

Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group Meeting

Wednesday 5th October 2016 at 5.00pm Castle Park House

Attendees:

Peter Vickery Chair Resident

Caroline Ashton, FTC

Alex Villiers Resident

Liam Jones, FTC

Gill Hesketh, Support and Admin, Resident

Apologies from: Mark Warren

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss PV's proposal for moving forward-see below.

Moving Forward;

PV took the meeting through the document and explained his thinking. The meeting agreed it was an appropriate way forward. PV had also had an A0 map of Frodsham laminated for use at meetings and presentations; it was suggested that all significant and officially listed buildings should be marked on this map (as listed in the Frodsham Town Design Statement), and that green/open spaces and green belt should also be marked.

Discussion took place on how to engage the local population and raise the profile of the NP; the suggestion of producing a leaflet to be circulated during Frodsham's Christmas festival (26th November 2016) was accepted. The wording will be drafted by PV, the meeting was keen to produce a concise punchy leaflet to attract attention, possibly using photographs of "before & after" of Eddisbury Square taken from the book "Frodsham & Helsby Through Time" by Paul Hurley.

Website

The meeting agreed it would be useful to finalise the website homepage so the public could be directed there for more information: GH to contact the website developer for a meeting to agree the website content.

Library of resources

A library of resources and relevant documents is to be collated in hard copy and lodged at the council offices, and electronic copies accessible from the website. Relevant items included:

Local Plan parts one and two

Frodsham Town Design Statement

CWaC's Frodsham Snapshot (from census data)

Frodsham Town Survey

CWaC's definition of "green space"

Definition of "Affordable Housing".

Local Plan part two

Gill Smith, planning officer at CWaC is to be asked to join one of our meetings to help the SG's understanding of how the Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan link together.

Action from this meeting:

ACTION	OUTCOME
GH to invite Jack to next meeting to discuss website	Sent 6/10
GH to invite Gill Smith to meeting	Sent 6/10
GH to collate a library of relevant documents	
PV to draft flyer for circulation at Christmas Festival	

The meeting closed at 7.00pm.

Following meeting dates are:

12th & 26th October 2016

9th & 23rd November 2016

14th December 2016

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation

October 2016 Going Forward – Document for Discussion

Progress to Date

Having established a small core team as the Steering Group, we have made good progress on the initial framework of the plan:

The Vision:

Frodsham will:

- Be thriving and sustainable
- Value its community and heritage
- Encourage innovation, collaboration and social cohesion
- Promote access to services

The Aims:

Thriving & Sustainable - To ensure that Frodsham has a sustainable demographic profile with services that support that profile and enable the community / town to prosper

Community & Heritage - To generate a pride in our community and maintain a broad range of activities that respects our cultural and physical heritage

Innovation / cohesion / collaboration – To promote activities that encourage community cohesion and support innovation whilst working in partnership

Access - Promote the infrastructure and access to services that support the above

Difficulties Encountered

All of the above reflect the values of the Community at a high level and can be tied back to documents already in the public domain from the Launch Event and earlier consultations. The task going forward is agreed to be the formulation of objectives and policy statements.

This is where our problems began and despite great work by Mark, we seemed to be on the defensive when it comes to wording these. It is also clear that our audit trail back to community consultations is less clear from this point forward. It was also made clear to us by CWAC that the focus of a Neighbourhood Plan has to be on future land use. Wish lists for the future of Frodsham outside this scope will simply be discarded.

