

Minutes of Eight Virtual Meeting of Renhold Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

Thursday 11th March 2021 at 7.00pm

N.B. – To save space, Actions to be taken are highlighted in Turquoise

Present: -

Amanda Quince (Chair), Ian McIver (I.T), Keith Herkes (Treasurer), Jooles Roberts (Minutes Sec), Claudia Dietz, Sandra Einon, Nicky Gribble, Dennis Ivins, Sarah Mitchell-Wood, Tony Ploszajski, Kirstin Rayner and Paul Sawford.

Specialist Planning Consultant: Sally Chapman, Chapman Planning.

Guest speakers: Kim Wilson & Sonia Gallaher, Bedford Borough Council Planning Department

1. Welcome & apologies for absence (AQ) AQ welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies received: Peter Norris, who was attending a meeting of BEFARE (Bedford for a reconsultation), the new name for the coalition of Parish Councils who are working together on the East West Rail project.

Thanks recorded for Peter's wonderful work on our behalf.

2. Introduction of new team members – if any None

3. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial interest for the meeting (AQ/All) None

4. Guest speakers: Kim Wilson & Sonia Gallaher, Bedford Borough Council Planning Department

AQ welcomed Kim & Sonia and thanked them for agreeing to speak with the group

SG started by saying that the Local Planning Review is in preparation & will be subject to consultation in the summer of this year. This consultation will be similar to last year, although the pandemic means that things change weekly so the exact format is not yet known, but all documents will be on the Council website. The Neighbourhood Plan will run alongside the Local Plan.

KW went on to say that the Neighbourhood Plan needs to be in conformity with the adopted policies at the time that it is examined. This means plans written now will be examined against Local Plan 2030.

The relationship of the Neighbourhood Plan to the emerging Local Plan

Should Renhold NPWG wait to see what emerges with regard to the 2040 Local Plan? The 2030 2040 LP will not be fully determined until 2023 at the earliest. The currently adopted Plan (Local Plan 2030) does not require allocation of housing sites in Renhold. Therefore the NP could still include some development sites if preferred or it could just include policies with regard to numbers, design, materials etc., the main thing is not to repeat policies that are in the local plan but to include policies which add value to what is already there. Adding a Renhold specific dimension.

In answer to TP's question regarding whether the 2040 Plan would become operational from 2023, Kim said that it had to be submitted (to the Planning Inspectorate) by summer January 2023 but will not be adopted until the end of 2023 assuming it passes Examination. The NP policies should be consistent and need to be monitored and reviewed in relation to the LP.

How the Local Planning Authority uses a Neighbourhood Plan (once it is complete) to deal with Planning Applications

The Neighbourhood Plan once made (adopted) will become part of the Bedford Borough Development Plan and its policies are used in determining planning applications. The Development Plan currently includes:

- The saved policies of the Local Plan 2002
- The continuing policies of the Allocations and Designations Local Plan 2013
- The Local Plan 2030
- Policies Map
- Neighbourhood Plans (that have been made)

The Renhold NP would carry some weight as it goes through the stages, but will have more weight once it has gone through the examination stage.

KW said that the Development Management Officers will look at all the relevant policies which form the Development Plan and will consider these alongside the which will include NP policies once the plan is made when assessing planning applications.

For the Neighbourhood Plan, the examiners tend to be retired planning experts, who will fully look at the evidence including the consultation responses & will write a report. They may suggest some minor changes, i.e., wording, some criteria changes, for example if policies just repeat the LP. The Mayor then has to make the an Executive decision to agree & accept the examiners' report, agree the Plan and move it forward to referendum. The whole Parish are invited to vote, with 50% of those who voted being in favour needed for the Plan to be made.

IM asked whether the examiners would pay a visit to the village. Once the Regulation 16 submission consultation is finished, all the documents are sent to the examiner who will ask questions, usually giving the P.C. two weeks to respond, and then an unaccompanied site visit will take place. BBC employs a consultant company, IPE, who organise the examiners who tend to be retired planning experts. The P.C will be sent a short C.V. of the available examiners and RNPWG will be able to choose, probably from three.

AQ asked whether BBC look over the Plan before it is sent to IPE and was told yes, BBC check certain things which are in the documents and that all the necessary documents are included, but RNPWG are lucky as SC will ensure everything complies before it goes to BBC. Kim suggested that the draft can be sent to BBC for comment, which will include suggestions & feedback from the people who will be using the policies. BBC provide a list of what documents are required to support the NP.

CD enquired whether BBC like to see individual policies as the Plan progresses, or as a bundle. It is best to send a bundle, but the content can be brief.

