

Notes from the Watton Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Working Group Meeting held 16.11.21

Present: Jane Fountain, David Dent, Pat Warwick, Liz Whitcher, Kathryn Stallard

Present from item 3: Peter Bishop

Virtually attending from item 4: Tina Kiddell, Breckland Council Neighbourhood Planning Officer Susan Heinrich and NP Consultant Ian Poole

Notes taken by Jane Scarrott

1. Apologies for absence received from Keith Gilbert
2. Notes from the NP meeting held on 02.11.21 were accepted
3. Jane Fountain, the Chairman of the Group informed those present that she no longer has the time to commit to the Group and wished to stand down. Jane will still attend meetings if she is able. She was thanked for her time and work for the Watton Neighbourhood Plan.

The Group elected David Dent to be Chairman. This decision will be an agenda item for ratification at the Town Council meeting on 23.11.21.

4. Breckland District Council Neighbourhood Planning Officer Susan Heinrich (SH) was asked to briefly explain her role within the Neighbourhood Plan process:
 - As the BDC dedicated NP Officer Susan provides free help and advice to Neighbourhood Plan Groups
 - Susan first visited Watton to give an initial NP presentation some 4 years ago and generally she does not attend regular meetings of any NP Group but will pass informal comments on emerging plans before formal consultation
 - Once informal comments have been made Susan meets with Groups to consider the comments
 - Further informal comments from other officers and departments with BDC are also likely to be made and further discussion is undertaken with the Group before the formal consultation stage.
 - SH bases her feedback around comments made by NP examiners and tries to pre-empt what issues an examiner may raise within a plan so the NP Group can make informed decisions as to whether changes are needed to their plan. SH flags what could be issues so assisting the NP Group to make informed decisions.

The NP Group need to understand the points raised by SH and respond appropriately.

5. Review of Plan Comments

IP had provided suggested Town Council/NP Working Group responses to the initial informal comments from BDC to the draft NP Plan. Members of the Group were provided with a list of IP's suggested responses which were discussed. As formatting and grammatical amendments, if not already addressed, will be dealt with at the final proof reading stage it was agreed to focus on the planning policies.

Points considered:

WTN 1 – recommendation no change but glossary to be added to the Plan to address terms used in the policy.

Flooding is Policy 1 in the Watton NP as flooding is of major concern in Watton.

WTN 2 – Noted that the suggestion to make this the first policy at the start of the chapter was only an observation made by SH but it was agreed that the word “occupied” would be better replaced with “brought into use”.

WTN 3 – SH comments that the policy is negatively phrased in parts was noted but the approach has been accepted in a number of examined neighbourhood plans and it was also accepted that making reference to other guidance in a policy risks the policy becoming out of date when the guidance is revised.

Noted that Highway adopted standards are not planning standards and that planning needs to be flexible and policies should reflect this.

WTN 4 – to be amended as worded by IP

WTN 5 – no change recommended
(BDC Officers concern may remain!)

WTN 6 – to be amended as worded by IP. Suggested that BDC Housing Team could be asked to comment.

WTN 7 – no change recommended
(SH suggested that the relevance of the proximity to the Breckland SPA be included)

WTN 8 – no change recommended

WTN 9 – no change recommended. Concern voiced that unless a planning policy has weight it is likely to be considered supportive text only.

WTN 10 - no change recommended

All comments relating to format, spelling etc. were not considered relevant as many have already been addressed in later versions of the Plan and any others will be picked up once the document has been desk-top published.

A review of the photos and images within the NP will also be undertaken by IP prior to presentation of the final draft. Graphs will be made uniform and enlarged so they can be viewed easily.

Overall it was agreed to proceed with the suggested responses as provided by IP.

SH can provide a comprehensive set of comments now or at the Plan consultation stage with another meeting to be held with the Group after Reg. 14.

SH voiced concern that National Guidance suggests Community Actions are placed in a separate document and if they remain within the NP, which is a statutory document, the examiner (or others) may comment on them. The whole plan is to undergo public consultation.

6. Amendments to Draft Plan 09.11.21

The as suggested by IP were agreed with IP to present the final version of the Plan to the Group on November 30th, ready for presentation to Full Council on December 14th 2021.

LW will send recommended changes to IP.

IP is confident any examiner will not be concerned with the community actions and therefore further evidence for the actions is not needed. The community actions are not felt to be subject to the basic conditions check.

Noted that the Council will be given the choice of using one of three independent examiners. BDC recruit the examiners who do not have a local vested interest.

7. No further Reports

8. Date of next NP meeting: **Tuesday November 30th 3.30pm**