

INITIAL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REVIEW MEETING
MEETING MINUTES
WEDNESDAY 16TH OCTOBER 2024 AT 7PM
SWANTON MORLEY VILLAGE HALL

Present: Mr R. Atterwill (Swanton Morley Parish Council) Chairman
Mrs B. O'Dowd (Parish Council) Vice Chair
Mr J. Venworth
Mr J Rodrigues
Mr S Gauntlett
Mr J. Phillips
Mr S. Vincent (Abzag Ltd– Neighbourhood Plan Consultant)
Mrs K Pickard (Clerk to Swanton Morley Parish Council)

At the start of the meeting, Mr Atterwill signed the Consultancy and Service agreement as approved at the Parish Council meeting on Monday 14th October 2024.

1) Welcome & Introductions

Mr Atterwill welcomed everyone to the meeting and made introductions.

2) To Receive Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Mr B. Powter and Mrs A Walker-Fraser

3) Neighbourhood Plan 5-Year review – Mr Vincent shared slides to demonstrate the following information

The reason for the review is that it is good practice, it was built into the neighbourhood plan and it is included in the NPPF, subsequently all plans are now reviewed every 5 years.

Other things to consider that may drive some changes in the plan are:

- National Planning reforms
- Levelling up and Regeneration Bill
- Changes introduced by Local Government
- Changes to the Local Plan
- Policy Conflict
- New development and/or land allocation
- Effectiveness of the 'Made' plan
- Unexpected outcomes of the 'made' plan

Key drivers to review the neighbourhood plan includes a guideline from Locality 'After the neighbourhood plan is made' the NPPF which is currently being updated and Breckland Council's Local plan which is currently on hold.

As part of the Local plan review the Parish Council submitted a response to Breckland Council, within the impact analysis there were 10 red flags on things that could impact the Neighbourhood plan. This was the loss of settlement boundary and built form. This could cause new or different sites to come forward.

The current Neighbourhood plan runs to 2036 with 16 good policies, key ones are development control and how the homes are built, would the Parish Council want to amend this?
Site allocation could be something to be mindful of.

Effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Plan – any feedback needs to be given to the consultant for consideration

Unexpected outcomes – any feedback needs to be given to the consultant

Mr Vincent asked for an update on the existing allocated sites and how far along the developments were.

Mr Atterwill reported that site 13 is complete.

Mr Atterwill referred to site 14 and 16 and updated that he had been on a walk around the sites with the landowner and their preferred developer who is keen to implement what has been detailed in the neighbourhood plan.

Mr Atterwill talked about the benefits of having the allocated piece of land in the plan which has meant that in the latest draft version of the Breckland local plan review, Swanton Morley is not allocated any additional housing numbers in the existing village. There is of course the matter of the future of Robertson Barracks which could significantly increase housing numbers in this parish and that of neighbouring Hoe & Worthing.

Mr Vincent then went on to talk about other drivers to consider with the neighbourhood plan would be the vision of the plan and the current objectives – whether they are still accurate or require any amendments.

Mr Vincent explained the potential outcomes of the review itself:

There are 4 possible review outcomes:

- i) No recommended change to the existing plan
- ii) Minor modifications - this will be where policies are not materially affected, consent of the qualified body therefore no consultation or referendum will be required.
- iii) Significant modifications but does not change the nature of the plan – this could be changing or adding one or more policies – this will require a consultation and examination but not a referendum.
- iv) Significant modifications that do change the nature of the plan – This could include new site allocations and the addition of many new policies – This outcome will require a consultation, examination and referendum.

Presentation was paused for questions.

Mrs O’Dowd asked if the Council would be transparent if any potential changes were suggested?

Mr Vincent responded that the transparency would be during the 6 week consultation.

Mr Vincent then shared a slide with a more detailed process for the neighbourhood plan review if the plan requires significant updates.

A review timetable was then shared on the screen for each part of the review process.

Mr Venworth asked because we already have a very good plan does that mean that the timeline would be changed or reduced.

Mr Vincent responded that it will not change, any consultation must be 6 weeks.

Mr Atterwill went through some updates on existing policies and provided some feedback for the consultant.

There is no longer a community car scheme which has affected access to GP appointments being held in North Elmham

5 Year housing land supply – there was a statutory instrument but as we are outside of the two years since the plan was adopted it shouldn’t apply to Swanton Morley? In essence if there was a ‘made’

neighbourhood plan in a two year period, even if Breckland didn't have a 5 year housing land supply the neighbourhood plan would still have some protection and policies would still be sound.

Mr Vincent confirmed that it should still stand, and there are talks about extending the two-year window. Local Plan review – Breckland Council's Local Plan is on hold until spring when the new NPPF is expected to be published. If a new draft housing target comes in, Breckland will not have a 5 year housing land supply in the new year.

Something to be aware of are potential new applications and having little defence against them Mr Vincent suggested it would be changing the defence as part of this process.

Policy 1 – Settlement boundary originally we have a settlement boundary – Mr Atterwill seems to be the only district councillor who is trying to retain the boundaries rather than having a policy based approach.

