

Minutes of the meeting of the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Wednesday 21st March 2018 7pm at the Council Offices London Road Halesworth

Present: Councillor Tony Allen, Councillor Keith Greenberg (chair), Emma Healey, Barnaby Milburn, Joyce Moseley, Rob Roy, Bob Shiers, Charlotte Slater

In attendance: Gill Everett Secretary

1. Apologies: Michael Fagg
2. Minutes: The minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 2018 were accepted as a true record
3. Matters arising and feedback on actions:
 - a) Youth Plan -Joyce had contacted Louise Thomas, community support officer from WDC. There was no current interest in a Youth Forum from the young people she has been working with, which could act as a reference group for the Halesworth Town Plan. Louise suggested contact with Eric Sewell at the Apollo youth club, who might help form a consultation group where there were issues of specific interest to young people.
 - b) Keith and Joyce had met with Jo McCullum, and Ian Johns from Planning at Waveney District Council (WDC) and circulated notes from that meeting (see agenda item 5).
 - c) Keith was awaiting response from Jo regarding contact with WDC's economic development team
 - d) Rob had not yet had a response from Halesworth Business connections, but had circulated a 2010 report on Halesworth retail need, and 2015 survey of town centre car parking use.
 - e) Town Clerk had forwarded WDC 2014 Halesworth Town Profile. Secretary had Office of National Statistics population and workforce data for Halesworth Ward, to be circulated.
4. Feedback from Holton Parish Council (HPC): following their March meeting HPC had confirmed that it did not have the resources to support a joint Plan.

The steering group reiterated its view that the WDC Local Plan referred to Halesworth and Holton as a joint area, and therefore, a joint Halesworth / Holton Neighbourhood Plan (Neighbourhood Plan) would be logical route. However, HPC's decision had to be respected.

Rob had circulated Government guidance on neighbourhood boundaries. On the basis of this guidance, he thought that a joint area could be designated with the consent of HPC. However, other members of the group were concerned about the legitimacy of attempting to include HPC without their formal involvement.

The implications of the decision regarding the designated area were discussed at length, taking into consideration HPC's non-involvement. The Halesworth and Holton parish boundaries, areas of joint Halesworth / Holton interest such as the "strategic gap" were identified on the maps provided by the Halesworth Town Clerk. On balance, the steering group decided that attempting to include Holton posed too many complications, especially in the context of representing its population.

The steering group reiterated its commitment to HPC's chair that the impact of Holton residents' use of services and facilities based in Halesworth, could be taken into

account and referenced in the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan. In addition, information can be shared concerning issues and / or aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan that may affect Holton

A vote was proposed, and it was **agreed** that the designated area for the Neighbourhood Plan should be the Halesworth Town parish boundary.

(NB. Consultation for the final draft of WDCs Local Plan commences on 28th March and ends 24th May, with implementation expected in Autumn 2018)

5. Meeting with WDC: Joyce and Keith had found it helpful to refocus on the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan; development and land usage, within the context of a vision for Halesworth.

Links to the sources and formulae used for calculating housing need have been circulated by Keith. WDC explained to Joyce and Keith that its housing needs assessments are based on a strategic view of the entire district. It has not undertaken a specific housing needs survey for Halesworth. Therefore, the needs of both may not be entirely comparable and it may be beneficial for the Neighbourhood Plan steering group to develop a town-specific survey / assessment. In this way, local needs projections could inform the Neighbourhood Plan to the benefit to the town. In this way, the Neighbourhood Plan could influence designated development sites and usage, and the type of development, but not overall numbers.

On the basis that the Neighbourhood Plan gains approval, planning policy and process must take the Neighbourhood Plan recommendations into account when making decisions, and this was the point at which private developers could be influenced. There are areas that the Halesworth Neighbourhood Plan has no direct influence over. For example, Charlotte pointed out that the local cluster of schools is now part of the Assett Academy chain, rather than under Local Education Authority control. However, the Neighbourhood Plan could make evidence-based arguments regarding infrastructure, such as land usage for education or employment.

It was **agreed** that a local housing needs survey was desirable. Navigus Planning Consultants have been used by other Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups, and have been recommended. It was **agreed** that Keith would contact the agency. It was felt that Michael had the appropriate skills, and knowledge of land usage and site availability, and that he and Charlotte might form a small group to work on baseline data. Charlotte **agreed** to speak with him about this.

The meeting with WDC also confirmed that communications did not need to go through the Town Council; the Steering Group as a legally constituted independent body could sign off. However the Town Clerk should receive details prior to public distribution to avoid any inadvertent conflict with Town Council policy.

7. Public Consultation: Emma and Bob gave feedback on the consultation workshop and gave examples from other areas.
There was an expectation from WDC that there should be public consultation from May or June 2018. Initial work would include awareness raising on what the Neighbourhood Plan was and how residents could influence it. Early consultation in another area had been about a 'vision' for the town.

There was discussion about different ways of involving residents, including a questionnaire, public meetings, and meetings with small groups. It was proposed that an information leaflet introducing the Neighbourhood Plan went to all households.

The Group was reminded that service providers, landowners and businesses needed to be consulted as well as residents, and timing needed to allow for second home owners who are more likely to be present during holidays.

It was **agreed** that there should be a Communication Strategy, with a leaflet and schedule developed for the next meeting.

8. Historic Environment Record: Barnaby had acquired the record for Halesworth, including mapped monuments, listed buildings and finds. He had been given contact details for the person from the archaeological service who advises on neighbourhood plans.
9. Project planning and risk assessment: being restructured with the benefit of government and WDC guidance.

Any other business: Emma asked about the Group's role in current discussions about a new community centre and future use of the Patrick Stead building. The Group could be mindful of options and alternatives as part of a strategic view of the built environment and make an argued case regarding particular sites. However, some decisions are likely to be made before the Neighbourhood Plan was agreed.

Date of next meeting: **Wednesday 18th April 2018** at 7pm in the Council Chamber

Action from 21/3/18

Rob agreed to draft a marketing strategy.

Emma and Joyce will work on an information leaflet and schedule for public engagement

Barnaby to invite Will Windell from the Southwold Town Plan Steering Group to a future meeting

Charlotte to speak with Michael

Keith to contact Navigus Planning Consultants