



WMTC Neighbourhood Plan

MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 28th MARCH 2017

Councillors Present:-

Cllr Powling (Chair)	Cllr Jenkins (Absent)	Cllr Banks
Cllr Clements	Cllr Weaver	Cllr Bragg (Absent)
Cllr Moore	Cllr Wargent (Absent)	

Attendees: Alan Brook, David Cooper, Paul Knappett, Marcus Pembrey, Veronique Eckstein, Debbie Gooch (NHP Co-ordinator)

1. Apologies for Absence

John Dyson, Sandra Howard, Cllr Jenkins

2. Ratification of the Minutes of the Meeting from 28th February 2017

DG provided several copies for the group of the last minutes in draft format. It needed spell-checking and were therefore not correct enough to be ratified.

CP commented that the Minutes were too detailed and needed to be noted in précis

VE offered to précis the meeting if needed

3. Summary of the Meeting on 28th February 2017

Funding

It was confirmed that the application to Locality for a Grant for the NP had been completed by 23rd March

CBC Planners

The Housing Committee had visited CBC Planners on 6th February. The first drafts were given to Sandra Scott who passed on to the relevant departments for review.

The CBC had provided a Data Protection excerpt for the document

RCCE

Michelle Gardiner from RCCE had come to the Council Offices on 20th February. One of the key topics was how to engage with the Community, how to go out to different organisations, post it pinboard etc

During the meeting Michelle asked if we had seen the Examiner's Report for the Boxted NP. She had sent it to DG and it had been put on the shared drive – under Boxted

RCCE Coordinator's Meeting

DG mentioned that she had attended the Coordinator's meeting at the RCCE offices – with representatives from Tiptree, South Woodham Ferrers & Danbury. DG reported that it was not always easy to contact Tiptree's Coordinator as she does not work in the Council offices all of the time.

The RCCE has been appointed by Braintree District Council as the liaison, up to a certain level of support, for the NPs within their district as there are so many rural parishes. Braintree have done this so that they do not have to dedicate a member/members of their staff.

RCCE - Oyster Magazine

The RCCE Oyster Magazine had been put on the shared drive – with a note drawing attention to information about the Coastal Pathway and the number of NPs being taken up in Essex
Questionnaires

The RCCE had met with DG discussed the questionnaires at length and really took it to task - they felt that it was too like the RCCE's Housing Needs Surveys and it needed to be reviewed and re-worded

The Great Dunmow Q pack had been decided upon at previous meetings but had subsequently been superceded

Peter Banks had shown the Online Q and how it works – and the Business Q

Inputting/Data Entry figures were provided from Reed Employment at £15 per hour approx
Delivery of Q – further discussion with the delivery company for the Courier had taken place
Highways

The contact at ECC Highways was away off sick at the moment but emails had been sent in readiness for her return

PK asked DG to ask who had requested the Traffic Count in Dawes Lane in December 2016
School

VE asked for dates to be put together for the School to get involved and on track with the NP

4. Funding & Budgeting

As RMJ was not at the meeting DG provided the update explaining that it had been lengthy process applying for funding but confirmed that the application was submitted on 20th March. Whilst they had received the application, Locality had required further information in respect of the costs for the analysis tool. Further explanation was given and was accepted by Locality on 23rd March and sent forward for panel review sometime this week.

In producing the extra information for Locality DG had provided a sheet of comparative expenditure of Tiptree and Wivenhoe (who are also District Centres) and Tollesbury which she shared on screen for the group for extra information.

DG confirmed that the funding was based on estimates for the Questionnaire/Analysis tool and included 2 pop-up banners for events, the costs of the production of the paper questionnaire and room hire.

5. Timelines

Community Engagement

PC explained the process that was used during the engagement part of the Appraisal and talked about how they managed to engage with the community – School fete, village fete, entrance to beach at Victoria Esplanade/Seaview Avenue. Take a subject, get replies and analyse the results.

He continued commenting that the most accurate part of the Village Appraisal was the Q and the analysed results. He recognised the importance of public engagement and expressed difficulty in getting Youth. DG added that food was the answer to that problem! PC further commented that the local School up to the age of 12 and then the huge gap to the Secondary children.

DG commented that other NPs had done Youth Surveys – Tiptree's was a "disaster" but Wivenhoe managed to produce a successful survey.

DG commented further that maybe we could offer Youth an opportunity to come into the Council offices for a talk and boards and to use Facebook to involve parents to encourage kids to get involved.

