

Neighbourhood Planning Summary Report – November 2021

Two further meetings of Neighbourhood Planning Working Group (NPWG) have taken place, 7th October & 11th November, in attendance were the volunteers from the Parish and Cllr Thwaite (7th Oct) and Cllr Turner acting as Chair for both meetings

The NPWG now have 2 sub-groups, meeting monthly. There is a subgroup concentrating on the drafting of the Neighbourhood Plan Survey (includes Cllr Turner), the second on the engagement with Key Stake holders identified in the Parish and writing the interview questions to be used. (attended by Cllr Thwaite)

On 3rd November, the Parish Clerk, Ian Poole (Places4People), Cllr Thwaite, Richard Byres and Roger Merry attended a meeting with West Suffolk Planning policy team members Amy Wright and Boyd Nicholas and Julie Salisbury from the Strategic Housing Team.

West Suffolk confirmed that whilst the NP survey could include the housing needs survey, the development of a Rural Exception site would, however, be a separate process from preparing the NP.

West Suffolk also indicated that the next public consultation on the local plan, for Preferred Options, would take place from March to May 2022.

After considerable discussion at the NPWG meeting on 11th November, it was agreed that the NP Survey would not include the housing needs survey and would be timed to meet the timing of the Preferred Options Consultation. The survey will invite everyone over the age of 16 to complete the survey & express their views.

The timetable for the NP Survey is now as follows:

- Survey to be delivered to residents of Wickhambrook Parish, starting Week 31st January
- Survey Return date 15th February.
- Volunteers will be needed to distribute and collect the surveys
- Key Stakeholders interviews will take place during January & February to coincide with the Survey.
- Final Drafts of both NP Survey and Interview questions & Key Stakeholder list for circulation to Ian Poole and the Parish Council, 7th January 2022.

Action to raise as an agenda item on 13th January PC meeting for final signoff

Communication with the Parish will start to take place during December & January, the group has discussed a mixture of, flyers, posters and Banners, the cost of which should be covered under the grant application to Locality. Regular updating of the Website and Social Media, both the PC Facebook page and also Wickhambrook Community Facebook Page should increase reach and the clerk will work with the NPWG to support this.

Ian Poole has confirmed that the collation of data from the household survey will be through his existing licensed software – Smart Survey, and that there will be no on cost implications to the parish council for this.

Following a meeting with Ian Poole and the Clerk, the application for the grant from locality to cover the current financial year has been submitted (£5071.00) and the clerk has included the balance (£8050) into the budget for the next financial year.

Places4People has been chosen by the NPWG as its preferred professional consultant. Under the Financial Regulations (11.1(a)ii) the requirement when entering into a contract of less than £25,000 in value to obtain 3 quotations may be waived to enable a price to be negotiated without competition for specialist services (such as are provided by solicitors, accountants, surveyors and planning consultants).

Recommendation:

In accordance with Financial Regulation 11.1(a)ii, the parish council agree to waive the requirement when entering into a contract of less than £25,000 in value to obtain 3 quotations in respect of contracting the professional planning services of Places4People to support the preparation of the Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Development Plan, enabling a price to be negotiated without competition for specialist services, and note that the parish council has previously contracted services and advice from Places4People for which it has been satisfied.

The clerk has requested that volunteers in the NPWG complete and return the volunteer application form, to ensure that the parish council can meet its safeguarding and GDPR responsibilities.

The clerk has found that Cambs ACRE (Community Action Suffolk is an ACRE organisation) publish both their Housing Needs Survey Questionnaire, and reports to the commissioning parishes on their website. Cambs ACRE have advised that there is no copyright on the questionnaire, and the clerk has contacted Julie Salisbury, Strategic Housing Officer at West Suffolk, to establish whether the questionnaire published by Cambs ACRE would be acceptable as a basis (in conjunction with information held in the housing register) to establish whether there is housing need in the parish which could be met by bringing forward an exception site.

A further enquiry with Cambs ACRE has established that it may be possible to commission them to interpret the data collected from the Housing Needs questionnaire, if the work could be done at a time to suit Cambs ACRE, and the Strategic Housing team were to give a formal indication that they would accept the findings. The clerk has approached the Strategic Housing Team on this basis and awaits a response, to be reported back to the January meeting.

Next NPWC meeting 9th December

Cllr Turner