

Minutes

Steering Group Meeting Wednesday 6th December 2017 at 3pm, The Parish Church Room

Attending: Martin Livermore, Pam Freeman, Arthur Greaves, Alan Oswald, Tim Stone, Ken Winterbottom, Ashley Arbon, Jo Denny (Administrative Assistant)

Apologies: Amanda Thorn, Rob Foden, Sophie O'Hara Smith, Peter Topping

1. Review of the draft Neighbourhood Plan, to include Objectives and Policies

Martin Livermore (ML) I am presuming everyone has read the comments from SCDC and now today we are to review where we are and try to agree the objectives and policies written so far.

Tim Stone (TS) The first 18 points made by SCDC are general. It is not clear who is to respond to these. In particular point 18, the comment regarding rewriting the plan into a certain format.

It was agreed by the SG that we should ask the consultant to advise on whether this was required.

Jo Denny (JD) advised that Peter Topping (PT), Arthur Greaves (AG) and herself planned to meet with the consultant, now agreed as Rachel Hogger from Cambridgeshire Acre on the 21st December to discuss in more detail what they can provide for us and also what we need from them before the proposed meeting with the SG. JD/AG will raise the query with regard to point 18 of SCDC comments with them.

ML We have put the plan together having looked at other Neighbourhood Plans (NP) and the format provided by SCDC has not been generally followed.

JD My understanding of the meeting today is to look at the plan's objectives and policies to ensure the SG has a shared vision not necessarily to look at how the plan is drafted.

Pam Freeman (PF) a good idea to look at the Vision too.

Emma Powlett (EP) Comments by SCDC on the Vision at 8,2 of their comments. It has not been trashed.

ML The consultant to advise on this.

Housing and Rural Development Review of Objectives

Objective 1 – Housing Opportunities - To ensure that opportunities for residential development in the Parish are managed to provide the types and styles

TS What do we want from the village in the next 30 years?

AO – We have to see the NP to the village. It's a planning document and residents won't necessarily know about the Local Plan (LP)

TS the objective refers to Housing "that is needed." Can we define what that need is?

AA There is opportunity for development in the village, but we are governed by the LP

ML Planning permission had been granted for the Moorfield Road and scrap yard sites, but we can expect a further application for the Royston Road triangle and, at some stage, an application for the Highways depots.

PF What about the walled garden?

ML – Yes there is an application, but it is greenbelt so we cannot include in the NP.

What houses are needed?

Ken Winterbottom (KW) – This is from the housing needs survey.

TS Can we not just say this number then?

ML We can't be that specific.

TS If housing is affordable housing, exception sites can be used as well as the 2 sites mentioned before.

KW We could include walled garden for affordable housing as an option.

AA Agrees with KW with putting in this option.

EP There are other issues though other than just building 40 affordable houses in the walled garden. There is also the issue of the infrastructure, the road could not cope with the additional cars of residents.

ML We do need to capture what we, the village want.

AA Two hectares of land insufficient to build houses with enough room for access, roads, open spaces etc. That is why the Royston road application did not success, no green space was being provided. Five acres would be enough.

EP Is 5 acres the planners advice?

KW They say 30 to 40 houses for 5 acres but that is insufficient.

ML Its agreed that all the important parts are covered by the policies under this objective.

Objective 2 – Sustainable Local Economy - To support the local economy, by supporting existing businesses, enabling them to grow where possible and providing opportunities for new businesses to become established on suitable sites in the Parish.

PF Are we saying we want to attract more businesses?

ML We are being ambitious, lots of businesses are from outside the Parish

AA What do you mean by supporting local business?

ML Intended to say we have local businesses, shops, what we can do to support them is another matter.

KW At the Red Lion drop in a few businesses in the village said they would have to move out if can't expand.

EP There are the wider benefits to the village, business facilities, milk, pubs and all may employ local residents. If Brownfield site comes up, should consider the use for business.

AG The scrapyard application included retail but SCDC did not agree this.

PF Should the area be a spin off from the station, should we be saying that SCDC should make more of the depot site?

JD advised that this was something Amanda Thorn had suggested previously, that we should say what we want from any development on the site.

Alan Oswald (AO) We need to think about houses that might be built on the sites, east of the village near the station.