Reflecting on this, it seems we should agree on a single policy objective for our Neighbourhood Plan. The wording needs improving but it feels like:

“To inform the local planning process on the future development of land within the Frodsham boundary”

Once you've said that, then the aims and themes we have laboured can clearly be seen as the success criteria against which any particular application can be evaluated, namely:

- Contributes to a sustainable demographic profile
- Respects Frodsham's cultural and physical heritage
- Supports economic development within Frodsham
- Improves community cohesion
- Complements the developing infrastructure both within the town and across the Borough
- Protects surrounding Green Belt land from inappropriate developments
- Protects Frodsham's Green Spaces and valued buildings

If we then ask ourselves the question “how do we achieve our policy objective”, then, remembering the focus on land use we have a shorter list of alternatives to look at:

- Use currently undeveloped land within the Frodsham boundary
- Use brownfield land within the Frodsham boundary
- Use “back land” on existing developments
- Convert existing developments from residential to commercial use or vice-versa

The criteria become the means by which applications can be judged and the possible sites within these four classifications are the locations for which planning applications may come forward in the future.

We can now begin to develop policy statements for each of these 4 options; clearly there is work to do to closely define both the criteria (eg what green spaces?) and develop our map.

However, without community participation, we risk being accused of a lack of transparency if we simply develop our statements within a small group. Better to re-prioritise our work research the relevant documents and engage with the community before we commit more detailed ideas to paper.

Way forward

We now have a grant of £5060.00, which has been approved. This money must be spent by the end of the financial year or within 6 months of the date of the award whichever is the earliest. So let us assume that we need to spend this money by March 31st 2017.

We are down to a small team comprising Peter, Gill and Caroline (regular) and Liam, Mark and Alex (less regular). Gill's expenses are excluded from the grant monies and are separately paid by FTC.

Forward Programme Construction

I have identified 3 immediate tasks following the sessions with Richard Thresh and the publication of the CWAC Local Plan part 2.

Firstly, the Steering Group needs to agree a breakdown for the plan focussing on the key issue of Future Land Use with the Frodsham boundary.

Secondly the SG must draw up a map of the area from the several that exist. Copies of this will act as templates to be used for the subsequent super-position of data for analysis and public scrutiny.

The third activity is to begin the assembly of a library of source materials with some simple classification for reference. These are available from national, CWAC and FTC sources. These will need to be accessed from the web-site and so completion of the site, or its availability for the SG to add in this kind of material is the third immediate task.

Considering the first task, to give structure to the plan, a decision is required now on the programme of public engagement over this period of the plan.

As a suggestion, two landmark public events might be considered. The first on the "Built Environment" covering housing and commercial developments and the level of protection to be given to existing infrastructure such as valued buildings. The second would cover "Open Spaces" which would cover Green Belt, Green Spaces, Parks and Gardens and Recreation, Sporting and Play Areas. Let's keep it this simple.

If we agree on this now and schedule the first event for mid-January and the second for mid-March we are in a position to book rooms now and do some preliminary publicity to encourage participation and attendance.

Each event would be effectively a one-day conference with a mix of presentations and public discussion so that people could listen to views from others and record their views on the map and other media we can supply.

Ahead of each event we would circulate questionnaires and assemble presentational material to prompt discussion and responses. We can use the web site to support this as well as to identify the key documents people should read.

Getting feedback from the audience is vital and we should engage facilitation expertise to run the process at each event.

With this approach I would suggest we hold off further work on policy statements until we have digested the feedback, i.e. during the next phase of the programme starting in April 2017. We can schedule the publication of draft policy statements based on this process for May / June 2017 again via the web site. In this way, community ownership of policies is clearly transparent.

If we can agree on this approach then we can explore how to engage with the Community.

Given the experience so far, I suggest we ditch the idea of working groups and simply co-opt onto the SG 2 or 3 volunteers for each of our two topic areas.

In the run-up to each event our team will need to involve key stakeholders. These will include landowners, schools councils and the like, identifying those willing to make presentations at the events and / or supply presentational material (e.g. a High School view of the future).

To progress this we will need fortnightly SG meetings and in non-SG meeting weeks, if a room could be set aside as a Project Office, then material can be continuously reviewed and assembled and urgent actions addressed. Attendance would be on a drop-in basis between certain times and one or two SG members should commit to be there.

All comments on the above welcome – it needs to be a working proposal for September 28th

Peter Vickery, September 22nd 2016