

Wells Neighbourhood Plan Working Party

Minutes

Tuesday 15th June 2021 10am Zoom meeting

Present:

Roger Arguile (RA-Chair), Cheryl Curtis (CC), Lindsay Dew (LD), David Fennell (DF), John Edwards (JE), Nichola Holmes (NH), Rachel Leggett (RL), Andrea Long (AL), Peter Rainsford (PR)
Graham Connolly (GC) & Nicky Debbage (ND) NNDC Housing Strategy and Delivery Managers, present from 10 to 10.33am for discussion re: Medcentres proposal

- 1. Apologies:** Received from Greg Hewitt, on leave.
Jacqueline Gray (JG) and Jimmy Tottle (JT) unable to join Zoom meetings.

2. Medcentres discussion

Nicky Debbage introduced herself and colleague Graham Connolly, speaking on behalf of NNDC's Housing Strategy Dept. with regard to the Medcentres proposal to build 60 "extracare" units and 12 affordable houses in Wells. NNDC were approached in late 2020 with a starter proposal by Medcentres PLC, with whom they have worked before. ND acknowledged the shortage of good quality affordable homes for elderly people across the district. She is due to speak at the next WTC meeting on July 5th to discuss the lack of affordable housing in Wells. ND understands that Homes for Wells (as a registered provider of social housing) is also in discussion with WTC about the provision of all types of affordable housing for local people.

DF has visited the recently completed Medcentre "extracare" 'Living Well Homes for Norfolk' development near Fakenham Morrisons with GC and Medcentres Director Mike Arnold. DF said that he was favourably impressed by this and has invited Medcentres to speak at the HfW board meeting on June 16th to explore collaboration ideas.

ND clarified that NNDC's objective is to facilitate the delivery of suitable affordable housing in the best way for each place, to properly meet the needs of its local population.

JE said that Wells Community Hospital would be good partners for providing the required local health care support and he will communicate the Medcentres proposal to WCH for discussion. He also remarked that it was vital to clearly explain any proposed scheme to the community to ensure its timely success, especially as it is relevant to the NP process. CC agreed that there was a critical need for "extracare" style homes in Wells and pointed out the importance of NP policy in ensuring that the larger homes released by such a scheme were retained as local family homes. ND confirmed that this would need the various housing agencies to work together. A Victory Housing manager will also be attending the WTC July meeting.

DF said that it would benefit local employment to have more care workers in the town, although that might also create a further housing demand. PR remarked that as the "extracare" housing scheme design would be sensitive to local practicalities, it should be possible to inbuild staff accommodation for the 24 hour onsite care required.

AL asked whether NNDC would consider development of the 'triangle' along Two Furlong Hill as compatible with the Local Plan. ND confirmed that discussions were ongoing as part of the process. RA has raised the issue directly with Ian Withington (IW): any proposed change of land use would need to show that the benefits to the community (affordable housing) outweighed the current situation (grazing, as the allotments would be retained).

AL will get this principle in writing from IW to aid with the AECOM design code assessment. Although WTC now owns the land, the question of Holkham's covenant on it remains.

ND and GC left the meeting at 10.33am.

3. Minutes of last meeting, 20.5.21

Accepted as a true record.

4. Matters arising (not dealt with below)

There were no extra matters arising from the May minutes.

5. Design code update - RL

Since the AECOM virtual tour on 13th May, Graziano is expected to have visited Wells in person to check details as necessary but neither RA nor RL have had any queries from him. RL will find out what stage the AECOM design code process has got to, with a view to having their report for finalising the design code in August.

6. Character appraisal update - RL

RL commended JE on the consolidated Wells town character appraisal report which he has streamlined from the various section appraisals completed by the NPWP. It now includes the beach access and service area as suggested at the last meeting. Other members of the working party have continued to make additions and suggestions which JE will put into a final version for RL by tomorrow evening (Weds 16th June). This is a significant step forward in the evidence gathering process and has been a good joint effort.

RL can now send the character appraisal to AECOM for inclusion in their assessment.

There will then be an online feedback session where the NPWP and AECOM go through the assessment point by point to finalise details for the design code.

7. Local Green Spaces and Non-Designated Heritage Assets – RL

RA has circulated provisional lists of these which the NPWP have been adding to and he will review progress.

JE will use the character appraisal report to extract any further items for inclusion.

PR will also assist : he mentioned the current lifeboat house which is soon to be replaced, Wells Harbour Railway and the Northfield Crescent area. RL agreed that it was beneficial to have three people involved in this task, for optimum coverage. She will need a photograph and description of each item listed, with map placement for easy reference.

Agreed, that RL will set up a Zoom meeting with RA, JE and PR for 10.30am on Tuesday June 29th to go through the lists and help with assessment.

8. Call for Sites update - AL

AL has arranged to call GH on Monday 21st June to discuss any applications received so far and she will follow up later next week with Dave Chapman at NNDC.

PR has contacted NNDC regarding Maryland but had no response yet. He is willing to talk directly to the owners of units requiring redevelopment, if that can be arranged. Also to approach the asset management group controlling the future of the Ark Royal site.

AL will contact Ian Withington for help with making the appropriate contacts and to enquire about any proposed “major projects” being brought forward to NNDC’s Planning Dept. of which WTC is not yet aware.

After the closing date, the NPWP will be able to see the list of applications. GH and AL will pass the applications to AECOM for their independent assessment of the sites. AECOM will produce a map and feasibility report showing the sites as red, amber or green for development as suggested. This report will be fed into the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to inform future development policy options.

LD left the meeting at 11.03 and RL left at 11.05am.

9. Policy ideas discussion – AL

Discussion began about the policy ideas which AL had updated and circulated following the previous meeting. It is necessary to agree what the policy wording and content will be. AL explained that the NP policies would be enacted whenever a local planning application was made.

Over the next 45 minutes the NPWP considered in great detail the 7 policy headings for Housing and the 3 policy headings for the Employment objective. AL will incorporate the working party's suggestions and revisit these two objectives at the next meeting, when the remaining 16 policy headings will be discussed for the other three objectives: Infrastructure and services; Environment and tourism; Sustainability and climate change.

10. Communications – RA

RA reported that the July edition of The Quay magazine, now at the printers, includes an update on NP work.

The proposed public consultation exhibition date has been changed to the weekend of October 1st / 2nd. RA will notify GH of this change for booking the Congregational Church hall.

11. Date of next meeting

Tuesday 20th July, via Zoom at 10.30 am. Note later start.

Meeting closed 12 noon.

NH