

Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan Meeting

Held on Monday 20th November 2017 at 7pm in the Meeting Room at Diss Youth & Community Centre.

Present: Corinne & Graham Moore (Scole), Mike Bootman (Palgrave), Alison Wakeham (Burston & Shimpling), Roger Greenacre (Stuston), Simon Olander (Diss), Jessica Fleming (SCC Cllr), David Burn (MSDC Cllr), Adam Nicholls (SNC Planning), Andrea McMillan (BMSDC Planning), Richard Dear (Stuston) and Deborah Sarson (Diss Town Clerk)

1. Apologies for absence were received from Val Pudney (Palgrave), Paul Curson (Roydon), David Traube (Diss) and Graham Minshull (Diss)
2. Minutes –the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd October 2017 were agreed.

The Chairman took the opportunity to thank elected members and officers from County and Districts for attending this meeting at relatively short notice. He explained that the Steering Group had been working over the summer to compile the initial list of issues and options and with Tibbalds through workshops and other means to produce the 'plan for the Plan'. Having arrived at a final report, in the light of the potential implications of the recent government consultation and with changes of personnel in both Districts, now is the time for all concerned to arrive at a common understanding.

3. Consultant's Report:

- a) The final version (v6) of Tibbalds 'plan for the Plan' was received. Concern was expressed about the amount of work identified in the next few months in gathering evidence and consulting, the latter for which there is still no clear plan. It was noted that the report as presented includes the list of issues identified collectively by the Parishes and during the 'light touch' public consultation but doesn't necessarily reflect the collective views of the Steering Group in other respects. The report suggests a possible vision and set of objectives but the intention is to hold a workshop as soon as possible to agree our own before consulting on them. Other issues and constraints outside our control may affect the proposed timetable, including personnel changes at both LPAs, progress on Local Plans in relation to our NP, Government proposals for changes to the NPPF and the scheduling, which does not take account of central funding and support being constrained to individual financial years. A key aspiration is a significant traffic study which Tibbalds suggest could cost in the region of six figures. AN, having consulted with a Norfolk County Council colleague, confirmed that ideal times for a meaningful traffic survey are April and September when traffic flows are considered to be representative. Existing data sources such as fixed traffic counters and recent surveys could be used and SCC and BMSDC will investigate how they can assist. It was noted that further work will be done to review the timetable and develop the project plan.

In general, the report was well received and noted to provide a clear plan for moving forward. It was agreed that it would be uploaded to the NP website with the caveats above but provides a roadmap and, crucially, now enables us to consult residents, businesses and other stakeholders for their views.

- b) It was confirmed that the Steering Group considers Tibbald's have met the brief given to them and that it is recommended that payment be authorised by Diss TC (as Lead Council and client).
4. White Paper: Planning to build the right homes in the right places – it was noted that a comprehensive response had been submitted to DCLG on behalf of the Steering Group as discussed and agreed by the Working Party. AN responded to the questions set out in the letter to Tim Horspole, in particular those regarding the statement of common ground. He explained that it is an enhanced duty to cooperate on strategic planning matters and applies specifically to local planning authorities; NPs wouldn't automatically be included but they should be taken into account; the white paper requires LPAs to have a draft statement within six months and an agreed one in twelve; he suggested that it is expected that Government is unlikely to make many changes in response to the consultation as they intend to move forward quickly with implementing the proposals in both white papers. It was noted that our concern results from being in the unique situation of working across LPA boundaries and the white paper proposals may disadvantage the progress of our NP as an 'unintended consequence'.

There is also concern about the timetable for the emerging Babergh Mid Suffolk Joint Local Plan in relation to the timescale for the NP (Spring 2019) and maintaining compliance with it, noting that the most recently 'made' or adopted Neighbourhood or Local Plan usually takes precedence. It was further noted that the Greater Norwich Local Plan Regulation 18 Growth Options will go out to consultation in the new year (8th January-15th March). Various discussions were held about allocation of sites and progress of the Local Plans. It was noted that the key to ensuring a deliverable NP is continuous engagement with the LPA. MB explained to AM that the representations made by the Steering Group to the recent Regulation 18 consultation on the BMSDC Joint Local Plan were intended to signpost the current thinking and future ambitions of the NP.

