

NP steering group meeting Notes – Wednesday 4th October 2019 10am
Wayland Hall Council Offices

Present: - Jane Fountain (JF), Pat Warwick (PW), Neil Featherstone (NF), David Dent (DD) John Chocqueel-Mangan (JCM) Keith Gilbert (KG)

1. Apologies

Liz Whitcher, Paul Adcock

Holwell design guidance was shown as an example of what is felt to be the current situation in Watton in regards to focusing on the street scene and the character of the Town <http://holwellneighbourhoodplan.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Appendix-2-Planning-Design-Guidelines.pdf>

On the approaches into the town the new developments design pointed out the density of the new housing compared to existing housing. Example – Thetford Road Development has 35-38 houses in 1 hectare whereas existing houses in Canon Close has 7 houses in 1 hectare.

2. To accept NP meeting notes from 20th September 2019

Notes were accepted

- It was noted that an item to discuss a volunteer tree warden is on the Town Council agenda for the meeting on October 8th. The idea of having a volunteer tree warden in place will be to identify preserved trees and the protection and works needed along with identifying trees that should be preserved. It has been suggested that the tree warden attend a basic tree inspection course which will indicate to them early indications of tree health.
- It was reported that the Town Council has agreed to explore the options of a Sustainability appraisal.

3. Aecom – Technical Support Update

- Application for Technical Support has been approved.
- A conference call from Ben Castell (Aecom) with steering group members took place regarding the successful application for Technical Support and moving forward.
- As part of the NP process and engagement with the Chamber of Commerce and the Watton Retail Group it has flagged up changes to the Commercial and retail sector within the town.
- It has been suggested by Aecom (Ben Castell) 3 option could take place moving forward: -

Stated below in email from Ben Castell on October 7th

1. ***Economic-focused town centre plan: Building on the content of the Commercial and Retail group's proposals/objectives and the issues raised by the High Street Action Group to set out how the Neighbourhood Plan could advance them. As we would need to focus on land use planning, this could focus on particular sites as well as general. Could also include shopfront guidance.***

2. **Economic-focused spatial plan for the whole town:** *Similar to the above but encompassing the whole NP area – so greater coverage but less detail and focus.*
 3. **Town-wide design guide:** *Building on the Character Appraisal and with a particular focus on the large areas on new planned housing, a Watton Design Guide with local flavour that applicants will have to take account of when submitting applications. I have a message out to Locality to ask whether they would welcome a separate package to deliver this – it is possible they won't because of your past and current support but it is worth asking.*
- Ben Castell to send Examples of Design Guidance and Master Planning through by email, to be shared with Steering Group members – Priorities to be discussed – comments to be submitted back to Aecom by 18th/21st October.
 - A walk round of Town Centre sites to be organised with Aecom
 - Outcomes from the Watton Market Final Masterplanning Report which was compiled by Aecom in February 2018 to be included in Design Guidance.

4. NP Policies development

The steering group considered version 7 of the NP policies and objectives (App 1) NF to finalise version 7 and distribute to steering group members. Final version to be circulated to Town Councillors.

5. Sub group updates

- Drainage Group – No update
- Youth engagement – No update
- Other

DD has been gathering data on what customers are looking for when shopping in Watton. The 3 main priorities that cropped up are Great Customer Service, Free Parking and Knowledgeable Staff.

6. AOB

No matters raised.

7. Next meeting date

Meeting date to be determined by progress with AECOM project. Possible Town walk to be arranged with AECOM to discuss issues and outcomes.