TS There are 5 organisations interested in development of the site: Genome Campus, SmithsonHill Agri-Tech, Abellio/ Network Rail, Cambridgeshire County Council and, Highways England. There is also the possibility of South Cambridgeshire District Council with the Greater Cambridge Partnership proposing a Rural Travel Hub and IWM Duxford have expressed a keen interest. We should get them together to see what their plans are as **we** need to look at the area as a whole.

ML I have added a separate section in the draft NP to look at this area in a holistic way. Much will depend on the outcome of the transport hub. Car parking will also come into this.

TS Will they need planning permission to build a single storey on car park?

KW Probably not.

AG Any application for a second storey on the current carpark has been dropped due to the possible travel hub.

AO Concerned that organising a meeting with the possible 5 above would be difficult and a challenge. TS had already set this up for 1st December but had to cancel. The list is much wider than the 5 and Heidi Allen is keen to assist.

PF We need to know the plans for the potential travel hub first which will be in mid-January and Greater Cambridge Partnership would also need to be involved.

AG His understanding is that once the travel hub is decided, a consultant in relation to this project will organise a meeting to discuss this with all concerned. He is of the view we are in a very good place to get the travel hub.

TS The County Council have said they will do their own master plan for the depot site. But with no masterplan for the whole area, South Cambs planners would have to deal with any application in isolation. In the emerging Local Plan Policy E/8 Histon has managed to prepare for a masterplan and therefore any isolated application for development within a prescribed area would have to conform to the stated requirements whole area. This could be an interim solution for Whittlesford.

KW Reiterated that we do want to meet, but we just need to know the outcome of the travel hub first.

KW Any spare land on Hill Farm Estate for new businesses?

AA No, but I did object when the LP was being prepared that the area should come out of the greenbelt, particularly as the business DB10 is already in it.

PF In the LP when first submitted there were omission sites and a call for land.

AA Yes but it was all thrown out.

PF When the current LP is adopted another one will begin almost immediately and this can be reconsidered then.

AA It will need to be because a lot has changed with regard to planning rules since then.

Objective 3 Whittlesford Bridge To support an integrated plan to redevelop various aspects of the Whittlesford Bridge area to provide substantial development, a good living environment, good access to all modes of transport, and, where appropriate, commercial development.

ML He has added in this new potential policy following SCDC comments. This includes Royston, Station, Moorfield, everything from Station Road which is the Whittlesford Bridge Area

TS Agreed with the policy as it captures what we want.

ML This part of the draft plan will need to be drafted which he will do.

PF Concerned the inspectors of the NP will not be happy with this, as it is a plan within a plan.

ML did not feel this was the case, but is only an area with different characteristic. If areas such as Granta Processors (if owners move) and walled garden were developed for housing they would not need significant infrastructure unlike the Whittlesford Bridge area, i.e. transport and shops etc.

KW Particularly the North of the village is green belt where as the South is not.

PF was concerned residents would not be happy with calling the area Whittlesford Bridge, separate from the rest of the village. Also, it looks like a plan in a plan.

ML We need to make sure we are looking at any development in that area from the position of the whole village and not separate. We need to work on this. He also thought a section on this area would accommodate TS's point that this area of the village needs real consideration.

PF Suggested that other people who are not part of the Steering Group (SG) look at the draft plan.

EP Suggested sending it to the school governors.

AA was concerned that planning issues are very complicated and the issues within the plan would be difficult to understand

All the SG agreed more consultation was required.

Environment & Heritage Section Review of Objectives

Objective 1 – To protect and enhance the wildlife, environment and heritage assets within the diverse landscapes and views of the Parish.

This objective has not changed since the SCDC comments, but polices within the plan have.

EP Notes that the policy on the Great Crested Newt were still in, when SCDC has said it should come out as already covered by other guidance and legislation.

AA This is extra protection, as lots of newts have gone in this area.

EP Suggested that to get around this the policy included other mammals.

TS We have already been told the section is too long. AA Other mammals do not need as much protection as the newts. The issue is not whether they are a protected species but what are the precise rules for implementing that protection.

EP suggested that by widening the policy you would attracting attention to it.

This was agreed by the SG

(EP left the meeting)

Community Assets review of the Objectives

Objective 5 – Infrastructure - To maintain and enhance the existing provision of facilities and services and to ensure appropriate new provision is made for any future developments both within the Parish and in the surrounding areas.