5. Duty to Support – the urgency of resolving the means by which, and gain assurances that, both LPAs will comply with their Duty to Support the NP was agreed. It was noted that the two key officers at SNC are leaving and that BMSDC has stated that it will only deal through SNC as lead LPA. Both Tim Horspole and Adam Nicholls plan to leave SNC in December (although TH has agreed to stay on for a further three months). AN advised that Simon Marjoram will be taking the lead on NP's in terms of general advice but a decision is yet to be made who will be allocated to specifically support our NP. However, reassurance was provided that SNC will continue to support our NP and it was noted that there is financial support available, previously asked about, with up to £6K available per parish for an NP; it was stated by AN that a total of £24K for ours (with four SNC parishes involved) would not be possible but a figure higher than £6k might be possible through negotiation. It was suggested to write formally requesting funding support for the NP as soon as possible so that AN could deal with it before he leaves; he acknowledged that our NP is breaking new ground for all involved and that he has a contact at DCLG who could be of help to us.

AM reported that the BMSDC Corporate Manager – Strategic Planning has now left and that a replacement has been appointed starting in December. The BMSDC NP main

support officers are Paul Munson, planning consultant, and Paul Bryant, who also provides technical/procedural support. A memorandum of understanding has been developed by BMSDC which has been shared with SNC and is awaiting their review. It was accepted that we need to request information from SNC & BMSDC in good time and to be clear about what we require it for so they can provide the most appropriate information. It was noted that the sorts of questions we need help with at this stage are, for example, 'what are the population thresholds that require or would result in additional investment in, say, health and education provision?' AN advised there is a Norfolk Health Protocol currently being worked on which could assist with this and the education thresholds would be provided by the County Councils.

6. Updates were received on any matters relevant to development and delivery of the NP including responses to the request for volunteers/organisations to help develop it. It was noted there had been a couple of responses from volunteers with interests in specific areas but guidance on how to take these forward from the plan had been awaited. It was noted there is a list of about 70 interested people who have received periodic updates on progress of the NP. DS advised that she is engaging with Richard Bacon's office and is hopeful that he will chair a business summit to engage them in the process. Burston & Shimpling and Palgrave need to meet up to start discussing traffic issues. Scole is actively identifying key stakeholders for the River Waveney topics.
7. Future Focus - future focus and the immediate priorities of work to start gathering evidence were agreed as: developing the Project Plan (**Action: GM**), identifying individuals to take interest groups forward; each parish to engage with their own communities (**Action: All**) DS remained concerned that we still don't have a clear engagement plan.
8. Planning Applications (Note: AM and AN not present for this item) – updates were received and any responses considered to planning applications that may have implications for the development and delivery of the NP. Two applications were brought to the attention of the Steering Group – Marston's pre-application for a small hotel and bulk retail units on land off Park Road and Morrison's application for four small retail units, a retail pod, car wash and tyre areas. There was concern about the impact of retail units on the town centre from both applications and the impact of Morrisons proposals such as the substantial loss of parking spaces, poor design and location of car wash area etc. on the current access to the River Waveney and the potential impact on the river ecology. It was noted that Marstons, which is presenting a pre-application proposal to Diss TC's Planning Committee this week, has commissioned a retail impact assessment given the lack of which was one of the grounds that the previous application refusal was upheld at appeal.
9. Website – has been updated with minutes etc. AW said the addition of Information from parishes including photographs of the 'best and the worst' would be useful as would any other information they can provide (**Action: All**). Progress was being made in providing the means (Mailchimp) for e-mail updates and other information (**Action: AW**).
10. Digital Mapping – the recommendation that the evidence base be supported by and held on digital maps was noted and options for accomplishing this were considered. It was noted that parishes are included in the national PSMA and therefore have access to OS

data. Some programmes exist for parishes to use with some more sophisticated than others but would require additional licensing, hardware and support. Being able to view different map layers provided by other authorities such as flood zones etc would be required, AM agreed to investigate how mapping held by Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils could be used **(Action: AM)**

11. Next meetings:

- a) It was confirmed that regular meetings of the Steering Group will be held on the 3rd Monday of each month unless otherwise notified;
- b) It was agreed that nominated elected members and officers of County and District Councils will be invited to attend all regular meetings unless otherwise notified; LPA officers noted that they can't commit to attending every meeting but with sufficient notice will attend when required.
- c) It was agreed that a doodle poll would be used to set a date in the w/c 27th November for an internal Workshop to develop our Vision and Objectives for the Plan, discuss the organisation of theme/topic groups to work on them and brainstorm stakeholders.

Meeting ended 9.30pm