

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP Notes of the Meeting held on Wednesday 27th November 2024 at 7.00pm at The Wick Community Centre

Present: Gerald Douse (Chairman) Lynne Brooker (Secretary), Cllr Alan Ball, Cllr Derek Harrison, Cllr Stewart Mott, Jane Cresswell, Pete Ellis, Jag Gill, Geoff Jenkins, Janet Nelson, Mike Townsend, Linsey Woolridge and Chris Wyle .

Nicky Joshua, Community Engagement Officer, Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE)

Apologies: Cllr Kim Oakes (Treasurer), Cllr Steve Oakes, Keith Dell and Cllr Louise Gann

For the new member of the group Nicky Joshua gave a brief overview of the parameters of producing a Neighbourhood plan; what it is and steps needed to be done to satisfy current regulations

1. Minutes of the last meeting held on 25th September 2024 agreed as a correct record. Nicky Joshua noted that she hadn't received a copy of the minutes and these will be sent to her. **Action:** Lynne

2. Communication/Town Presentation: leaflet delivery. A few people on the planning group did not receive a copy of the leaflet through their door. The Chairman did raise this issue with Postmums and various reasons were given for this: some are due to the grey areas of the dividing lines ie brown bins indicate Chelmsford so some people may have been missed. Some people spoken too at the town event on 16th November hadn't received leaflets either. Some people may have received the leaflet and it got caught up with the post office delivery of leaflets and thrown away! There are a large number of spare leaflets if anyone wants some copies to hand out to neighbours. It would be a good idea if group members checked with friends and neighbours to see if they had received a leaflet and then this information should be feedback to Postmums who were paid to distribute the leaflets.

Janet Nelson advised that she had submitted an agreed blog to the Wickford Town News and hopefully this will should be published in the December issue. Agreed that this blog should also be included on our section on the Town Council Website – know Tory is busy but ask if she could upload it. **Action:** Janet

The engagement on the 16th November was good with some positive feedback. All the information will be collated. This all helps with our consultation requirements for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Action: Lynne

3. Basildon District Council Local Plan – Reg 18 consultation. This plan has now been published and is able to be viewed on line and there are a number of meetings organised around the District. It is a difficult plan to read with over 1250 pages.

It shows the allocation of housing projects for Wickford which is approximately 4,200 – this is set out on page 231 of the report. There is an additional 235 plots for traveller over the course of the Local Plan, these areas have not yet been allocated. The proposed sites include using areas designated plotlands/infills/Greenland etc. A map was tabled for ease of reference to allow the meeting to see approximately what area and numbers are being proposed over the next 20 years. Once the numbers are allocated in the Basildon District Council Local Plan they can't be altered. It was also

mentioned that looking at this tabled map that the settlement line between Wickford and Basildon could disappear and that is something that needs to be addressed in the Neighbourhood plan.

It is important that people engage and comment on this Local Plan because infrastructure must be addressed which includes roads, doctors/dentist, schools, parks, green areas (environment), river. The Neighbourhood plan can also address these issues and make it put of the requirements along with a design code.

A question was asked on where exactly has any 106 money been spent in Wickford. Basildon Council should have this information. It was noted that the money goes to County for Education or Highways and they can allocate it to say Colchester but then money raised in Colchester might be spent in Wickford. You don't get the actually money from your area, it is put in a pot ringfenced ie you will get £10k but the money can come from anywhere.

The meeting noted concerns with regards to current planning applications being submitted in area H20 and H21 on the tabled Mapp because they are building both sides of the London Road and all traffic will merge into one road putting more pressure on an already congested road. Same can be said for the proposed 1100 properties on the Wick H17. It is important that the Local Plan Reg 18 consultations take into account the impact of congestion in certain areas with any new housing developments/projects. It was once again noted that there is a section of land that is unparished but falls within the Borough. Wickford also have a few unadopted roads that are proposed for infills and this may cause problems.

Neighbourhood Plan: previously agreed that we would concentrate on design code rather than plot allocations. We need to commission this work. The experts will walk round with representatives looking at the different designs already present ie on the Wick, old Town, different types of bungalows and the block of flats. Within reason the Neighbourhood Plan can specify how we want new properties to interface with the current housing stock, ie with regards to windows design, number of windows, types of materials to be used, colour scheme, pathways: paved/grass, provision of schools, healthcare/dentists social amenities etc, could also include any property extensions, green spaces, derelict sites, brownfield sites, rivers. It is also important that we include what we don't want

On page 754 of the Local Plan it states risk of flooding – we need to know exactly what risks and ensure these are incorporated in the Neighbourhood plan.

Developers will be aware of both the Local and Neighbourhood plan and any new applications will then be looked at against both of these before planning approval is given.

4. Way Forward

Contact Locality (Groundwork is the company appointed by Locality to handle the oversee grant applications) and request additional funding-(if this is not spent by the end of March 2025 it goes back and you just apply for it again, it is our pot of money. Tick the box for Design Code and receive and additional £8k. Aecom have the sub contract from Locality and they will carry out the Design Code and also request Housing Need Assessment. Costs for printing, paper, meeting room hire etc can all be included in the grant application money. We need to do this before the end of January.

Tory undertook the initial contact with Locality for the first pot of Money so may be useful to liaise with Tory when we are ready to proceed.

May also wish to commission Housing Need report but this will be covered in the Basildon Local Plan. Do not think we need to purchase the Migration figures, basically Wickford is now a Commuter Town which direct train service into Liverpool Street, so people mainly moving here and commute to work.

We have three main doctors surgeries in Wickford, we need to know if they have any expansion plans – CCG are the body who run and allocate funding for expansion of surgeries but worth a chat with the local practices. Concern was also raised that Swanwood Surgery is set to close because that land is earmarked for development, there is space in the London Road surgery, are they going to merge, are we going to lose another doctors surgery? **Action:** Lynne to contact Robert Frew Practice and Jane Cresswell Swanwood (if Jane cannot do it, Lynne will contact Swanwood as well). Gerald will contact London Road

Need to go back over the Scoping Report. Go out to social clubs (not schools already done), take the boards, get people to say what they think Wickford strengths are, weakness, opportunities, threats and anything else they feel relevant.

Need to reach more people perhaps more online: our own Facebook page – just like a bulletin board all comments to be emailed no commenting so we do not break any rules. More press releases, perhaps use Commonplace, see what the costs is (can be included in grant money). Need to reach 10,500 people perhaps do a survey?

Action: Agreed that a small group will meet in the WTC offices to talk about the survey Gerald, Janet, Nicky Joshua, Geoff, Derek and/or Alan Ball

Speak to Shotgate again because some of the housing numbers are allocated in their parish – just a conversation to see what they are thinking. **Action:** Lynne to contact. Runwell previously said they are open to discussion.

Date of next meeting: to be confirmed. Meeting finished at 9.15 pm