

Wells Town Council Meeting June 7th 2021

Agenda item 13

Neighbourhood Plan Progress

The Working Party is supported in its work by our firm of consultants, Rachel Leggett and Associates. Further technical support is now being provided by a government appointed agency AECOM whose role is to provide independent advice as part of the evidence gathering process. Grant funding has been obtained to pay for its work as well as that of our consultants.. Because Locality, the grant giving body did not open the application process until after the new financial year, it was decided to support the work of the consultants in the interim from the moneys allocated by the Town Council in order to prevent delay in the completion of the Plan. Subsequently a grant for £8460 has been made by Locality to cover consultancy work for the rest of the year.

Character Assessment

The town has been divided into seven areas each of which has been assessed as to its character – 60s housing, conservation area, former council housing etc. – but described in detail so as to provide guidance on how any development should take place and what needs to be protected. This applied to individual houses, streets and views. Each member of the Working Party was invited to assess the various area street by street. (see enclosed map – which should now include the land northwards to the Pinewoods west of the Beach bank.)

Design Code

Follow a virtual guided tour of the town using Google maps by RA and PR members of AECOM will visit the town to look at its buildings in order to formulate policies for development. They will provide independent assessment of where and how any development should take place. This will include a response to the sites offered under the Call for Sites process assessing their suitability.

Objectives and Policies

The working party has worked out five major objectives of the plan: these relate to housing needs, to employment needs, to local services (education, health and leisure), the character of the town, and issues relating to rising sea levels. The question is then what proposals for change or protection the plan should contain for particular areas in the town. 'Policies' means specific proposals for particular pieces of land and are guided by specialist advice as above.

Consultation

Finally, people will want to know how the Working Party's proposals can be examined in detail by the people of the town. We have agreed that the drop-in consultation will be on the weekend of September 25th. when people can comment on whether we have interpreted the wants and needs of the town correctly. This is not the last chance but the first, for people to comment on a plan which should put power into the hands of the local community.

Cllr Roger Arguile