

## **Minutes of the Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting: Tuesday, 14 January 2014**

### Present

Nigel Kay, Faversham Town Councillor (FTC) – Chairman

David Simmons, Mayor, Faversham Town Council

Trevor Payne, Faversham Town Councillor

Cllr Mike Henderson, Swale Borough Council

Andrew Osborne, Faversham Creek Consortium Management Group member

Anne Salmon, Faversham Creek Consortium Management Group member

John Sell, Faversham Town Council Planning Agent

Sue Akhurst, Faversham Creek Trust

Brenda Chester, Brents Community Association

Janet Turner, Faversham Society

### In attendance

Jackie Westlake, Faversham Town Council Clerk – Secretary

### **1. Apologies for absence**

1.1 There were apologies for absence from Cllrs Mike Cosgrove and John Coulter, Kirsty Northwood and Natalie Earl.

### **2. Minutes of the last meeting and matters arising.**

2.1 The minutes were agreed

2.2 All matters arising had been dealt with.

2.3 There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Update on drafting progress**

3.1 The Group agreed to retain Hilary Whelan (HW) on the drafting sub group.

3.2 HW gave a brief update on progress. The group had met twice, with a further meeting arranged for 17 January. There was a good skill mix and the group was working well to deliver a good product for the Steering Group and the Town Council to consider.

3.3 The drafts of six chapters by Anne Salmon and others formed the basis of the content, but it had been necessary to reformat from a narrative structure to a hierarchical framework. The draft was split into two: the core of the Neighbourhood Plan, and a larger document providing supporting evidence.

3.4 The Group considered the papers that HW had circulated. These consisted of a series of headings which gave an indication of how the information would fit into the draft framework; and an example of how the document might look as the finished product, using a couple of chapters as a guide. There were gaps of a technical nature, on which the group

would need support, and HW asked whether this would be something Planning Aid or the independent planning consultant, yet to be recruited by SBC, could help with. Additionally, the group needed to have some indication of a budget, to cover the production and printing of the final draft NP.

#### **ACTIONS**

- **Jackie Westlake (JW) to chase Planning Aid re: their offer of support**
- **JW to report back on the Town Council's decisions on the budget following the Finance Meeting to be held on 20 January 2014**
- **The Mayor, David Simmons (DS), to chase SBC re: the appointment of the independent planning consultant**

3.5 The Group discussed the role of the independent planning consultant and additional help from SBC on the viability assessment. On the latter, the land use report, with the proposals from the Brents Community Association, would go to SBC's viability consultants.

**ACTION: JW to speak to Natalie Earl re the viability assessment**

3.6 John Sell (JS) said that the drafting group did not have the authority to write the content of the NP. The independent planning consultant could help with this. Nigel Kay (NK) proposed, seconded by Andrew Osborne (AO), and, on being put to the meeting, it was:

- agreed by a vote of 9 in favour that the drafting group could draft content for discussion at subsequent meetings bearing in mind the Town Council resolutions which had been agreed in October 2013.

3.7 Where the drafting group had different proposals, the various options would be presented to the Group for selection and onward reporting to the Town Council for final agreement. Where there were conflicts with the previous land use decisions made by the Town Council, these would need to be reviewed by the Council.

**ACTION: drafting group to begin drafting content**

3.8 Brenda Chester (BC) proposed, seconded by Anne Salmon (AS), and, on being put to the meeting, it was:

- unanimously agreed to proceed with the structure as outlined by HW

3.8 DS thanked HW and the group for their hard work, noting that AS had prepared the original drafts.

#### **4. Update on communications and engagement**

4.1 Sue Akhurst (SA) gave a brief update on progress. The sub group had met once and would meet at least two more times. The group was working to a timetable where the pre-submission consultation would begin in mid-March and continue to the end of April, although this would depend on the progress made on the drafting of the NP.

4.2 It was intended the community engagement would reach beyond the previous consultations' efforts. AS had prepared an outline approach, identifying facilitated meetings, further publicity (flyers, mini version of the NP as a leaflet), use of various websites and a Facebook page. Danny Chesterman (DC) would provide a report to the next meeting of the Steering Group to ensure the Town Council could consider it at its meeting on 10 February.