AO SCDC did not have any issue with the wording of the objective, protect/enhance and provide. He will remove surrounding areas following the comments as can't include surrounding areas. Can mention facilities outside of village such as doctors, not as an objective, but policy.

SCDC advised that the section could not include education, but can include recreation area where there is new development. In light of SCDC comments should we now look at assets of community value? Shop, post office and licensed premises.

JD had understood from an email with SCDC about this that it was not part of the NP but a separate project that could be looked at.

ML The shop and pubs do attract people to the village so should considered.

PF believed Pubs care already covered by other guidance.

AO the shop is to a certain extent as a community can bid for them, but the owner does not have to accept. He will investigate further as having a shop is very important to the village.

TS Everyone agrees, but what would a planning officer do about it as it is not a planning issue.

All agreed this was an issue to raise with the consultant

PF We also need to think about the effect on the shop should another shop open in the South of the village.

Transport review of the Objectives

Objective 4 To maintain and enhance sustainable transport links within, to and from the Parish, particularly taking into account the presence of the rail station and both the challenges and opportunities it presents.

PF SCDC mention of road safety in the draft suggesting it should be included as an aim and not a policy, but on reading other plans they have included.

ML The comments from SCDC are only advice and not “must dos” necessarily.

PF Connectivity with greenways cycle should be considered with any possible travel hub.

AA Bus routes, road safety and speeding not part of a NP.

AO Was of the view they should still be mentioned. Projects?

TS Confirmed projects were remaining in the E & H Section

Housing and Rural Development review of policies

ML When looking at policies we need to consider which policies we are considering deleting following SCDC comments. WE require advice now for the consultant on our plans and the comments made where we disagree.

Policy H02: Building design and construction: New developments should be compatible with neighbouring buildings in terms of scale, style, materials and setting. All developments should also meet minimum room size requirements as defined in the Local Plan. The Plan proposes for small developments (four dwellings or less) we would not expect any specific mix of property. However, for larger developments, a uniform housing type, size and mix would not be acceptable and we would expect the mix to include a proportion of smaller dwellings. Our current expectation is for developments of affordable housing to include some one-bedroomed dwellings.

No real change to this policy.

Policy H03 Environmental standards: New developments should be built to high energy efficiency standards (meeting at least Minimum Efficiency Level B) and adhere to the latest technology infrastructure, include where appropriate native species of hedging plants, and protect and enhance sustainable drainage systems and green infrastructure.

This is already covered by National Building Regulation or the E & H section.

TS He does not think Minimum Efficiency Level B is on other national guidance/policy. He suggested saying build to passive housing standards.

ML Yes, we could, but do we want to?

TS If new houses are going to be expensive could add in more efficiency standards.

KW It is as important for affordable housing to have low energy cost, for example the Beach Tree Lane houses are very well insulated, which was recommended by the developer and saves residents high energy costs.

TS Should the policy include, electric car charging point, rainwater harvesting. He would like to include the latter.

PF is there anything I polices regarding design?

ML Not at the moment, but we should include. Need houses to be sympathetic with houses already in area. The difficulty is with larger significant developments that may occur in the South of the village. Need to consider the wording carefully.

AA HO Policy 4: County Council and Highways Agency depots: When this area of land becomes available, support will be given for its development of whatever mix of housing and commercial development best serves the needs of all residents for the foreseeable future, including possible relocation of the existing grain processing business from next to the primary school. [insert map] Currently, the County Council intends for this large brownfield site to be developed exclusively for housing.

I have spoken to Granta Processors. Has anyone else spoken to them regarding a possible move? They want to move he believes.

ML Spoke to them at The Red Lion drop in in January 2017 and they said they wanted to move, but nowhere to go. Syngenta site would be a good place.

PF Are they restricting their move to Whittlesford?

AA Not particularly. Their planning permission expires soon and due to the costs of such an application are unlikely to apply again and therefore might never move.

End of Meeting Conclusion

Unfortunately, the SG ran out of time to go through the remainder of the policies or other Agenda items at this meeting. It was suggested that another meeting be arranged before Christmas with Peter Topping being present as chair. However due to SG members commitments this time of year, it was agreed that SG members would email the facilitators and the rest of the group with their comments on the polices in each section to include whether they are agreed or not.