

ATTLEBOROUGH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP

Minutes of the above steering group meeting held at
Attleborough Town Hall, Queens Square, Attleborough, Norfolk
on Tuesday 6th May at 6:30 p.m.

1. INTRODUCTION

The meeting commenced at 6:32 p.m. Cllr. Middleton thanked the members for attending and explained that the purpose of the meeting was for updates, to assign tasks and discuss action to be taken. The minutes of the last meeting held on the 25th March 2014 were agreed by the Steering Group (SG) members in attendance.

1.1. Present

Richard Middleton - Chair & Councillor for Attleborough Town Council, Queens Ward.

Adrian Joel - Councillor for Breckland Council, Buckenham Ward.

Tony Perkins - Councillor for Attleborough Town Council, Queens Ward.

Roger Bond - Councillor for Attleborough Town Council, Burgh / Haverscroft Ward.

Colin Kilby - Manager of Breckland Lodge Hotel.

Phillip Leslie - Director of Eastern Attachments Limited.

Terry Cracknell - Representative from Business Forum.

Tony Bradstreet - Clerk to Besthorpe Parish Council.

Keith Martin - Councillor for Breckland Council, Burgh/Haverscroft Ward.

Lucy McLean - Practice Manager of Attleborough Surgeries.

Sarah Foulger - Director of Banham Poultry Limited.

Edward Tyrer - Councillor for Attleborough Town Council, Queens Ward.

Alistair Martin - Doctor and partner at Attleborough Surgeries.

1.2. Absent

Jayne Owen - Councillor for Attleborough Town Council, Queens Ward.

Neil McShane - Head Teacher of Attleborough Academy Norfolk.

Steve Hall - Representative of Attleborough Community Team.

2. APOLOGIES

Phil Mileham - Breckland Council Deputy Planning Manager.

Derek Smalley - Councillor for Old Buckenham Parish.

3. UPDATES

Cllr. Middleton went around the room to get an update from the groups in attendance.

3.1. Employment Updates

3.1.1. Meeting with Mr. George Freeman M.P.

Cllr. Perkins advised that the employment team had met with George Freeman M.P. at his Surgery on 2nd May 2014. They had briefed Mr. Freeman on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan and spoke about issues for local employment. Mr. Freeman felt that there was opportunity for more support for local businesses in this area.

Mr. Leslie advised that he had been in contact with the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) just prior to the meeting with Mr. Freeman. The outcome of the discussions with the LEP were good and Mr. Leslie felt that they were now speaking with the right people to get progress on the ongoing problems for his and other local businesses. Mr. Leslie returned to the topic of the meeting with Mr. Freeman and advised that the team had discussed specific issues for the town. Mr. Freeman explained that the A11 corridor is one of his priorities and that Attleborough is pivotal in his vision of the Cambridge/Norwich link up; he is keen support the SG.

Mr. Freeman suggested that Attleborough Town Council (ATC) invite him to chair a meeting for local businesses and other interested parties in order to gauge feeling on planning, business and employment and to help get matters moving forward politically within Breckland. Cllr. Middleton raised the matter of notifying Breckland Council (BC) representatives and asked District Cllrs. Joel and Martin to informally update relevant members of BC. Ms. Foulger explained that it was the intention that BC be invited and Mr. Leslie added that Mr. Freeman also wanted to include the LEP.

Mr. Cracknell read out an email from Michael Wassel, leader of BC which had been sent out to the business forums in the area. The email explained that the council was undertaking a review with business communities in Breckland and until that review had taken place, Mr. Wassel would not be attending any forums. This email had gone out to the business groups of Attleborough, Dereham, Swaffham, Thetford and Watton. There was no timescale given for the review but Cllr. Tyrer thought that it may be the District Wide Plan that was being referred to.

Mr. Leslie said a meeting with Mr. Freeman would help to clarify matters and give him a clear understanding of the problems and perspectives of both local government and businesses. Cllr. Perkins felt that if they could engage Mr. Freeman and enlist his help, it could only add weight to the SG's work. Mr. Kilby advised that Mr. Freeman wanted as many members of the SG and local businesses as possible at the meeting. The employment team stated that their group was obtaining a database of local companies. The SG members confirmed that they would be happy to share their contact details.

❖ ACTION: Employment team to obtain database of local businesses.

3.1.2. Initial Neighbourhood Plan Proposals

Mr. Leslie spoke to the SG about the presentation that the employment team had put together containing some initial proposals for the Neighbourhood Plan. Members of the SG felt that the ideas in the presentation would raise more questions and concerns and while it was important to share information with the town as soon as possible, it should be made clear within the presentation that these were initial ideas and that no decisions had been made. Mr. Leslie confirmed that this initial proposal included various ideas looked at from a business and employment perspective and it was a starting point designed to offer topics for discussion. Cllr. Middleton advised that an electronic copy of the presentation would be sent out with the minutes but asked that the SG not share this until agreed. Mr. Kilby asked Cllr. Middleton to include a request for feedback when the presentation was sent out to the group members. Ms. Foulger reiterated that, from the employment team's point of view, the presentation was an initiative and Mr. Leslie advised that the team would look at amending the presentation with a view to sharing it with the local business forum, following feedback from the SG. Mr. Cracknell asked whether there was anything, at this stage, that they could issue in a newsletter to the residents of the town and Cllr. Middleton thought that the SG should start with the business forum. Mr. Cracknell confirmed that the Attleborough & Snetterton forum had already expressed an interest in a dedicated meeting regarding the plans.

❖ ACTION: SG members to provide feedback on employment team's presentation.