MP asked if the School would have to schedule this in June? DG said that this should really happen before the Q.

PC suggested having someone outside the Coop all day and maybe Tesco too, but he did say that he felt we were very short on numbers and it was going to prove a real problem.

VE said that Nicky Sirrett had approached her and that she is very interested in the School being involved in the NP. MP impressed that the school needed a date and it became apparent that there was a misunderstanding within the Group about when this should occur.

It was agreed that the School should be approached – VE suggested a date in September.

PC asked the group if a meeting could be held during the time that the Q was out. DG felt that it needed to be showcased prior to that.

CP suggested that this would be the fore-runner for the Questionnaire

PK suggested that we capture interest at sports events – and that the coaches may be able to help engage interest from the young people. DG suggested Oyster Fun Day as an ideal target day and stated she would get the date.

There was further debate about publicising the Q and delivery of the Q.

DG stated that she would approach the School and RCCE with the information of their process. Suggested dates in May were the weeks of 15th and 22nd May.

PC suggested that the next meeting should include making plans for actual public engagement.

6. **Evidence Base, Questionnaires & Committee Groups**

DG asked everyone to review an excerpt of a document titled “the need for an evidence base in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan”.

DG also mentioned that the Wivenhoe NP SEA assessment was on the shared drive in the Wivenhoe folder. Wivenhoe paid in excess of £6K for the production for their SEA report by an independent. RMJ had been contacted by Locality and they had offered assistance with the production of our SEA report.

DG further commented that the NP would be based on 3 steps – what we have, what we need and where we want to go with it.

Wivenhoe - Vision & Objective – DG brought to the group’s attention to the key issues of this document and most particularly the footnotes showing where they got the information from it could be a good guide for us

DG showed the most recent version of the Questionnaire – covered in yellow highlighter and remarks for new questions. The most recent question was in relation to Universal Credit and Housing Benefit – and do you get both or just one? The Question is relevant to affordable housing. Another question that was put to the Group was can you be on the Local Authority Register AND the Housing Association waiting list – would you/could you be?

The Questions will be put to a vote for the committee to review.

Income has always been a question that we have reviewed and not been keen on – asking people to put down their income as part of the Housing Need survey – for affordable and Right to Buy. There was much discussion about the need for income Qs would it put people off completing it although it was only for people who were answering Housing Need questions where it was relevant.

DG offered further explanation of the information that the Q would ask, reiterating why CBC & RCCE had advised us to ask/why. Qs about income being Gross or net?

DG stated that she would be delivering the Q for review on or by 14th April.

Committee Groups

DG reminded everyone what the groups were and who was in what group. DG agreed to re-send the Group information to all.

PB added that he and VE had discussed that they would like to work together on an “environment” group but that they had not as yet managed to meet up

Open Space Recreation

DC added that there is a study on what is called Open Spaces/Recreation Study from the borough – it is a 320 page document. He continued that we are going to end up with something close to that if we are going to comply with the evidence base. He also added that Wivenhoe did not have a proper environment study in their NP. CP added that Wivenhoe did not liaise with Natural England. He mentioned Ian Black who is based in Rushmere Close as a contact.

DC added further that we would have to have a Mersea Island Environment heading which is going to cover all things including tree study and everyone including and beyond. He also mentioned the Chris Blandford 2006 Report which did exactly that. There are lots of reports out there that may be dated but they do give the basis upon which to work.

VE asked if we could ask for some outside help – use the Courier for advertise for new blood to join and help. Perhaps Essex Wildlife Trust for instance could help.

DC added that Cudmore Grove for instance is an asset of our open space – we could have include the reporting from there.

CP asked DG to read the Groups to the meeting and asked her to send them out to the group later.

PC felt that there had been some resistance to some the questions in respect of Health & Wellbeing but that they had been suggested by the Doctors' and Medical Centre. He also felt that it was very much an environmental issue.

DC commented that a Medical Questionnaire would be going out from the Doctors' Surgery in the next few months.

VE added that in respect of Design, Character & Heritage there was already a report created by CBC and asked if that could that be used as part of the evidence base

Retail & Commercial and Clubs, Organisations & Associations – DC confirmed that he had taken the CO&As off the Sports because people like Scouts etc really need to addressed separately, also mentioning that they would be part of the Community Engagement. This information was available from Carol at the Council offices.

Resources – PC commented that he felt that the NP was under resourced and we need to find a way to recruit members to the group, particularly in respect of public engagement. It was agreed that there was expertise that we needed to draw upon on the island.

