

Notes from the Fremington Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting on Monday 20th March 2019 at 12.45pm in the Parish Council Offices

Present: Cllr Alan Rennles (Chairman), Fremington Parish Council
Cllr David Chalmers, Fremington Parish Council
Mr David Jury
Mr John Gulliver, North Devon Public Transport Users
Cllr Mrs Sue Kingdom, Fremington Parish Council
Mr Mike Kelly, Planning Partnership Ltd
Mr Graham Townsend, Planning Partnership Ltd
Mrs Victoria Woodhouse, Parish Clerk, Fremington Parish Council

Mike and Graham explained that the session was aimed at brainstorming following evaluation of progress to date. The group was asked to consider whether it would like a draft document prior to the elections and it was agreed that a draft should be produced after the elections and towards the end of May 2019.

Mike reported on the evidence and consultations that have been carried out to date which included:

The householder/community survey December 2017
Fremington Young People engagement 2017
Fremington Market Case – the attempt to engage the business community
Bus users – the second class citizens

Mike and Graham had looked at the community survey and the gaps/conflicts etc. Graham explained that within the executive summary there was a vision the first impression of this vision was that it was not Fremington specific and could relate to any community it was also felt to be too wordy.

David Chalmers entered the meeting.

Graham explained that there was nothing to object to within the vision statement but it is not distinctive.

Graham and Mike talked the group through the findings within the executive summary and how these might translate into policies.

Housing

Graham explained that under the housing section where there was an aspiration and community need to building bungalows that whilst you can encourage developers to build bungalows you cannot force them to and cannot intervene in the open market through a specific policy within the Neighbourhood Plan, however, you can through the affordable allocation which could reflect the local needs, where it can be made clear the mix that is required to meet the needs of the community.

Members discussed the views that had been expressed by couples in habiting four bedroom houses and wishing to downsize but remain within the parish. Graham further explained that bungalows often extended into two storey houses and a lot of the time this does not require planning permission.

Another option might be to negotiate through the viability of the site so the affordable housing allocation might be reduced to offset the provision of more bungalows within the site.

John spoke about the quality of the homes being built and the changing needs of people as their families grow.

Mike explained about lifetime homes and the inclusion of these within the Local Plan to ensure the properties have the flexibility to change with the occupants.

Graham explained that there could also be a policy relating to sensitive landscapes and the visual impact which might be mitigated by reducing the height of the dwellings to bungalows.

Mike and Graham explained that this is a process of translating the consultation into policy and that a policy would be developed to address the local community need.

Graham explained that community led housing is being encouraged and self-build is a mandatory exemption from Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

Distinctive Village Centres

Graham confirmed that this aspiration had been reflected at every stage through the process so far and formed part of the designation which was in order to maintain the characters of each distinctive area. Graham confirmed that this would translate into support for the green wedge policy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) supports green gaps for a purpose.

Infrastructure

Improvements to the infrastructure was a theme that came out of the consultation and this can be achieved through Section 106 contribution, however, the highway is Devon County Council's remit and if it does not object to the developments it can be difficult to work around. It was noted that the proposed Bickington Link was not supported through the Neighbourhood Plan.

John raised concerns about the issue of traffic which keeps being highlighted and the solution always seems to be the same, identify a pinch point, deal with the pinch point, then more traffic appears and the advantage is lost. What we need to be identifying is adequate space for bus/cycle routes and enhancing the experience of the bus user.

Mike and Graham confirmed that this is about accessibility and connectivity and a model shift should be investigated. The group agreed that the hierarchy should be:

- Pedestrian
- Cyclist
- Public Transport
- Private car user

Wellbeing

Graham felt this was a wider concept than had been explored so far, Mike confirmed that this could include air quality and public transport which all effects the wellbeing of a community.

Bus Services

Most people completing the survey were satisfied with the bus service more so than the train service, it was felt that there might be different expectations from the two transport methods along with the cost and it is about creating the right atmosphere around public transport.

Other areas explored through the consultation were peoples' feelings when moving around the parish, sport and recreational facilities and employment land.

Mike and Graham had looked at the findings and evidence so far and felt there were probably still some gaps. The recognition of the different communities will be within the plan and supported by policies, the Government's growth agenda means the employment and economic side of the plan should not be left out and the community facilities and links should be investigated. What has not come out of the consultations so far is what Fremington already has which led onto a discussion about the open spaces and history and heritage of Fremington and the importance of these and recognising this within the plan.

The group discussed the historic environment of the parish and the national importance and the clay from Fremington and the conservation of these areas.

It was noted that there are landscape studies for the estuary and agreed to invite the Chairman of the Taw and Torridge Estuary Forum to a Steering Group Meeting in due course. It was further agreed that Mike and Graham would circulate some recommended reading.

The meeting closed at 2.35pm.