

# SAFFRON WALDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TEAM MEETING

26<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2017

|                          |                            |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| Cllr Mike Hibbs (Chair)* |                            |
| Cllr Sara Eastham        | Cllr Paul Gadd*            |
| Cllr Sam Goddard*        | Mark Hayes                 |
| Douglas Kent             | Cllr Sharon Morris*        |
| Stephen Rapkin**         | Coby Wing (née Richardson) |
| Dan Starr*               | Isabella Warren*           |
| Tom White*               |                            |

\*\*Present

\*\* Present part-time

In attendance:

Sue Belo, SWTC Neighbourhood Planning Coordinator

Martin Folwell, Volunteer

David Corke, Organic Countryside CIC

Cllr Richard Freeman, Town and District Councillor for Castle Ward and Mayor of Saffron Walden

## 1. Introductions

Mike Hibbs welcomed the attendees who included new volunteers interested in joining the neighbourhood plan team.

## 2. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Lisa Courtney, Sara Eastham, and Douglas Kent, and from Coby Richardson and Stephen Rapkin for late arrival and early departure.

## 3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

Minutes of the last meeting of 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017 were agreed subject to the addition of the Arts Trust AGM.

## 4. Matters Arising

**H&CA:** Sue Belo has contacted Locality and applied for a grant and support from AECOM for the Heritage and Character Assessment initially plus Site Evaluation and Masterplanning.

**Green Infrastructure:** A list of Local Green Spaces and TPOs is needed to be discussed.

**Action: All to advise candidates for inclusion**

**PROWs:** UDC has the definitive map on its website supplied by Essex CC. Map on UDC is better as it takes you direct to Uttlesford PROW map.

**Minutes of Arts/Sports meetings:** These are still to be sent but are awaiting prior approval.

**Action: Isabella Warren/Sharon Morris** to send to Sue Belo

**George St/High St site:** Sue Belo has contacted Nigel Brown but apparently the Town Clerk has spoken to Julie Redfern who intends to contact the Neighbourhood Plan Team to arrange a meeting.

## 5. Planning Matters

Comments have been sent to UDC re the Local Plan but these are not yet on the website.

**Action: Mike** to email Sarah Nicholas and cc Richard and Sharon to check when these will be online. Also, UDC need to supply a list of those policies they consider to be strategic.

**Action: Mike** to email Sarah Nicholas and request a list of strategic policies.

## 6. Local Listing

Mike Hibbs thanked Stephen Rapkin for coordinating the list of candidates for Local Listing. Isabella Warren said that the SW Heritage Group is also looking at producing a list. It was agreed that both groups should submit their lists but that Douglas Kent should oversee this. It was agreed that it was important to include the fine turn of the century properties as well as others.

**Action: Sue Belo** to contact Angharad Hart to submit the list and ask her to liaise with Douglas Kent and the Heritage Group to obtain their suggestions.

## 7. Shire Hill Farm Development

Dan Starr said that the Neighbourhood Plan Team had agreed a position whereby we would prefer an allocation that would allow a 2FE primary school. UDC had allocated 240 properties of which 150 were proposed on the Keir site in the Thaxted Road. They had, however, rejected for the Local Plan site allocations the site next to the Linden Homes site which included possible land for a 1FE primary school. Engelman's agent has said that they would be prepared to build 75 to 100 houses but also supply the land for the primary school to allow a two-form entry school. As a Neighbourhood Plan team we have the right to say that the Engelman site is a more sustainable site than the Keir site. In June, Essex Highways said that no more than 150 houses can be built in the east of the town without causing traffic problems but the Keir site would potentially take 600 houses.

In addition, there is a plan for Engelman to submit a planning application to UDC in the near future. At the moment, UDC may see this as a windfall site as they have with the Little Walden Road site but it could be argued that Essex Highways has the final say.

Also, there are 42 houses at the care village that UDC did not count towards the allocation on Radwinter Road but the planning has lapsed on that. Richard Freeman pointed out that planning can be reinstated fairly easily but that he did not trust that UDC would be trustworthy in allowing a change to the Local Plan allocations. Dan Starr said that he thought that the Walden School might be on the right side of town for development from a traffic perspective.

