

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

**Wednesday 20th February 2019 at 7pm
Council Chambers, London Rd, Halesworth**

Minutes

There were present – Keith Greenberg (Chair), Bob Shiers, Joyce Moseley, Barnaby Millburn, David George, Charlotte Slater, Chris Bowden (Navigus consultant) and Phillippa Welby (secretary).

1. Apologies – received from Emma Healy and Tony Allen
2. Introductions to Chris Bowden (Navigus) – Navigus consultants have worked on over 90 neighbourhood plans including some locally – Framlingham, Beccles, Worlingham, Leiston, Wickham Market and Kessingland. Navigus consists of Chris and two research students, he also works with a network of other consultants who specialise in other areas. Chris is a member of the Royal Institute of Town Planners.
3. Minutes from the previous meeting – All agreed.
4. Matters arising from the minutes – **JM is still trying to contact the Apollo Centre and KG is still awaiting a response from WDC's Jo McCullum.**
5. Discussion with Navigus –
Process and timing for accessing Locality funding – The group needs to register with 'Locality' **KG to do this**. A letter from Navigus is needed if the group intend to apply for funding to cover consultant fees. Each plan can have up to £9000 of funding. There is another £8000 available to those plans of a more complex nature. Applications open in early March. The funding usually takes 2-3 weeks to come through. The group will need a plan outlining their timetable to apply for funding. **CB to provide a timetable for the group**. CB suggested that the group would possibly have its first draft of the plan by spring 2020.

Engaging Navigus and on what basis – Navigus are able to provide a level of support tailored the group's needs. **CB will send a letter detailing typical costs to the group** but produced an example which was indicative of the fees involved. Each NP group was different in the level of support it needed and it was up to group members to decide which parts of the process they needed support from the consultant for.

Level of evidence required by Inspector - The group needs to show that they have collected by 'soft evidence' – community views and 'hard evidence' – stakeholder views e.g. Highways. Navigus have detailed knowledge of technical documents so can save time if the group needs to refer to these. The consultation document that has to be supplied with the plan needs to show how the community was engaged, which groups you failed to engage with and how you tried to address this. The group decided to write a chronology document to keep track of what engagements it had carried out. **CS to look at options for this – preferably a spreadsheet that the group has access to in order to update**. CB advised attending other group's events

and having a stand e.g. Lions Summer Fair. This is an easy way of getting the message out to groups you may otherwise miss.

Do local businesses have a vote in the referendum – No. The referendum can only be voted on by residents on the electoral role for Halesworth.

Housing needs survey (also how to undertake it) – The group can only ask developers for certain types of houses with strong local evidence. The LP already asks for a mix of housing. An HNS can give false hope as to what an NP can achieve. CB advised that it is better to research around housing wants instead. Estate agents and housing associations are a good source of local knowledge.

Local green space designations – These can be included and protected by the NP. They need to be 'demonstrably special'. Unfortunately, the strategic gap between Holton and Halesworth can not be included in this as it's covered by planning policy.

Site allocations – This would be the same as in the LP, in that there would be a call for sites from the public, sites would be put forward, then a public consultation and the sites could be allocated in the NP. CB advised that there could be a policy that assists in keeping certain sites as business sites and that the policy would support further economic development of the site.

Is the steering group helping to form public opinions through its own ideas, or must we stick to reflecting the key aspects arising through our public consultations? If it is the former, how should we try and strike a balance – CB explained that the inspector won't look for support amongst community engagement for obvious policies like 'green energy'. That the group should try to engage with specialist interest groups too – Halesworth Business Connections for example. The policies have to be positive e.g. 'This sort of development is allowed but it has to be subject to this'. The group needs to work out what the NP wants to achieve locally alongside WDC's LP. Ultimately the group can decide the policies but it still has to pass referendum.

6. Questionnaire analysis - feedback from sub-group / further action – **CS, JM and DG to write brief for Navigus.** Navigus are able to analyse the survey results using Survey Monkey and draw out the results from each question.
7. Education research - feedback to date further action – CB advised that the NP could have a policy that stated the NP would support a secondary education provider in the town but without the support of the LEA it would be unlikely to achieve this. The other option to provide secondary education in the town would be to have land available and a free school and benefactor would supply the new building and education provision.
8. Debenham NP Chair attendance at March NPSG - preparation and questions. – **KG to defer Debenham Chair until the April meeting.**
9. NP Secretarial hours – To recognise that the hours allotted to the NP plan were 5 hours a month.
10. Other actions required – **PW to contact interested party regarding attending the NP meetings. PW to email the list of categories drawn up after the first consultation to DG, JM and CS.**
11. Correspondence – There was none.
12. Date of next meeting – 20th March 2019