

SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM MEETING

TUESDAY 31ST JANUARY 2017

Cllr Mike Hibbs* (Chair)	Cllr Keith Eden*
Sue Flynn	Paul Gadd*
Cllr Sam Goddard*	Cllr Sharon Morris*
Stephen Rapkin*	Coby Richardson*
Dan Starr*	Douglas Kent*
Isabella Warren*	Tom White*

*Present

In attendance: Sue Belo, Saffron Walden Town Council (taking minutes)
Rachel Hogger, Modicum Planning
Richard Fox, Uttlesford DC
Sarah Nicholas, Uttlesford DC

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Lisa Courtney, Sue Flynn, and Sharon Morris for late arrival and early departure.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

Action: Team still need to supply ideas for press releases and Facebook.

Breakfast Club: Sue has been asked to supply information on the NP to send to the Breakfast Club and the possibility of addressing the group.

Action: Sue to contact.

Heritage & Character Assessment: Most of the H&CA Assessments have been returned by the Saffron Walden Initiative and Mike Hibbs thanked them for having done an excellent job.

Hastoe Visit – Sue Belo sent team members an email with proposed dates.

Action: All to advise Sue Belo as soon as possible of the dates they prefer if they have not already done so.

Industrial Archaeology - Mike still needs to contact Tony Crosby.

Action: Mike to email.

Passivhaus: Richard Fox said that if SW can demonstrate that there is a need there may be an argument to require more Passivhauses to be built but that it would be an uphill struggle to justify and may not be acceptable to the examiner.

Rachel Hogger said that we cannot include environmental standards in a NP (since March 2015) but the team can ask Uttlesford to include as much as possible in their Local Plan

Secured by Design – this is no longer needed as it is now incorporated into Building Regulations.

4. Planning Matters

Mike Hibbs said that the team has had excellent support from Rachel Hogger, Bruce Tice and Hannah Hayden and would like to encourage ongoing dialogue with other members of the Planning team to work with them on emerging Local Plan.

SHMAA – Richard Fox said that policy of UDC was for more two and three bedroom houses. Sarah Nicholas said that Development Management Policies were still in development and There are examples of policies varying from those of UDC but this will not be a problem because we only need to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of UDC.

Transport Plan: Richard Fox said that Essex County Council did a study around the time of the withdrawn Local Plan and have since been updating the study and modelling the work across the town as a whole. Until the study is completed UDC will not be able to make a decision on housing in Saffron Walden and currently does not know the outcome. Once completed, UDC will make a decision on housing in SW. David Sprunt at ECC is leading the project but will not provide any information other than via Uttlesford. They are looking at a status quo situation and effects of forthcoming and proposed development.

Local Plan Timetable: Mike Hibbs said that the team would appreciate the opportunity to include a Planning Officer to attend future meetings to discuss specific subjects. Richard Fox said that the PPWG meeting of 22 February would discuss the revised programme for the LP and the Regulation 18 consultation timetable.

Sarah Nicholas said that they already have a fairly clear idea of Development Management Policies and that the first draft of plan would be issued in Summer 2017 to allow more time to discussion but they expected the final document to be similar.

Dan Starr asked about whether UDC was looking at the longer-term plan for SW i.e. are we talking 3,000 houses or 300 houses in a field with yellow lines?

Richard Fox said that UDC is looking at the longer term and does not want 300 houses stuck in a field.

Mike Hibbs said that he had met with Mark Hays of Saffron Walden Academy and he had said that if SW did not get more housing it did not need another secondary school but if there was to be more housing then another secondary school would be needed.

Paul Gadd said that perhaps we should look at two spatial strategies one with a lot of housing and supporting infrastructure and one with very little.

Keith Eden said that from his point of view, we need some signal as to whether the town is likely to grow. We are struggling to describe what the town should look like.

There is also the issue of densities and green space as the current guidelines from UDC do not allow developments that provide space and adequate gardens to meet the Essex Design Guide standards. Sarah Nicholas said that there is scope to develop our own policies for SW.

UDC is reviewing housing design and densities. Richard Fox said that there is scope for high densities in town centres but perhaps lower densities on the edge of town. Sue Belo said that if UDC publishes high density figures as it does at present then developers will follow those guidelines in preference to those in the Neighbourhood Plan.

5. Team Updates – Objectives and draft policies

Housing, Planning & Design: Comments were made as follows:

HPD1 add 'ground floor' – possible

Cut-throughs and 'twitchells' are important to preserve as they can have an impact on retail. e.g. Gold Street, and some have been removed in the past due to redevelopment – it is important to avoid this.

Shire Hill – the nature of Shire Hill has changed over last 30 years and although past use was industrial and services, there is now more retail, e.g. a plumbing shop.

When the road is knocked through to Manor Oak, there will be more through traffic. There is the potential to increase footfall through further retail opportunities. Keith Eden said that Shire Hill needs a specific policy. If little growth, Shire Hill will stay similar with just a little retail. Sarah Nicholas said Uttlesford has to grow and wherever the new housing is sited, Saffron Walden will remain a central hub as the local town so needs to plan for that.

HPD10 – should be the policy outcome of a housing mix policy based on evidence

We also need a policy on density.

HPD13 – need to consult on this as needs to be based on genuine community feedback.

There is also the question of damage of old properties by HGVs – vibration and pollution. Douglas Kent said that he was doing some work on this to include in the Arts and Heritage section but it was acknowledged that it would need to fall under housing in the final document.

Green space – needs to be a policy of green space within developments. There is a fair amount of green space in Woodlands Park but this is not the case in all new developments.

It was agreed that green space should not be located next to the road as it prevented children from using it for ball games.

There also needs to be consideration of the effect of developments adjoining conservation area but Sarah Nicholas said that this was always monitored closely by Planning Officers.

Sarah also said that the Conservation Area Assessment was only done a couple of years' ago, so did not think anything could have changed materially. Mike Hibbs said that he agreed that it was done very thoroughly.

Action: All team to feedback their comments on Housing and Design and especially advise of any areas they feel are missing.

Action: All team to send feedback on the revised papers for Arts & Heritage and Business & Local Economy as soon as possible.

6. Community Engagement Programme

Consultation Days: Boards will be required for the consultation day. Sue Belo has not received any suggestions from team members for their boards so has agreed to send some draft questions and policies for each subject area for the team leads to edit. Rachel Hogger suggested that we could also present the spatial options but we would need to be honest and say that the numbers are the responsibility of Uttlesford District to determine.

There are two scenarios – high levels of housing with the accompanying infrastructure and low amounts of housing with very little.

The consultation will be held on Friday 24th, Saturday 25th and Sunday 26th March. Photos to be taken at the event for use on Facebook etc.

7. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held at 7pm on Tuesday 21 February when the remaining topics of Transport, Sports, Leisure & Community, Education, and Health will be discussed.