

BECCLES AND PARISHES NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OPERATIONAL GROUP MEETING

Notes from Meeting

Monday 28 November 2016

10am

Beccles Library

Present:

Elfrede Brambley-Crawshaw (Chair), Beccles Town Council

Jo McCallum, Waveney District Council

Tricia Harrop

Josie Horne

Jonie Lawton

Bob Aris, Beccles Society

John Sayer, Beccles Society

Chris Scott, Ringsfield & Weston Parish Council

Catherine Roberts

Graham Elliott, Beccles Town Council

Beth Perrott, Baptist Church youth worker

Susan Barnes

Andrea Downes, Beccles Town Council

Heather Sexton

Richard Stubbings, Beccles Town Council

Hugh Taylor

Apologies:

Paul Fletcher, Beccles Society.

Item2

The minutes of the last meeting (31 October 2016) were approved.

Item 3

Elfrede update and introduction to Neighbourhood Planning for new people

A Neighbourhood Plan is a "Grass Roots" plan and NOT a Council led plan.

It is a positive document and not a means of stopping development.

It could, for instance, help protect some green spaces but it could not protect all green spaces from development.

It could influence the location and type of future housing but it cannot prevent housing development from happening.

It must be evidence based and will need a massive amount of consultation and engagement.

It must start with facts about the Neighbourhood area and NOT with preconceived ideas as to what is needed.

There is a website www.becclesplan.com

And a Facebook page www.facebook.com/becclesplan

An exhibition has been set up in the library to encourage people to contribute ideas. This will stay in the library for a month or so and then "travel" around the town and visit as many community groups as possible.

Elfrede explained briefly the process of creating a Neighbourhood Plan and that after a

large amount of consultation and engagement it must be submitted to an external examiner and subsequently be the subject of a referendum. A Neighbourhood Plan will clearly be “failed” by an examiner if there hasn't been extensive public engagement and if it hasn't been genuinely community led. And it is highly likely to fail a referendum if this engagement hasn't been thorough enough.

Once adopted a Neighbourhood Plan has real “clout”.

The Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan has already been used to influence planning decisions within the village.

Item 4

Jo McCallum, Community Development Officer, Waveney District Council

Jo gave an overview of Neighbourhood Plans from a District Council perspective.

The key points were:-

Neighbourhood Plans can appear overwhelming.

They are an opportunity to “shape your future”.

19 plans are in the pipeline in WDC/SCDC, of which one has passed the referendum stage.

They are a lot of work!

The more people to share the work load the better.

The Inspector will need to see hard evidence that the consultation has reached “everyone”.

We need to keep records of who has been reached by the consultation.

The document can influence development eg. where it might go and also the type of property (retirement bungalows, first time buyers, social housing etc).

The document can highlight infrastructure needs eg. Sports facilities.

It is a good time to do a Neighbourhood Plan as Waveney are currently producing a new Local Plan.

Funds available are £1000 from WDC [Budget held by Jo McCallum].

Funds also available from “Locality” and these are often used to engage a consultant to draw the plan together.

Elfrede added that some funding is available from the Town Council and that Beccles Library has supplied the meeting room without charge.

WDC will pay for the Examination and Referendum.

Jack Green (Planning officer) can offer help.

We may choose to set up working groups for each theme identified in the consultation and WDC (via Jo) can help put us in touch with experts.

We will need a Constitution for the NP team.

There is a “Service Level Agreement” between the NP group and WDC. This sets out what we expect from each other.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a tax on new development and largely replaces the old Section 106 payments made by developers. The Town Council receives 15% of the CIL paid but this rises to 25% of the CIL if a Neighbourhood Plan is in place. This money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure within the town.

We need to know who is committed to helping develop the plan.

For the first six months or so it is all about community engagement.

Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan has just passed its referendum. A letter/email of congratulations will be sent to the Kessingland NP team. *[The vote was 89% in support of the NP on a 28% turnout].* This is culmination of 2 years hard work by their NP team.

Graham will circulate links to the Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan documents (see below)

Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan – Referendum Version

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/assets/Planning/Neighbourhood-Planning/Designated-Neighbourhood-Areas/Kessingland/Referendum/Kessingland-Neighbourhood-Plan-2016-2030-Referendum-Version.pdf>

Other Kessingland Neighbourhood Plan documents

<http://www.eastsuffolk.gov.uk/planning/neighbourhood-planning/neighbourhood-areas/kessingland-neighbourhood-area/>

Graham also agreed to post links to census data for Beccles:-

Census data for Beccles

<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk/dissemination/LeadDomainList.do?a=7&b=11120524&c=beccles&d=16&g=6467316&i=1001x1003&m=0&r=1&s=1477993684081&enc=1&domainId=58&census=true>

Everyone agreed we can share each other's email addresses.

Item 5

Shaddingfield, Ellough, Sotterley & Willingham Parish Council have withdrawn from the combined Neighbourhood Plan.

Barsham & Shipmeadow Parish Council have likewise withdrawn.

Ringsfield & Weston Parish Council still want to be involved.

The designated Neighbourhood Plan which includes Beccles and eight surrounding parishes is effectively defunct but it still stands until a new designation area is agreed.

A new Neighbourhood Plan area will need to be defined in due course.

Hugh said this should be done as soon as possible although it was stated the consultation being started would be equally valid whatever the final boundary.

The very strong advice from experts is that the surrounding small villages are best to make their own plan and this should be short and highly focussed on the issues identified within their own community.

A neighbourhood plan needs to be as local as possible and even Beccles on its own is a very large Neighbourhood.

We will need to justify the area to the examiner.

When a new NP area has been decided the NP Steering Group will need to ask the Town Council to submit a new application for this new NP area. This will be subject to consultation and a final decision by WDC.

Item 6

Consultation boards now on display in the library along with some factual graphs and information.

Who is willing to be in the library to “man” the display?

Please let Elfrede know if you can help and what times you can do so that Elfrede can then promote the times that it will be “manned”.

You may need to explain a few basic facts about the NP but mostly it will be to encourage people to engage with the NP process.
It will stay in the library for a month or so.
After this it can go to a wide range of community facilities across the town.
It can go to schools and schools are free to create their own displays. This is viewed highly by Ofsted.

Item 7

The website and Facebook page are now active.
Jo McCallum was very positive about our Facebook page.

Item 8

Graham talked through graphs from census data.
These showed population age profiles, house types, housing tenure, employment, household occupancy and travel to work data. The graphs compared Beccles with Waveney and with the East of England.
More can be produced on "as needed" basis.
Let Graham know what graphs you want to see!
graham@phonecoop.coop

AOB

Richard raised "Terms of Reference" for discussion at next meeting. Jo McCallum tabled a guideline Constitution which could be used.

Who wants to be part of the committee? If you are interested please contact Elfrede.

It would be good to have a leaflet to help get people engaged. Susan Barnes offered to design a leaflet and bring back to next meeting.

Meetings are usually the last Monday of the month but due to Christmas the next meeting will be on 9 January (followed by 30 January). The meeting will be in Beccles library at 10am. Times of meetings may need to be varied.

People are welcome to bring cake to meetings!

Meeting closed at 11:40am.