Paul Gadd said that SWCHS were interested in the Walden School for secondary provision but not primary provision. The Saffron Trust is interested still in the Linden Homes site and the adjacent Engelman land for a 2FE primary school.

Sam Goddard said he was slightly split twoways in that we had commented on the Engelman site as a positive site when we were asked to comment on the SLAA earlier last year. He thought that we should pursue the site but he was still mindful of UDC's reaction.

Paul Gadd said that if the care home did not go ahead then there would be a shortfall in the housing numbers. Dan Starr said that we needed to act urgently if we want the Engelman site allocated instead of Keir.

Richard said that he was concerned that the Iceni plan brings a road down to the Thaxted Road to the edge of the Keir site. The spur road at Shire Hill is designed to take the largest HGVs but will act as an invitation to build a relief road through three housing estates.

Paul Gadd said that even if none of this happens but that if we don't do this, then Kier will go ahead and they will be desperate to build a link road. In his view, there would be less of a downside in opting for the Engelman plan.

Dan Starr said that it was the responsibility of the NP team to allocate sites as part of the Neighbourhood Plan and that the team had the right to make proposals for alternatives to the Kier site to UDC.

Sam Goddard said that the houses in Little Walden Road were a game changer and needed to insist that they be included in the allocation as UDC would never propose that they should be included.

Mike Hibbs reminded the team that Gordon Glenday had said that if the NP team was prepared to find an alternative site then UDC would drop the Kier site from the overall allocation.

It was agreed that the team stance would be to ask for the Little Walden Road development to be included in the allocation numbers and that the Engelman site with up to 100 homes plus further land for a school and playing fields, subject to them being able to comply with the green space allocation. There would be a further 27 houses that would need to be found. Plus 42 homes in the retirement village.

**Action:** Dan Starr will make the calculations and email Mike Hibbs who will contact UDC with the proposal (copying the NP team and Richard Freeman).

## **8. Green Infrastructure**

Sue Belo has already circulated a list of Green Space previously audited by UDC for the Open Spaces and Playing Pitch Strategy document. Ideally, in the first instance everything should be included as e.g. verges are important for wildlife.

Mike Hibbs said that ideally the land surrounding the Friends School should be retained as green space.

Sue Belo stated that the Essex Wildlife Trust report had been sent to John Brooker in relation to the de Vigier Avenue site and that she had also contacted Natural England to ask for their advice. Mike Hibbs said that the NP team appreciated her help with this matter.

It was agreed that David Corke should join the Green Infrastructure group and be added to the Green Infrastructure team list of members.

**Action: Isabella** to coordinate a meeting of the Green Infrastructure team in the near future to look at the green spaces audit, TPO audit and PROWs.

It was noted that Permissive Rights of Way could disappear. Mike Hibbs said that he was also concerned about the small routes in town that could easily disappear.

## **9. Plan Progress**

Sue Belo circulated a grid showing where the current gaps were in the plan for each team lead to update with the feedback from Rachel Hogger. It was agreed that team leads should work on developing their sections on an ongoing basis.

### **Action: All**

Sue Belo explained that although she could help develop policies, she did not have the personal knowledge of the town to fully appreciate all the issues and that team leads should look at other Neighbourhood Plans to identify similar situations to Saffron Walden.

It was agreed that a team email should be set up but that the best way of working was for groups to get together on a regular basis between meetings.

It was suggested that team members could share papers via DropBox but that this was full to capacity. It was agreed that important policy reviews should be shared to the whole team.

**Action:** Dan to clear DropBox.

### **10. Consultation and Engagement**

There will be meetings for potential volunteers on 19<sup>th</sup> October in the evening and 24<sup>th</sup> October between 11.00 to 1.30.

**Action:** All team members to advise which meeting(s) they can attend.

### **11. Next Meeting – Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> October at 7pm**

The next meeting will be held on 17<sup>th</sup> October when the consultation on Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Place will be discussed plus progress on each theme.