Sunday Times Article – DC had provided an article reporting on the Shelter report which had been distributed to the group. It appeared that no one from Housing at the meeting last night had read this report.

DC stated that when the Inspector reviewed the NP he like it or NOT like it. If it does not meet the government guidelines he will say so, if he does he will pass it on. If he reviews it and decides that West Mersea needs 500 houses then you have 500 houses. There is nothing that WM nor the Borough can do about it. The Inspector is all powerful and he has consent from the government to rule on it. In turn the Borough make their interpretation and look to NP to ask where the houses will come. This reiteration was fully taken on board.

DG added that this NP will need show past, present, future and beyond – with a risk assessment which would be key to the plan – for instance evacuation etc.

7. Local Plan Report - 27th March 2017

Caravans - DC had brought a question to the CBC at the Local Plan meeting, CBC representative who works on caravans wants to see more caravans on Mersea.

PB reported that 5 of the attendees at the Local Plan meeting.

There were 4 key topics covered apart from the initial “have your say” which John Akker & David Cooper spoke twice.

Coastal Protection Belt Review – this was re-visited with some provocation from all the officers, Bev McClean

Protected Lanes – none of these were on Mersea, the nearest being in Fingringhoe.

Colchester Local List – referenced Mersea because the list is about properties put forward for listing and so Cllr Jowers read the list of 14 houses from the island.

Fixing Our Broken Housing Market – PB explained that is the preview of the new NPPF which is due in the Autumn 2017.

DC reported:-

Coastal Protection – felt still confused by it, it is around the built up area at the moment and we are going to breach it with the two sites that are proposed. DC asked what was the point of having a Coastal Protection Belt in your NP if you are immediately going to break it? He felt that they would re-visit the Dawes Lane site possibly with a view to being too far into the CPB – he reiterated *might*. Whilst the Brierley Paddocks site does not breach the CPB in quite the same way – it will be breached regularly if the housing numbers in the White Paper are not being met as there will be penalties if they are not met which will lead to more development within this area. The developer does not stand to get much in the way of penalties unless he is tardy in finishing the development. The only way a developer would be tardy is if the housing market plummets then everyone is in the same position with respect of penalties. If every 5/10 years there is a review, where do they go then – to the other side of Cross Lane even though it has been stated that Brierley Paddocks is their hard boundary according to their current Plan. Waldegraves is in fact only 200 metres to the East and sits on the boundary of the Parish Boundary with East Mersea.

He suggested that we eke out our housing within the area we have got.

Furthermore he confirmed that they had taken out the “Mersea Flats”, the bit below the low water mark and out in to the deeper water mark. He commented that the recent mammoth tusk fell betwixt and between, and that there is a “harboursville” coastal bit that is not covered by the local plan which is suppose to cover onto terrestrial land down to the low water mark

whilst the harbour one comes up to the harbour water mark – so they cover themselves in between. The new CPB will only go down to the low water mark – along the whole beach. In a nutshell we need to be careful that we do not lose protection on our foreshore. It is unlikely because Marinas have been ruled out for this area but it is really important to ensure we keep the protections up.

Colchester Local List

DC thought that we were not covered by a local list but had been told that we were covered but had not put anything forward, or had not had an opportunity to put any houses forward. We now have this opportunity and Cllr Wargent is talking with the District Councillor about it. There is a criteria to follow but it should go in our NP to ensure it is covered and should form part of the environmental assessment. For example the White Hart – whilst it is not Grade I or listed, conservation areas are all listed so they are now saying that we need to pick out certain buildings within there, not just as a group but individual houses that may wish to be highlighter – perhaps the Lane area.

VE said that was a heritage list but DC confirmed that was not the same – that this would be a colloquial local list which has local history to it – eg. _____ was born there or lived all of his life here etc.

VE said for example Howard Messer at Salt Edge. DC said that a complete package of that individual and what he did was necessary. Also, telephone boxes, post boxes were examples that could be added to the list – but it would need to be evidence based.

DC said that it was refreshing to see a different attitude from the Committee at the Local Plan meeting – it was evident that they were listening and responding to Mersea. CP added that a Conservative Councillor had said that he would like to see the reintroduction of Council Houses as they once were. The majority of Councillors wanted to see affordable Housing that was truly affordable and not allow the purchase of these properties.

DC confirmed that he had sent a letter in to Karen Syrrett in respect of development sites. He added that there were at least 80-90 plots/sites that are immediately available and then added further that they are not windfall sites as they fall outside the scope of the plan.