KH enquired what cost will be covered by BBC & was told all such things as leaflets, ballot papers, polling cards at Regulation 16 submission will be paid by BBC. RNP need to fund Regulation 14.

SC asked whether Development Management staff at BBC will have been trained to understand how Neighbourhood Plans work, as she has experience of other Councils where this was not the case. KW said that so far they have not had an issue, and the comments would come from BBC through the planning policy team anyway. SG agreed saying that as the Plan goes through, the planning policy team who collate comments from the various internal officers vets it all. They are there to offer helpful comments, but RNPWG do not have to use the advice given, they will be recommendations only, and comments are made with the aim of creating an effective Plan and policies.

SG asked that 4-6 weeks' notice be given to BBC when requesting advice, particularly in relation to the Draft Plan, so that they can coordinate staff, but again SC will ensure that RNP meets all requirements.

KW & SG were thanked for their time, and invited to stay for the rest of the meeting should they so wish. CD was thanked for suggesting that they be involved at this early stage, which had proved very useful.

5. Review of Minutes of 7th Meeting of RNPWG and Matters Arising (AQ)

Everyone confirmed that they had received the Minutes, and there were no matters arising

6. Update on progress with the P.C./N.P. website (IM)

The P.C. have taken over the whole issue of the website, allowing a significant section for the NP. Following a full market analysis 5 companies were selected based not just on price, but also functionality, appearance and the cost to keep it updated. A poll of all Parish Councillors was carried out, and Robbie Bays of Bays Media was chosen. It is a local company & Robbie Bays is very approachable and fits all the criteria based on value for money. The P.C. resolved to work with Robbie on the basis that RNPWG pays for its section, and the P.C. pays the bulk. A .gov.uk domain has been purchased – the Clerk to Stondon P.C. has been very helpful – and although there is now something on the new website to see, it is not quite ready to be distributed for opinions. Robbie has come forward with ideas, photos have been provided to him, and he is transferring some information across from the existing P.C. website. The new website will be linked to the Facebook site which IM had already purchased & Robbie will update this as well. AQ thanked IM and said that Robbie is a good co-creator making a powerful team.

7. Initial results of G.I. Survey (KH)

Having done all the leg work for the survey with regard to leaflets & collection boxes it has now been taken out of our hands. Responses in paper form were relatively low, with a reasonable number using the on-line form. The total number of responses, from the 1400 households in the village, was 88. KH felt, as did obviously some of those in attendance at this meeting, that this was disappointing, but Cliff Andrews has said that it is actually very good, with other P.C. surveys receiving far fewer responses. Very little information from the survey is yet

available. Information from the paper copies is being uploaded and an analysis is being done, with the results being available for the April meeting of RNPWG

NG questioned whether 88 responses is enough for a sound analysis, and was told that CA has said that the number is not as vital as having responses from a good cross section of the community, i.e. not all from one area of the village.

KR said that CA will write a draft report and then the draft results can be published by RNPWG for people to say whether they think the aspirations identified are a good thing, or a bad thing. There will still be the second opportunity to give your opinion, so do not worry too much, it will very much depend what people have said on the survey.

AQ reminded everyone that the meeting on 15th April is designated for the results of the survey, but if they are received before that date they will be circulated to the Group.

8. Project progress view (AQ/All) AQ pointed out that in view of the fact that she, IM, KH & NG are very busy with other P.C. matters that a lot has been achieved: the Neighbourhood Area, which includes the whole parish, has been designated, funding has been secured from Locality, TP has provided an analysis of the evidence base and has analysed the results from the initial resident survey to identify key themes, a flyer has been distributed to keep all residents up to speed with the recent Call for Sites and the East West Rail Route E corridor, the vision and objectives had been drafted, a website provider has been secured, Terms of Reference have been written and the GI plan is underway. The Group were asked who had received the Terms of Reference (copy attached to these Minutes) and IM confirmed that only one member had not been sent these, and he would do this without delay **IM**. These have to be passed at the next full P.C. meeting on Wednesday March 17th. Everyone was asked to look at them and make comment should they so wish before then. AQ said that NPWG also need to be aware of the P.C. Code of Conduct, **IM** to distribute.

SC suggested that the last line in the Terms of Reference should read “may be dissolved” rather than “will be dissolved” by the Parish Council, as this leaves things open for a review if needed. The NP should be monitored every 5 years and then reviewed if something is triggered. The Working Group can be completely inactive, but they will still be there if needed.

