

Neighbourhood Plan Working Party Meeting November 5th on Zoom at 10.00 am

Introduction

This short paper is intended to facilitate conclusions which we may have reached in previous meetings. I may have got some of them wrong so it is important that we establish where we now are.

As to how we deal with them, on the promise that everyone gets a fair shout, I hope that you will allow me to ask people to speak in turn and for people to indicate if they want to make a point.

Item 3 Key Issues

1 We have a shared vision as to why we want a Neighbourhood Plan.

We want to make a difference and influence the development of a town which is changing in its demography quite rapidly. Whatever wider aims we have, housing for local people is key to our efforts.

2. We do not have a wider range of skills necessary to its production and for that reason we need to call in the aid of those who have those skills.

3. The stages begin with identifying issues and evidence gathering so that we can fine down our aims and objectives. We have to make a convincing case for the choices we may have already made in our minds so that any policies can be justified in evidential terms.

4. Issues to be identified have to be subject to consultation in the community so that we can be sure that whatever we consider important is something in which the community has a positive opinion.

5. We cannot present people with a blank sheet of paper and we have to give people the opportunity to raise issues which they consider important even if they cannot be made part of a planning document. In doing so we must not raise hopes that we can deal with things like, for instance, the road infrastructure or parking regulations which are the responsibility of other bodies. We can however refer these matters to the relevant authority.

6. The issues with which we can deal are planning matters i.e. they have to do with land use: the major issues IMO are housing supply and tenure, housing character, employment facilities, community facilities including retail, the natural environment, recreational space, car parks.....

Item 4 Public Consultation

1. **Public consultation on these issues has to be an early stage.** Constrained as we are by government prohibitions, a **website** is a major means by which we need to begin the process. None of us has particular expertise in these matters and while we might have a stab at it, the fact that there are grants to be had we might as well employ a professional.

We may have ideas as to what should go on the website, matters which we can discuss with the professionals.

Item 5 Consultancy

1. **We have not discussed what we would want a consultant to do.** It would seem wise to ask Richard High what the options are and given our level of expertise how we could manage it, and what tasks we would want him/her to undertake

2. We could then approach possible candidates.

A consultant who I know specialises in community engagement but would also be able to offer wider support on the neighbourhood plan. She is:

Rachel Leggett & associates

Norwich, Norfolk, UK

Telephone: 07947 615335

Email: rachelleggett@me.com The website is <https://www.rachelleggett.co.uk>

Rachel is not a qualified planner but she does have extensive experience of neighbourhood plans and she also has planners among her associates. I think she is has done a good jobs on the plans she has been involved with. The website I think shows that communication is a strength. I never even had one!

Rachel Hogger of Modicum Planning based in Cambridge. She is very well qualified, much younger than me and has done a couple of plans in Norfolk: Saham Toney and Long Stratton. She can be contacted through the website below.

<https://www.modicumplanning.uk/>

Ian Poole of Places4People, who has done several NPs in Suffolk including Newmarket. He is based in Colchester but does not seem to have a website so I haven't got contact details. I'll try to get them but I suspect Rachel Hogger may be the better bet, as the distance to travel to meetings is an important factor. Consultants don't like having to travel 2-3 hours for meetings that last 1-2 hours unless recompensed and you don't want to be paying for lots of travel time.

Item 6 Grant applications

1. **It is possible to apply for grants in order to employ a facilitator to enable public consultation and also for the setting up and hosting of a website.** Greg Hewitt is willing to deal with the grant application process. We can have a discussion with him as to how go about it.

Item 7 Milestones

- 1. We have a time line and tasks to be performed.** In the light of advice from RH we may want to revise it. In particular the order of tasks may need to be changed. There have also been inevitable delays partly because of our not being clear about the order and partly because of covid. We might like to revisit this item with a view to rewriting it.

Item 8 Next Tasks.

These will arise from our conclusions at the meeting.