As a neighbourhood plan we can still have the settlement boundary in the plan - if we want to keep it then we can. Mr Vincent said that this would then conflict with the Local Plan therefore retaining the boundary would need justification.

Breckland local plan would be adopted after the neighbourhood plan is reviewed, if the settlement boundaries are no longer included in the Local plan then its policy based approach could supersede the neighbourhood plan.

Policy 11 = design of development, had a design code – Breckland now have a design code, the Parish Council need to ensure this does what it needs to do in Swanton Morley.

What has worked –

- Local green space – additional fields have been put forward by the council
- Protect the sensitive views

The biggest thing currently on the horizon is Robertson Barracks – the biggest portion does not fall in the Neighbourhood plan area – Mr Atterwill felt that there was not a lot that can be done in the plan just to retain what is in there and engage with the future correspondence.

The Clerk asked if the boundary review with Breckland could look at the barracks site?

Mr Atterwill responded that the PC could request a boundary review of the Parish. This could be something for the future when the council are aware of the proposals for the site.

Other issue on the Barracks – Breckland project team is working with stakeholders for what the site is capable of and what the constraints are. This should be complete by Christmas – then there will be an idea on the number of dwellings that the site can take.

There are constraints on the site with Highways and Mr Atterwill has suggested a new road leading to the site.

Mr Vincent then stated that his approach is to be challenged in the forum to make the plan better.

Mr Atterwill talked about affordable housing being referred to in Breckland Council's new housing strategy where they have looked at differences with exception sites.

Policy 11 readdress the protection of Swanton Morley – possible changes

Mr Vincent also alerted those present to the definition of built form; some description is quite vague and this does change the way development could come forward in some areas. This may result in slight wording change of Policy 1.

Other areas that have worked well are:

- Protection of Open space
- Enabling growth in right places
- Employment and local shops – There is the potential of a new shop in the Village

- Mobile communications – now have a new mast
- Robertson Barracks – Large tower – request to leave it and install some dishes for the signal

Flooding issues have been identified but the policy is to ensure any new developments ensure there are sufficient provisions to mitigate the risk of flooding.

Mr Venworth asked to have stronger wording within the policy as there is a problem with flooding in the area and the pumping stations cannot cope

Mr Vincent responded that the existing policy is quite comprehensive and covers some of those things and policy 11 criteria 14 also covers this issue which mentions a sewage capacity assessment.

Mr Vincent is quite confident that there have been no significant negative changes.

The Clerk asked if there should be something in the plan to talk about Swanton Morley Surgery and the services available particularly with housing increases.

Mr Vincent stated that the surgery facilities are not considered as a planning matter so not a planning issue, The clerk asked if it was a development issue.

Mr Vincent said that developers can build facilities but cannot make the NHS use it. These issues are outside planning.

Mr Atterwill suggested that they can ask developers through s106 legal agreements to make contributions to the surgery. Request for staff cannot be done through planning.

Another positive thing that has come from the Neighbourhood plan and new development is a new improved bus service.

The clerk also referred to point 6.54 'Possible new development opposite the school and traffic calming measures' Norfolk County Council have historically refused the installation of chicanes or priority traffic so would this be considered as part of the development, Mr Atterwill responded that when Hoe Road East is widened as part of the application Norfolk County Council will assess the road on the basis that it has been asked for. There is no reason why they can't install them in the right location as part of the development or the Parish Council could request them as part of the Parish Partnership scheme.

Mr Vincent also noted that Policy 3 does refer to what they can do.

Next stages and moving forward.

Mr Vincent said certain things have to be done with the review: key things are what changes are needed along with evidence and justification and do the Parish Council want to form a Steering group.

Mr Atterwill responded that the council definitely needs to open up to members of the public who are interested in being involved.

His suggestion would be following this meeting the consultant now has a flavour of policies that need to be looked at and what changes needs to be made based on what we know about the Local plan. This will include flooding and taking account of design code.

Once this work has been completed, we will be at the stage to form a steering group this will then be followed with a community engagement event at the Village Hall with display boards and ideas.

The Clerk asked once Mr Vincent looks at policies that need changing and the steering group is formed can additional considerations be made?

Mr Atterwill responded that at this time the Parish Council recognise that some of the policies need to be changed due to external forces changing.

This work can be done initially and if someone comes forward with further suggestions and ideas, these will be considered through the review process.

Mr Vincent reported that there will be a changes and update document for this purpose. Community engagement to be held after Christmas and 6-week consultation will be February to April.

Mr Atterwill asked how long it will take to make the suggested edits that are required following the meeting and when the work is done to review this at another meeting?

Mr Vincent suggested that we meet again in a month.

Mr Venworth asked if there could be a meeting to discuss the individual policies to get a better understanding of them.

This can be done when the changes and update document is available.

Councillors are also encouraged to read through the existing plan which explains why the policies are there.

The Clerk will invite members of the public to be involved after the next meeting.

It was agreed that Mr Vincent will work on the policies discussed this evening for the necessary changes and will produce this for the next meeting.

4) To Agree Date and Time of Next Meeting

This was agreed as Wednesday 13th November at 7pm in Swanton Morley Village Hall

The meeting closed at 9.10pm

_____ (Chairman) _____ Date