

MINUTES

Steering Group Meeting Friday 9th February 2018 at 12pm, The Parish Church Room, Whittlesford Parish Church, Mill Lane, Whittlesford.

Attending: Rachel Hogger (Consultant Cambridgeshire Acre), Peter Topping, Pam Freeman, Arthur Greaves, Alan Oswald, Tim Stone, Ken Winterbottom, Ashley Arbon, Emma Powlett, Sophie O'Hara Smith, Jo Denny (Administrative Assistant)

Apologies: Amanda Thorn, Rob Foden, Martin Livermore

1. Rachel Hogger to provide an overview of her report.

The Neighbourhood Plan (NP) should be drafted in a way that a person who knows nothing about Whittlesford is able to understand it.

There can be other section in the NP that include Parish Council commitments but not in the main part of the NP.

It would be a good idea to have one member of the SG to bring the whole plan, together. Emma Powlett (EP) did this before. Is EP prepared to do this again following further amendments?

Section A of the draft NP needs to be more specific to the community, describe the Parish to anyone who does not know it. Describe bio-diversity, population etc. There is lots of information that can go in. Rachel Hogger (RH) to send EP a template to use.

The SWAT analysis is very good. It should show strengths and areas that we wish to protect (the key issues). RH advised that the SWOT needs some further work to make sure it is all agreed.

EP agreed the strategy of the plan should be within the SWOT.

The Steering Group agreed that Table 1 in RH's report was very useful.

RH advised that the NP examiner will want to see a link between the Vision, Objectives and Policies. Pam Freeman (PF) queried if RH was happy with the Vision. RH has not made any comment in her report so must be happy with it.

Peter Topping queried whether RH thought the draft NP as it is, subject to the detailed advice on amendments from RH was ok or whether we needed to start again. RH confirmed that it did not need significant change (subject to RH amendments). At present it doesn't quite flow right and will benefit from a review of the SWOT analysis so that all policies flow from that analysis.

Ashley Arbon (AA) did not feel the SWOT was useful and that there are a lot of policies in the draft NP that are not agreed.

Alan Oswald (AO) We need to make sure that the things villages want are included in the plan, but make clear when they are not in the scope of the plan. They still need to be mentioned. RH Agreed with this.

PF, SWOT is a good business plan. SOS, it will be helpful at consultation events. PT Clarified that RH advice was to spend time on the SWOT to make sure it is right and agreed. AA Agreed, but did not want to be involved himself with this area.

RH Policies need a supporting text, again to help a planner reading this who knows nothing about Whittlesford. Rationale to policies needs to be very relevant with some supporting documents, but make it easy to read. The NP should be a simple guide.

2. Questions from members of the Steering Group who have read the report and have specific questions relating to understanding the report.

No specific questions from the SG.

3. Other questions

No further questions from the SG.

4. Neighbourhood Plan Individual Themes, Housing & Rural Development, Environment & Heritage and Community Assets & Infrastructure – more detailed discussions.

Housing & Rural Development

Ken Winterbottom (KW) been through recommendations.

RH Policy 2 Building Design and Construction – some very generic designs. Design policy does not do more than the Local Plan (LP) see report.

RH Housing mix should be a stand-alone policy if want this and different to LP. Bring in evidence from housing needs survey results to include number of rooms and also the statistics that RH previously sent over (include in main body of plan).

Policy 4 County Council (CC) and Highways Agency Depot.

KW This is difficult as CC have said they want to use as housing and we want business and also possibility of transport hub for buses and parking.

RH provided map for KW to mark site for clarity. The map was the most up to date available now with the current development framework.

PT He thinks it is highly unlikely the site will be used for anything else but housing, it might be transport in the interim but ultimately housing.

RH What does Whittlesford want the site to be?

SOS Parking and other facilities. Read out the following possible Objective 3 draft.

Cumulatively, with the sites already identified, development around Whittlesford Bridge will deliver a significant number of new homes. Rather than providing small parcels of open space with each development it would be preferable to plan comprehensively to create a new park/country park working with local landowners and the County Council to serve Whittlesford Bridge and the Village as a whole. Developers would be encouraged to contribute to the creation and maintenance of the park.

The Greater Cambridge Partnership are undertaking a masterplanning exercise for the upgrading of the station and creation of a Travel Hub to support development south of Whittlesford. The aspirations for a park and also a local shop should be factored into discussions with the Parish.

PF Master Plan being done.

TS was of the view that until a Master Plan is completed, piecemeal comments by the SG have no value.

AA If going to be housing, the area needs to be sustainable.