PC asked if CBC were taking on board that the Dawes Lane site was giving a whole load of sports fields which also locks the northern boundary. DC confirmed that had not been entered into the equation at the moment as there is a change under the government paper. The previous SIL has now gone, Section 106 is still on the larger sites as well as the new TARIF – possibly another name for the same thing. This led back to the question of how you fund social/first time buyer housing.

DC commented further that Exception Rural Sites for Housing. DG asked if WM qualified because we were larger than the original community size. DC continued that exception sites can be found for a larger community as we are. Through Community Led Funding and possibly a council led trust or such.

Both PB & DC commented that Karen Syrrett had written a very good document about the white paper. PB quoted “to ensure that infrastructure was provided at the right time”. He added that it could be little bit tough on the developers not just on quality but more about delivery. “To avoid delays on approvals having too many conditions”, but they wanted to give more protection to rare species. “Modular” construction was also discussed and the Right to Buy figure of 80% remained unchanged.

There had also been a comment on funding on NP and PB had asked DG to contact Sandra Scott at CBC – DG confirmed that there was “no clarification” on this subject. DC’s understanding of this meant that NPs would continue to be funded as it was originally for just a year or two years. It maybe that the charges for permission to build may be raised in order to employ more people in the Planning Department to speed up the process (whilst this was not mentioned at the meeting DC confirmed that he had read it elsewhere).

CP added that planning charges would be increased by 20% with a further increase of another 20% the following year – and he further commented that CBC appeared to be very keen on this.

CP further added that CBC Planning had expressed concerned about density and had emphasised parking and cars etc. Underground car parks had been mentioned and DC confirmed that the price would be £25K per garage.

DC added that the government has decided to reduce small sizes again – possibly 6 feet x 6 feet, just under 2m – so they will be smaller than the houses in Japan. Room sizes will need to be part of the NP.

DG mentioned that there was a change in percentages for affordable houses and starter homes – both reduced from 20% to 10%. Therefore on a 200 house site would now have a total of 20% affordable/starter homes – 40 houses or so.

PB added that the Local Plan has to be reviewed every 5 years. There was talk about standardising Housing Needs and what that means, higher density housing, and the brownfield register is going off-line now and will come back updated in a few months.

CP reported that people were advised that the NP was the way to address issues within communities. CBC stated that the biggest influence on Planning was going to be the NP. They would be taking the information from the NP as to what West Mersea wants.

MP added that, particularly in respect to Stop 350, the Borough felt it was wise to use the Consultation period (June/July) to campaign.

8. GANNT Chart

There had been much discussion about the GANNT chart earlier in the meeting AB downloaded a free version of a GANNT chart and transferred the information onto it.

9. Any Other Business

AB asked about a pilot or focus group for the questionnaire and how to go about it. MP suggested that we use the members of the mailing group as a focus group and find further people. AB asked again if the Business Q would still be online. PB & DG confirmed this and DG commented that the RCCE and the Council had added many points to it.

Sandra Howard has met with Susan Newcombe from Affordable Housing and Sandra is waiting for a reply from questions from that meeting.

Sandra also wanted to ensure that the group was aware that the criteria for the building of affordable housing was better than something like a self build or such.

Sports Questionnaire

DC stated that he was ready to go with the Sports Q which was based on the previous CBC Study. He confirmed that it would be approximately 5 pages (3 pages back to back) and that the covering letter was quite detailed. There would also be space for comments in order to provide an evidence base. He added that the previous study had not included any of St Peter's Meadow.

CP proposed to the Councillors present if they would allow David to print the Sports Q – It was agreed by all of the Councillors present :- Peter Clements, Sophie Weaver, Paula Moore and Peter Banks. This was to be minuted and sent to the Town Clerk's office.

PM asked about the information being collected – would it be available for the Council to use. DC quoted “the information provided would remain confidential and would comply with the Data Protection Act”. DC further added that the information could really only stay within the group. PM asked if the report would be available to the council and DC confirmed that it would and that it would form part of the NP.

WM NP Logo

SW presented two logos (1 & 2) designed by her brother Will

DG then presented 6 logos (3, 4, 5 & 6) designed by AlphaPrint (printer we are using)

It was unanimously agreed that subject to a few amendments discussed No 2 was the design SW would contact Will for the amendments to be made and would then be adopted.

10. Date and Time of Next Meeting – 25th April 2017 - 7pm for 7.15 pm