 5 at school (year 6 were unavailable on the day).

PT and EP One of the reasons for the plan is to set out the housing we want and where that is sustainable.

SOS Agree with view that character of village should stay the same and AT advised some brownfield sites first and plan can stress the need for affordable housing and list the things we want to see with any larger development, links etc. The area by the station could have more sustainable development and there is a move with local policy towards houses near stations. If there is a need for rural exception sites in greenbelts, the objectives in E & H section are critically important. Only a limited number of houses though can be built on these sites, approximately 30, not looking at finding housing for 300 homes.

Inclusion of potential exception sites to be considered.

PT It is good to continue to have these discussions and remind ourselves of the aims and objectives of the plan.

3. Landowners

EP, Any consultation with landowners should not be done in August or September due to their workload at that time. A breakfast meeting would be the best option to encourage as much attendance as possible. PT, No landowners should be consulted

at this stage except a meeting with Bidwell's which is already organised. Any consultation needs to be following a formal invite and ensure fully transparent. AT suggested previously that PT, ML and TS should be present for any meetings. RF has list of landowners that he will provide to JD to start compiling addresses.

4. Update from each group

PF Transport, no real change save the 7a stopping and the transport hub being discussed over the summer with a decision in January.

AO Community Assets, Issue with school and ability to cope with Highways depot if developed. It will become critical at some point. EP commented that until the school is full with village children only nothing can be done. In future Duxford School is doubling in size and children will need to be sent there. SOS suggested that if the plan should mention that the intention is for the children to be sent to Duxford School that a better link/crossing over the A505 will be needed.

ML Housing, Have had very useful comments from all and have now added another objective that developers will need to contribute towards infrastructure. There is lots of cross reference with other sections. PF suggested access to new sites needs to be looked at and ML confirmed a policy covers this. A discussion took place about the possibility of a footpath though the station under bridge and around Welch's which needs to be agreed with network rail and Abelio. Abelio indicated will agree to this but still an issue for Network Rail who continue to cite safety issues as the reason not to agree.

TS Environment & Heritage, changed objective 1, not as yet mentioned Local Green Spaces, but will now do. Had a meeting today with Historic England, who suggested that a heritage consultant could look at section. Need maps, quoted £600 for a map and £1,000 for work on it, but we need to see what other groups need too. PT we can't commit to spending until have a better understanding of what needed. SOS may be able to organise someone to add graphics to the base map to delineate areas etc in Photoshop at a small cost. Further discussions needed when looking at bringing the sections together.

5. Bringing the sections together. Instructing a consultant/Grant Application

AG We can apply for a grant to pay for a consultant to review draft plan.

JD Can apply for up to £9,000, not retrospectively, takes about 4 weeks for application (we have already received some of our maximum allocation for previous work). JD will require assistance completing the application as most information will be about the Parish Council (PC). An additional grant over £9,000 is only possible where the population is 25,000 or more.

The SG Agreed to appoint a consultant and therefore need to obtain various quotes, at least 3.

EP Two members of the SG need to look at quotes.

PT suggested a member of SG should lead the appointment of a consultant. We need an audit trail of who chosen and why. No one appointed as yet.

AT's colleague provided quote so far. JD to contact a consultant suggested by AG in Bury St Edmunds who was involved in the Rendlesham neighbourhood plan and also more local consultants. JD asked Mark Deas for suggestions and he is coming back to her. PF suggested Andrew Ashcroft, a neighbourhood plan examiner who may also be able to suggest consultants. Again JD to contact.

There was a discussion as to what stage the draft plan should be for a consultant to review it. PF suggested the consultant should check legislation. JD understood the quote currently received was for a draft plan that has been brought together and is drafted as far as possible.

EP The putting of the sections together into a draft plan in one language is a lot of work, that a consultant can do, but will charge a lot and this is in her view something we can do.

AA and TS had a 2 hour meeting with Edward James MA BA ACIfA a Historic Places Advisor for Historic England; East of England. AA said they had been advised that the E & H section on the right lines, but still work to do, but would then review it. TS The section has also been verified in parts by the Wildlife Trust.

PT felt we should take assurance we are on the right track and that we should continue with drafting each section and then bring together ourselves. Does everyone agree?

PF raised concerns that if we continue to work on the sections, but may be told it is completely wrong.

SOS understood that AT in her professional capacity was able to comment on whether any of the sections were fundamentally wrong.

AA asked if other groups had been able to obtain any free advice like the E & H group had from Historic England.

EP Historic England a statutory body and there are similar bodies to this for other sections.

TS has spoken to people who were involved in the Rendlesham NP who have been able to provide advice on what to include and not to include.

PT we need to make sure we use a consultant appropriately. Facilitators should have confidence we are on the right track.

EP was of the view that there was enough expertise in the SG and also wider community. We will get much better value for money from a consultant if we have a good draft. It can be worked on over the summer and September.

It was agreed by the majority to proceed with the procurement of a consultant on the basis a final draft will be produced by the SG for review.

6. Review Timeline (bearing in mind instructing consultant, obtaining SCDC views on draft and Strategic Environmental Assessment)

JD - The current timeline needs to be amended. As drafting has progressed it is apparent there is a lot of further work to be undertaken, to include finalising a draft prepared by the SG, obtaining South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) views on the draft policies (which will be delayed due to the summer holidays) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment that SCDC have advised will take 2-3 months. We cannot have our pre-submission consultation until the assessment has taken place.

The SG also agreed that a consultant should be instructed to review the draft plan once each of the workgroups' sections have been pulled together and there is whole plan that is taken as far as the expertise of the SG can go with it. Initial contact with a consultant suggested by AT has indicated that a consultant may take until mid-October to provide feedback if instructed beginning of September.

In order to keep the plan moving we could have a soft consultation with residents on the policies? Avoid August as holidays.

AA – The Environment & Heritage group also need to consult with land owners first which may take some time.

TS – Have a meeting soon with Bidwell's but lots of other landowners to be contacted.

PT- Before next meeting we need an indicative timeline. JD to draft and send to SG for comment. Should include TS comments regarding landowners. Important to get NP completed, ideally before middle of next year when local plan may be adopted (March). After the District Council will start looking forward to their next plan and will include any land they might want to be used for development.

ML If we have a draft plan it would still carry some weight.

AG At NP presentations he has attended previously they have been advised NP's can take on average 18 month from start to referendum.

ML Once plan drafted then a period of approximately 6 months when it is out of our hands and SCDC refer the plan to an examiner.

PT If local plan not approved by assessor the district Council will have to start again.

PF More houses being proposed on greenbelt sites include two in the Local Plan and one very large site for modification. The inspector of the Local Plan will decide on these..

EP We need to keep residents updated on timeline and progress.

AO/PT Would be helpful to focus on what needs to be done in next 4 months as after that much of the timeline is out of our hands with assessors/consultants etc.

New Timeline to be sent to SG and then SCDC and other local villages undertaking plans to try and establish if realistic.

7. Updating residents (September Look etc.)

We can have 3 pages in LOOK for September as no PC minutes. JD on holiday when the article needs submitting and will therefore need help to finalise it.

8. AOB

Sophie O'Hara Smith and Emma Powlett agreed to join the Steering Group. JD to confirm with Ashley Arbon.

9. Date for next meeting

Next meeting will cover landowners' consultation, instructing a consultant and how to bring the sections together. No date was arranged as yet due to difficulties with the holiday period and many people being away. It was suggested meetings should be earlier, 7.45 agreed.