SOS Current Master Plan is for much wider issues not just village area and we need to think about it for the village.

RH At the moment policy drafted on basis we will agree with CC. If there is disagreement within the SG, it should go out for larger consultation. The group needs to consider whether the site should be allocated which has certain benefits. If allocate the site the whole community around Whittlesford Bridge should be involved and then there will be more of a say in what happens. Alternatively, can have a policy in the NP that says in the event of the site being used for housing we want mixed use etc. RH to update her advice on this.

Affordable housing Policy Exception site retitled Rural Exception Site.

Environment & Heritage

TS Updated section already following RH advice, but still has a number of questions. The group is confused that previous advice had been for a lot of the information they had obtained should go in the Background Section and now RH's advice to include in the main part.

RH This issue comes up a lot. Her advice is that a planning policy should be clear. What is intended by policy and rational should be clear. For example, design policy should be underpinned by character assessment.

The detailed Great Crested newts work should not be in main body of NP but refer only to the facts and figures.

Where a policy has a constraint, there should be a constraints map to go in the main body of NP. Maps are very important.

JD advised that the information from SCDC that she has sent on in the week is very useful and there is a map portal where layers can be added. RH will provide contact name for a person who prepares her maps if Samantha from SCDC is unable to help.

Key information which meets key issues should demonstrate clear intention and rationale.

Policy EH2/1 Need tangible examples.

Lighting Policy will only be used if planning application comes in, consider this.

AA gave an explanation as to why 175m used in the Great Crested Newt Policy.

RH advised that if a development is undertaken under a permitted development order a planning officer cannot do anything. If the NP contains wording which suggests the contrary, then the wording will be taken out by the examiner.

Transport

RH looked at the Master Plan information that PF provided. Cycle ways and pedestrian ways should be in the transport section. Link the Master Plan in the section. Need to understand where Whittlesford Bridge and Whittlesford Parkway are in NP and where the Master Plan helps.

SOS Aspirational routes should be included as already advised by SCDC.

RH The Transport section should include all aspirations. Provide context to planning policies.

Policy 1 Better Connected Parish link this to maps of aspirations. Move the community assists on footpaths to the transport section. Overlap policy 5 and 1 transport. Policy 3 RH as suggested wording. Provide supporting text. Consider rewording of "congestion" if this not an issue. Consider what we are trying to achieve in this policy regarding parking, PF to change wording.

RH advised to set out parking difficulties and areas in the NP as then relevant to planning applications. An explanation is needed to the policy.

AA has prepared a map of congestions/accidents which he will discuss with PF.

Community Assets

AO Policy 2. Will look at all policy following advice to ensure that any developments support new facilities for example if a new football pitch is required that there are sufficient changing facilities to support this.

RH Is the CC site suitable for a new football pitch.

RH Policy 2 Licensed Premises. It is easier to give pubs land use protection and she has proposed wording in her report. It is very valid to have a policy on this. Should discuss any specific issue with premises it relates to and talk to them. If you believe it requires protection then it is not necessary to have landowners consent.

RH Have you engaged with landowners/businesses?

JD Yes, landowners meeting and questionnaire to businesses.

5. Next steps

- RH advises that the review of the SWOT should take place which should eliminate crossed policies. It only requires a few changes.
- Whittlesford Bridge Area. AO, PF, ML, KW and SOS to arrange a meeting to discuss generally (Allocate site or not) and what the community needs on the site (aspirations). RH sending additional advice on this. Then either engage by email or meet with CC to discuss policies drafted.
- Informal consultation once policies finalised over a 4-week period. Drop in events, evenings, afternoons. Ensure responses are representative of community. Join with other events, make it fun. Maps and photos will help.
- Once have final Draft NP and before submitting NP to SCDC there will need to be a formal 6-week consultation with all who have an interest in the plan, including residents, voluntary bodies, environmental bodies. Ensure plan complies with Basic Conditions. (Currently there are a number of unresolved key issues in draft NP that need resolving first and the draft NP is not user friendly enough. Once RH advice taken on and EP amended it will help. Wording of many of the current policies are not “planning policies”).
- Strategic Environment Assessment and Habitat can be undertaken as soon as policies finalised and agreed
- Check legislation for 6-week pre-submission rules.

6. AOB

Jo Denny leaving date 28 February 2018, Administrative arrangements following this. The SG agreed another administrative assistant was required.

7. Date for next meeting

JD to organise meeting to discuss the SWOT analysis.

AA would like a specific meeting on maps.
Agreed next meeting to discuss SWOT analysis and maps.

Meeting finished 2.30