

Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Steering Group meeting Monday, 13th August at 2020 at 10.00am via Zoom

Present: Cllr S Kingdom (SK), Cllr I Capon (ICP), D Jury (DJ), Cllr C McCormack Hole (CMH), Cllr I Crawford (ICR) and M Steart (MS)
M Kelly (MK), Planning Partnership Ltd
G Townsend (GT), Planning Partnership Ltd
Mrs V Woodhouse, Executive Officer (EO)

Members introduced themselves.

Apologies

Apologies were received from Mrs L Kimberley, P Smith and Cllr F Biederman.

Draft version of Neighbourhood Plan

It was noted that the Steering Groups comments had been sent to MK & GT following the last meeting along with notes from the Climate Emergency Working Party.

DJ explained that he was disappointed by the draft report and would like to hear MK & GT's comments on the notes they had been sent.

MK started by explaining that it is not their Neighbourhood Plan and they have tried to include what has been asked to be included, discussions around climate emergency had not previously take place and they would need to be careful with an audit trail and how we got to climate change as it cannot just be inserted. MK explained that it is only a draft plan and they are receptive to including what the Steering Group has asked for and what it needs to be.

DJ felt that there were lots of aspects from the consultations that should have been included and made more of in the draft plan and that Bickleton and Woodville should have been acknowledged, for instance open space has not really been touched upon in the draft which came out of the consultations although there is an enormous amount on Fremington Quay and the pottery which did not come out of the consultations. DJ felt the plan needs to be attractive and engaging and needs to focus on what is important to the community not just highlighting climate change. DJ would have liked the opportunity to discuss the plan prior to it being presented to the Parish Council – it was noted that there had been pressure from Cllrs to see a draft given the length of time.

SK agreed that the draft plan was not engaging and too historic, SK felt that the plan needs to be more about the future. SK pointed out that the group had undertake a lot of consultation and felt there was a good audit trail for everything the group had asked to be included.

MK stated that he did not disagree with the points that had been made, MK explained that a comprehensive list of the public open spaces had been produced but it had not been made clear in the draft that this would be an appendix, the plan can be restructured.

CMH felt the plan did not represent the community of Roundswell and there was no emphasis on the future, CMH explained that Roundswell houses several young

families that could make up the future of the parish. CMH went on to say that the historic references within the draft were brilliant but there must be more about other areas and not just “the sweet little village of Fremington”.

SK agreed that there was an overarching feeling that the document was all about Fremington and it needs to be inclusive of all the communities within Fremington Parish.

MK confirmed that the importance of distinguishing and including all of the communities within the parish had come through from the Steering Group and the need to look at the separate identities more of this can be made within the design policy on page 19.

DJ confirmed that the distinction between villages was strongly identified through the consultations and this feeling between the separate villages needs to be preserved. DJ explained that areas such as Dunning Green really identify areas and when you reach Dunning Green it signals that you are in the Woodville area, it should also be included as part of the history of an area.

ICR stated that there were two omissions from the draft which are key to the future and these are the document from the North Devon Public Transport Users Group and the young people’s report neither of which have been referenced. Climate change also needs to be referenced – particularly in relation to housing, transport and the wellbeing of residents, there needs to be substantial additions.

GT drew members attention to page 8 of the draft document which refers to “green infrastructure” and noted that they had not explained that they would be included in the appendices to the plan.

MS explained that the evidence needed to be turning into a vision with objectives and where we want to see Fremington Parish, he asked where does the parish want to be and what does it aspire to? There is nothing quantifiable.

DJ stated that there was only one objective shown and that was Fishleigh Quay and questioned who in the community has supported this? It was noted that this had not been identified through the consultation process.

MS felt the wording of the policies required further consideration and somewhere contradictory.

GT explained that the Government is currently consulting on planning for the future and there are proposed changes to the planning system which could change the importance of the Neighbourhood Plan, out of the consultation it has been clear that the Government is encouraging Neighbourhood Plans and therefore the Neighbourhood Plan may need to be more focused to reflect the Local Plan. The planning changes could see local levels of decisions and there could be a new role for Neighbourhood Plans to play in this process.