4.3 It was hoped that as many members as possible of the Town Council could attend the meeting on 24 January (held at the Faversham Club).

**ACTION: JW to issue details of the meeting to the Town Council**

4.4 BC advised the Group that she and HW would be preparing a publicity plan to raise the profile of the consultation.

## **5. Update on Creek Business Case**

5.1 NK noted that amendments were still being made to the draft. David Iron (DI) advised that the draft had been submitted to the Town Council for comments. On receipt of any comments, further amendments would be made. A final presentation would be made to the Town Council within the next week and the business case would then be published. It was a decision for the Town Council as to when the Steering Group should be sent a copy.

5.2 The Group said that the business case could influence the drafting of policies and it was important the Group saw the document as soon as was possible. [Secretary's note. An embargoed copy was sent to the Steering Group on 15 January 2014.]

## **6. Updates on projects from the Faversham Creek Trust and the Brents Community Association**

6.1 SA gave an update on the Faversham Creek Trust's regeneration plans for the inner basin. The Trust did not believe that it would contravene anything to come out of the business case and was in line with Town Council land use policies. The plans focused on the inner basin and considered its maritime and tourism potential. On Ordnance Wharf, the Trust was working with the Brents Community Association and had identified a potential purchaser for Ordnance Wharf. In addition, the Trust had discussed the plan with BMM Weston, whose owner was willing to allow the restoration of its area of the creek. The plan rested on the restoration of the swing bridge and the repair of the sluice gates.

6.2 The Trust was concerned that the Steering Group was asking it for business planning information which wasn't being asked of the developers. NK suggested that housing would generally pass the viability tests. The Group did not wish to put voluntary organisations at a disadvantage but they might find it more difficult to pass the viability test and it would, therefore, be helpful if they could provide as much information as possible in advance.

6.3 The Group considered the plans. DS welcomed the plans which did not appear to conflict with the business case as drafted. Janice Hennessey (JH) said the viability of alternative proposals on the various sites should be considered within the viability assessment overall. The purpose of the NP was to provide a planning framework for what was ideally wanted for the sites. The owners' plans for the site had to fit into that framework. If the use was desirable, it would give the local planning authority the option of compulsory purchase.

6.4 There was some discussion on deliverability. JS explained that the test in the National Planning Policy Framework assumed there was a willing owner/developer for the plans. There was some debate as to the importance of having a Plan that was realistic in order to prevent further stagnation around the Creek.

6.5 BC said there was no further update on progress on the Brents Community Association (BCA) plans for a community centre/boatyard. She was concerned about the reporting of the plans to the Town Council by the Chairman, as it had not been agreed by the Steering Group that the plans were premature, as stated by NK.

## **7. Swan Quay Appraisal Report**

7.1 NK said the summary of the wider appraisal had been received too late for proper consideration to be given at the meeting. The Town Clerk had a copy of the whole report which members could borrow. The Group considered the findings in the report had some fit with the Town Council's resolution on Swan Quay:

"The Town Council acknowledges the challenges presented by this site. Whilst not all the buildings are listed, most do have a certain merit. Any development should be of a scale and design to match existing. We believe that this site is an important pedestrian gateway to the North Eastern part of the Creek and as such care must be taken in drafting the Plan to make sure the site is not overdeveloped. In light of these concerns the Town Council accepts the use classes proposed but we ask the Steering Group to investigate ways in which our reservations can be addressed."

**ACTION: JW to add the summary to the next meeting of the Steering Group**

## **8. Budget Update**

8.1 There had been no further expenditure on the NP budget since the last meeting.

## **9. Any Other Business**

9.1 NK asked that all papers be with the Town Clerk one week before the meeting date. There would be exceptions but they would be cleared by the Town Clerk in discussion with the Chairman.

**10. Date of the next meeting**

10.1 Tuesday, 4 February 2014. Dates for March and April to be arranged.