

Minutes of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting: Thursday, 13 September 2012

Present

Nigel Kay, Faversham Town Councillor (FTC) – Chairman
Mike Cosgrove, Swale Borough Councillor (SBC) – Vice Chairman
Andy Culham, Faversham Town Councillor
Trevor Payne, Faversham Town Councillor
Anne Salmon, Faversham Creek Consortium Management Group member
John Sell, Faversham Town Council Planning Agent

In attendance

Jackie Westlake, Faversham Town Clerk – Secretary
Tony Fullwood, Planning Consultant

1. Apologies for absence

1.1 Mike Henderson and Andrew Osborne gave their apologies for absence. Natalie Earl and David Simmons were unable to attend.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 22 August and matters arising

2.1 The minutes were agreed.

2.2 Under matters arising, the following issues were raised:

(a) Communications strategy. Cllr Kay (NK) updated the Group on his discussions with CPRE. They would provide support on the communications strategy and would provide a facilitator for the proposed workshop;

(b) The Dawlish Plan. Tony Fullwood (TF) said the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Neighbourhood Plan regulations required Neighbourhood Plans to have general conformity with adopted strategic policies. He made the point that Dawlish had not complied with the NPPF. SBC's adopted plan regarding Faversham was the Local Plan (2008), but that only looked forward to 2016, and the Neighbourhood Plan would extend to 2016. There was no provision in the regulations for the Plan to be examined against any emerging Plan, but the independent examiner might be minded to look at emerging Plans to ensure general alignment for the period not covered by the adopted Local Plan. It would be critical to have discussions with SBC policy planners about their view of Strategic Local Plan policies such as Policy FAV1 and AAP2. There was some discussion as to whether proposals for specific sites could be considered strategic and how different proposals for different sites on the Creek might have an impact on the referendum. TF made the point that there would only be a single question governed by the regulations about using the neighbourhood plan for Faversham Creek to help decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area. The previous stage – inspection – would require evidence of general conformity with the Core Strategy.

ACTIONS

- Jackie Westlake (JW) to organise a meeting with SBC policy planners and the Steering Group

- JW/TF to scope brief for the meeting
- JW to circulate what Faversham Town Council had put into the draft Core Strategy
- JW to speak to Natalie Earl regarding the individual representations, and to prepare responses

(c) SBC legal opinion on the swing bridge. Mike Cosgrove (MC) said he was unable to give any information on the legal opinion as it was still in draft with work continuing. He did not want to comment until it was complete. He fully recognised the importance of the swing bridge to the Neighbourhood Plan but was unable to make any further statement at that stage.

ACTION

- Legal opinion update to remain a standing item on the agenda until resolved

(d) NK pointed out there had been no further budgetary information from SBC. The Group was concerned it had been waiting for that detail for many months. There was no clarity as to how much of the £20,000 was left and whether there were any funds available for the steps being suggested by TF.

ACTION

- JW to contact James Freeman for budget details before the next Steering Group meeting

(e) The Group discussed the proposal by TF for a facilitated workshop to propose key issues for all stakeholders to discuss and reach agreement on. It was agreed this needed to happen no later than November 2012. However, an updated project plan was critical both for this work and to enable other engagement/consultation opportunities for key stakeholders in the Communications Plan. The workshop was an addition to the original plan and concern was raised about how it could be funded. FTC had allocated its budget in full for 2012/13.

The Group agreed that attendees had to be able to represent their organisations as well as take decisions on their behalf. Statutory agencies had to attend. There should be a set of negotiating issues to which, by the end of the session, all parties could sign up. An external facilitator, such as the CPRE, would be able to provide, not only an independent perspective, but also a wider context.

ACTIONS

- JW to update the current project plan
- JW/TF to take forward the workshop plans
- On receipt of budget information from SBC, NK to present to Faversham Town Council (FTC) for a discussion on potential Town Council expenditure

3. Public Footpath ZF5

3.1 The Group agreed to present the following resolution to FTC:

- To present a formal objection to KCC on the Faversham Reach Residents' Association proposed diversion of public footpath ZF5.

3.2 In discussion, the Group agreed the Town Council-proposed footpath formed part of the Streetscape Strategy, now formally endorsed by FTC and SBC Joint Transportation Board. Waterside Close footpath continued to be an issue, and there appeared to be no real progress. MC said he had asked Abdool Kara, Chief Executive, SBC, to arrange for SBC to formally support FTC's proposals and to assist in expediting the Waterside Close work.

4. Communication and Engagement Strategy/working with the CPRE

4.1 The Group discussed the paper in detail. The strategy should be clear as to how and when stakeholders and the general public could engage, both formally and informally. An updated Neighbourhood Plan project plan was necessary to identify key engagement stages, such as the stakeholder workshop, formal consultation, independent examination, and referendum. The Group considered whether the engagement to date would be sufficient to satisfy the independent examiner as well as the wider public at the referendum stage. There were considerable time pressures on the Plan, and some stakeholders were expressing their concern about a perceived lack of progress. The Group agreed the following should form part of the communication strategy:

- The Neighbourhood Plan as a standing item on FTC's meeting agenda
- Use of the Local Engagement Forums
- Notice-boards and websites
- SBC newsletter
- Regular information to all schools in Faversham
- Posters in the supermarkets and other shops
- John Sell's communications focus group (Christine Rayner, Laurence Young and others)
- Leaflet drop in January/February 2013 outlining the outcome of the workshop

4.2 There was some discussion about Faversham 2020, and the Group agreed references to the Creek should be consistent with what was in the Neighbourhood Plan, and that there was clear synergy between the two for evidence for the independent examiner.

ACTION

- All Steering Group members to forward their detailed comments on the Communications and Engagement Strategy to JW (preferably through track changes) for incorporation

5. Any Other Business

5.1 The papers on awareness-raising and DCLG additional funding were noted. It was also noted that the Faversham Creek Streetscape Strategy had now been endorsed by the SBC/KCC Joint Transportation Board.

ACTION

- JW to ensure the Streetscape Strategy was placed on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of faversham.org as part of the evidence base

6. Date of the next meeting

6.1 The date of the next meeting was scheduled for 11 October 2012 at 7pm in the Guildhall.