ICP expressed his disappointment at the draft document and asked the consultants what they felt should be incorporated from the documents that had been sent prior to the meeting and the discussions that had been held and how quickly this could be achieved. ICP expressed the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the

community's needs and explained that there had been an amendment to the NPPF last year which needs to be reflected in the document and there was an audit trail for climate change, he felt the consultants had been given two very good documents and these should be taken away along with all of the comments and an amended draft produced.

GT explained that the main point of today's meeting was to obtain a steer on the draft document. They can look to include specific policies relating to climate change but they do need to look at the detail to reflect the aspirations of the working party and need to look at how the document will fall into the overall planning structure when used to determine planning applications as its main function is a development plan document. GT felt that the working party might be supportive of climate change policies but there could be other people within the community who may strongly object so it would need to be evidenced.

SK highlighted that issues such as a community centre for Yelland and an extension for the community centre in Roundswell had been highlighted but not included in the plan and did not feel that the plan, which should be concise, reflects the future wants and needs of the community and there is a need to be far more open minded.

MS explained that the draft has not used the Local Plan as the base point or related to the spatial strategy, a base line needs to be set as a starting position inline with the Local Plan and then need to look at what we want to aspire to over this base line. The plan needs to show consistency say we are following the overarching document, there are sites that are zoned in the Local Plan across the parish which are not shown in the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

SK felt there should be something in the plan to control the design which is acceptable to the parish and dictate this to the developer.

ICR explained that there was a paper published in June showing clear recommendations for new standard on planning for example compulsory solar panels etc.

DJ asked what the vision of the Parish Council is in relation to climate change, he felt it was important for the consultants to understand the vision and asked if FPC had signed up to DCC's climate emergency (it was noted FPC had) and asked if the consultants could use DCC's vision if FPC had not set vision.

ICP felt the draft did not give specifics within the policies and he would like to see specifics such as policies relating to affordable housing/affordable social housing, charging points for electric cars etc.

MK explained that the vision on page 8 of the draft may need to be amended and that they were only working with the vision they had been given by the Steering Group, MK explained that it is fine to change the vision as long as it comes from the Steering Group. MK felt that the objectives were all capable of accommodating the points that had been made throughout the meeting and the policies, with some changes to the wording, could also accommodate the comments. It was noted that the plan would need to provide some deliverables and noted that it is not meant to duplicate the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan sits underneath the Local Plan, the deliverables will needed to be tested for soundness but MK felt the points during the meeting had been

well made and were legitimate and they would need to go back to the beginning and ensure the document and vision reflect the discussions today. MK suggested that a timescale should be agreed to circulate the next draft before a formal discussion.

ICP felt there were further aspirations that could be added as appendices and gave examples of the water taxi and light railway.

MK confirmed that the document is meant to be aspirational providing it doesn't duplicate or contradict the Neighbourhood Plan.

GT explained that the Local Plan and Neighbourhood Plan are taken together to form the development plan for the area and the need to be explicit about how the two relate and the importance of not including things that you don't have the technical ability to include.

DJ felt that aspirations should be shown as appendices so as not to miss lead the public on what the Neighbourhood Plan can achieve.

MS highlighted the need to focus on the wording of the policies and gave some examples where the current draft policies contradict themselves leaving it open for the developer to interrupt and argue against what the Steering Group and community is trying to achieve through the policies. He felt the group needs to be realistic about how policies are worded and think about the position the parish could be put in.

Members discussed the lack of affordable housing that is delivered through developments and how appeals have allowed a lower percentage of affordable housing due to the land supply being challenged. It was felt that something should be included the plan about the percentage of affordable housing and the link to local people.

DJ felt that a statement of intent must be included as it was one of the first things to come out of the consultations.

It was noted that two papers were discussed and approved as reference points to use within the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan, these were the comments from the Climate Emergency Working Party (dated 21st July 2020) and thoughts from MS on the Neighbourhood Plan, and the consultants should work on the draft in line with these papers and the discussions and comments that have been made to them. A timescale was discussed, and it was agreed for a second draft of the Neighbourhood Plan to be circulated to the Steering Group by the 30th September 2020 and for the Steering Group to meet (virtually) with the consultants on the 8th October 2020 to discuss the draft document.

Meeting ended at 11.20am.