

Minutes of the meeting of the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Wednesday 16th May 2018 7pm at the Council Offices London Road Halesworth

Present: Michael Fagg, Councillor Keith Greenberg (chair), Barnaby Milburn, Rob Roy, Bob Shiers, Charlotte Slater, Gill Everett (secretary)

1. Apologies: Councillor Tony Allen, Emma Healey, Jane Mcgeehan, Joyce Moseley
2. Minutes of the meeting on 18th April 2018 were approved
3. Matters arising: 3) the Chair of Halesworth Town Council Peter Dutton and Councillor Tony Allen had attended a meeting with Halesworth Business Connections. Tony had agreed to be the Council's link person with Halesworth Business Connections
4. Core priorities: there was general agreement that the headings suggested by Rob described the priorities identified by the steering group at the meeting on 18th April 2018. The list presented under those headings was a synthesis of the topics suggested at the meeting, with Joyce's subsequent contribution included. It was suggested that education should be the first priority. The list as presented is not weighted, and it was agreed that the group would leave it like that. Instead, we would use the process of community engagement to identify the priorities of Halesworth people.

It was noted that, in relation to Halesworth, secondary education was not mentioned in the Waveney District Council draft Local Plan, apart from noting there was wasn't any in the town.

Further suggestions for core priorities included:

- a) considering the possibility of qualifying availability of housing for first time buyers to those with a local connection. Kessingland had done something on these lines in their Neighbourhood Plan.
- b) considering zoning of land use: "the right spaces for the right things". For example, car dealerships close to the town centre were not ideally located, and deliveries contributed to obstructing roads (along with parking for school and the police station in one location). As the Neighbourhood Plan would be in force until 2035, this was the opportunity to set out aspirations such as commercial and housing zones. Keith **agreed** to talk with the Waveney District Council Economic Development Team about possibilities for commercial zoning of land use, and possible incentives to businesses.
- c) the preservation of the 'strategic gap', open space between Halesworth and Holton, and open aspects on entering the town

It was recognised that care must be taken to avoid raising aspirations that were not deliverable; where local government did not have that power, or sources of funding were not available.

It was **agreed** that Rob would create a matrix from the core priorities as a basis for community consultation

5. Community engagement: in Emma's absence Charlotte spoke to the consultation plan Emma had summarised from her meeting with Charlotte and Gill. The need to engage

with a full range of Halesworth residents was recognised, and ways of doing this discussed. While the plan was welcomed as a starting point, it was felt that a more detailed, costed plan with individual responsibilities, was needed.

The first stage of community consultation is awareness-raising and information. Emma was congratulated on the leaflet she had drafted for this purpose. However, it needs some amendment. For example, the section concerning use of CIL monies was seen as a hostage to fortune. It is unlikely to be sufficient to deliver the infrastructure required by a potentially large increase in population, even if WDC puts its share into the pot. In addition, CIL is capital funding, so anything with a revenue requirement would also need a sustainable funding source. The leaflet also needs to be clear that the NP has a statutory status and that the planning authority has to take notice of it, when making planning policy and decisions. Keith asked Emma, Charlotte and Gill to amend accordingly and it was **agreed** they would.

It was noted that once the leaflet was distributed through whatever channels, we would be “on a treadmill”. We would have to follow up quickly with an initial programme of consultation if we are to be credible. This could involve a range of methods such as a poster campaign in key / diverse locations and venues around the town such as cafes, Cutlers Hill Surgery, the Co-op, pubs, the HTC website / Facebook page, and so on. We could also consider using the pop-up shop in the Thororoughfare and / or have a Gazebo in the street. We could also undertake a public meeting at say, Edgar Sewter School. Keith said the group has to give a lot of thought to the logistics involved in all these ideas. He pointed out that we had talked about going out to consultation in June. However, all the ideas involve getting permissions from any organisations involved, checking with Edgar Sewter as to whether a) it was agreeable and b) availability of the hall, advertising, sorting out materials, content, “scripts” for any public meeting etc. Keith stressed the importance of having all this in place before the first poster goes out into the public domain. Otherwise, we are likely to fall at the first fence, taking on board the reality of the “treadmill” point made earlier. The meeting agreed that it will be better to slow down a little to ensure we have got our planning right. With that in mind, it was agreed that September was a more realistic target for commencing an initial consultation.

Finally, ways for people to make contact with their views, such as email, social media and a postal address needed to be considered and advertised and in place, once the awareness raising phase began. At this point, it isn't clear who would monitor such contributions, or how. Keith **agreed** to discuss possibilities with the Town Clerk regarding the use of HTC's new Facebook page.

6. Consultancy: Keith had contacted Navigus regarding the timing of possible consultancy involvement, and costs. He circulated the response from Chris Bowden, director of Navigus. Chris had indicated that the work underway was taking the right direction. However, he suggested it would be more effective for him to become involved after the initial community consultation, when he could offer:
 1. support in developing the Vision and Objectives
 2. technical evidence gathering, including development of our socio-economic and environmental 'baseline'.
 3. Engaging with technical stakeholders
 4. Advice on community engagement and support with the development of materials

He also provided a link to Locality” the organisation which processes central

government grants up to £9,000, which are available to support use of consultancy services.

7. Housing: Michael had spoken with Community Action Suffolk who could conduct a Housing Needs Survey at a cost of £1.70 per household. They could also provide software for Neighbourhood Planning. He had discussed designating an affordable site for affordable housing (a Rural Exception Site)? as Kessingland had done, which needed the support of Waveney District Council.
8. Historic Environment Record: Barnaby held the support document for Neighbourhood Planning from Suffolk County Council, referring to the section on education. He will **provide** a link for those who wish to access the document
Any other business: none

Date of next meeting: **please note a change from the planned date of 20th June to 4th July** 2018 at 7pm in the Council Chamber.