9. Sally Chapman – next steps (SC/All) SC said that the first part has been completed, and now is the time to start bringing together information on the various aspects of the Plan. People responsible for sections of the Plan need a shared drive. IM said he is aware of this and will be working on it **IM**. SC continued that the main focus is to get the GIP finalized & endorsed by the P.C. The Housing Needs Survey will also run in parallel – it is all about gathering information together. CD has done a lot of work on Gaps Policy– high quality, sustainable buildings – and this needs to be put into the shared folder so that everyone knows where this information can be found.

The second part. AQ asked if it was realistic to set up housing needs analysis for May. SC said yes as BedsRCC are doing that. It is a different type of questionnaire and SC would not expect to get too many replies.

Call for Sites has to be applied for by the P.C. and a technical package can be provided by Locality. They would look at what RNPWG are looking for, i.e., small scale development, affordable housing etc. This is quite a complicated work stream.

AQ asked whether money for AECOM is separate from Housing Needs, & SC said yes and this should be applied for via Locality at the same time.

What needs to be done now:-

The bringing together of a structured document:-

Spacing between the Ends has been covered.

Landscape/character assessment needs more information, just mentioning the Ends is not enough. These and views would all tie up together in one policy area.

Biodiversity, landscapes, public access all tie up together. **TP** offered to take on the tasks relating to biodiversity & landscapes & to put the information into the shared drive. **SC** to send a link to Bedford Borough Council with regard to landscapes to IM, who will forward it on to TP. KR said that Landscapes Character Assessment will be part of that.

Historic information etc will be required, more than just what is in the GIP. IM said that some work is being done, almost as a subcontractor to BRCC, by BMRC. KR suggested that information in relation to endangered animals etc. comes from a different body. BMRC covers the cost of OS map licenses. TP said that the biological records information was very out of date, with no mention of the key species in the Parish, and there is no up to date analysis. **TP** offered to work on this.

Historic environments. JR offered to do some work on Listed Buildings (including photos), as the information with regard to some house names and numbers on the lists she has seen is definitely wrong, and TP offered to work with her on this.

Potted history of the village SC said that this is not necessary, but is just nice to have in the Plan, identifying heritage aspects and features. There is a guide setting out what non-designated assets are. NG suggested that an elderly resident who has huge knowledge of Renhold might be approached. AQ to speak to him. AQ suggested making a plea for help with anything the Group cannot do themselves. KH will include this in with his report for the Village Magazine.

Design It is possible to ask Locality to do a design code, but if it is done by the Group it is more meaningful, but it is a lot of work. CD, who is already doing GAP Policy, offered to do design too.

SC to send to CD the Suttons Design Code. NG asked for clarification that this is building design and was told it is. Identify buildings in the village, what do we want new buildings to look like? The Environment Bill asks for 10% gain in biodiversity increase in all new buildings and development. NG enquired whether 'dark skies' would be in this section. There is information available from CPRE which should be put into the shared drive.

Housing A Housing Needs Survey will be done, and AQ advised caution with regard to survey fatigue, especially as villagers are about to be asked to join in the fight against East/West Rail Route E. AQ/PN are attending an EWR meeting with the Minister of State for Transport on Monday, & the Parish Councillors will be meeting Borough officials in early April, after which the P.C. may want to do another flyer.

SC suggested that the Group is doing a lot of work at the same time, and if desired some of it could be put together at the end. Background information is enough for her to translate into policies, she just needs factual information in the one place.

Traffic & Transport Rights of Way, etc. These will be captured in the GIP, as will recreation and spaces.

Community assets/local businesses SC is not aware of very many businesses within the village, but suggested mentioning the village shop, school, etc. AQ to follow up. Mention farms, the local farm shop, the many businesses operating from home. There does not need to be a policy on businesses, and for the moment do not try to list them. A business survey is not necessary.

Land survey This should show information on each bit of land in the village. SC suggested that AQ ask Lizzie, the Parish Clerk, who has just completed Wilstead's Land Registry, for help. The costs will be known by the Chair of Wilstead P.C.

AQ asked if anyone had any questions, and none were raised

10. Agreement on work packages, volunteers and timescales (AQ/All)

No timescales set, as EWR and GI Plan are taking precedence right now

Gaps Policy and Design Coding CD

Biodiversity and Landscapes TP/NG

Historic Environment TP/JR

Website IM/KH/AQ

GI Plan follow up KH

Village History and Community Assets/Businesses AQ

Funding IM/KH/AQ

11. Arrangements for next meeting with BedsRCC on April 15th 2021 (AQ/All)

KH to confirm with BedsRCC that the first round of the GI Plan work will be completed and that they are still available on 15th April

The meeting closed at 8.30 pm.