3.1.3. Employment Areas

Cllr. Middleton asked about the wider employment issues and whether the team were any further forward in identifying employment areas. Mr. Leslie advised that several areas had been identified within the initial presentation together with a full range of employment types. Mr. Leslie added that, from his discussions, he believed that there was significant interest from local businesses and developers, which could bring a significant increase in employment. Cllr. Tyrer stressed the importance of the involvement of the LEP. Cllr. Bond felt that it would be a point in the SG's favour if it was seen by the LEP as the conduit for local businesses, providing a lead in the Attleborough area; this was seconded by Mr. Leslie. District Cllr. Joel reminded the SG that the BC Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan needed to work side-by-side to avoid conflicting aims. Cllr. Tyrer said that he had managed to speak with Mr. Mileham of BC and arrange a meeting on 13th May.

3.2. Infrastructure Working Groups

3.2.1. Health & Social Care Update

Cllr. Middleton explained that progress had been slow but he hoped to get matters underway in the next few weeks.

3.2.2. Education & Sports & Leisure Update

Cllr. Bond updated the SG that he had been in touch with Sports England and was trying to get in touch with Steve James of BC regarding regional sports provision to

find where there are gaps which Sports England may be able to fill. Cllr. Bond advised that he was getting in touch with the Ten Group Facilities Director, Stuart Molineaux and that the UEA Sportspark director had agreed to be involved if needed. Cllr. Middleton referred to the section on sports facilities in the employment team's presentation which Cllr. Bond acknowledged. Cllr. Bond asked how they should go about instructing a consultant to review any plans or reports. Cllr. Tyrer replied that ATC had approved the initial consultation work and that the SG needed to speak to Mr. Mileham further regarding exactly what was needed.

Moving on to the education aspect, Cllr. Tyrer felt that it would be beneficial to get the county education authority involved to explain its plans for the next 10-15 years. Cllr. Middleton thought that the regional education strategy was to have taken place in March but Cllr. Tyrer advised that this was in abeyance, from primary onwards. Cllr. Bond suggested making contact with Chris Hey, Norfolk County Council's Head of Place, Planning and Organisation who is responsible for writing the strategy. District Cllr. Joel raised the matter of the school sites and what input the SG had regarding this. The SG went on to discuss who owned the sites. Cllr. Middleton felt that it would be useful to also invite the head teachers of the junior, infant and Chapel Road schools together with Old Buckenham High. Cllr. Tyrer also suggested getting in touch with Mr. McShane to get contact details for the heads of the various feeder schools.

3.2.3. *Transport Updates*

Cllr. Tyrer explained that they were reviewing Capita Symonds reports regarding transport. Cllr. Middleton stressed the importance of providing options, as there was already a great deal of evidence. Cllr. Tyrer confirmed and advised that they were following due process.

3.3. Funding

Cllr. Perkins updated the SG that they were still trying to get additional funds through ATC but this would be difficult until the town clerk position was filled. Ms. Foulger suggested asking for funding ideas at the business meeting and Cllr. Bond advised that he had spoken with developers who were willing to contribute once more information was available.

4. CONSULTATION

While developers were happy to liaise individually, it had been difficult to arrange a joint consultation with several developers and that this could pose difficulties in delivering and progressing realistic plans where co-operation was essential. Cllr. Tyrer advised that district councils and planning authorities were taking a pragmatic and pro-active approach to brokering meetings between developers if it was felt that there was an impasse. Cllr. Middleton suggested raising this with Mr. Mileham at the forthcoming meeting. In the meantime, Mr. Kilby recommended that they continue

making contact individually with each developer. The SG went through the list of developers and agents currently interested in the area:-

- Taylor Wimpey
- Attleborough Land
- Gladedale Estates
- Persimmon
- Orbit Housing
- Hopkins Homes
- Ptarmigan
- Savills
- Bidwells
- Hanse House
- Norfolk Homes

Members discussed the best way to progress ideas, at what point to engage with the developers and by what method. It was important that the SG should not simply cover old ground; it needed to produce something substantive regarding infrastructure requirements over the next 20/30 years, together with some idea of costs. Some of the information was already available or could perhaps be obtained from the developers themselves. Cllr. Middleton said that the SG should first come up with the ideas of what the town both needed and wanted. Cllr. Tyrer felt that, given the limited amount of time SG members had available, this would be best achieved by members feeding those ideas to consultants who would then take work forward, using the Neighbourhood Plan vanguard funds as agreed by ATC. Mr. Cracknell felt that once the options were decided, the funding sources, including local private funding, would be necessary as the costs would not be entirely covered by developers or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Cllr. Bond raised the importance of following the correct procedure with options and public consultation in order to comply with local government requirements for the Neighbourhood Plan. District Cllr. Martin gave the Banham Poultry site consultation as an example of good consultation. There was a discussion about how many Neighbourhood Plans had been prepared so far in the area and Cllr. Middleton advised that there were now several and details could be found on the Neighbourhood Planning Team website.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/groups/neighbourhood-planning-team>

5. NEXT STEPS

5.1. Mr. George Freeman M.P. & Business Forums

Cllr. Middleton said that he would write, on behalf of ATC, to Mr. Freeman to invite him to chair a business meeting. Cllrs. Bond, Perkins and Tyrer would raise the matter with the council at their meeting on 12th May under the Neighbourhood Plan agenda item. Following feedback from the SG members, the employment team would develop their plans in readiness for the business forum meeting on the 21st May.

- ❖ ACTION: Cllr. Middleton to write to Mr. Freeman from ATC with an invitation to chair a business meeting.
- ❖ ACTION: Cllrs. Bond, Perkins & Tyrer to raise the meeting with Mr Freeman at the next full ATC meeting on 12th May.
- ❖ ACTION: SG members to provide feedback on employment team's presentation.
- ❖ ACTION: Employment team to update presentation prior to business forum meeting on 21st May.

5.2. Sports & Leisure, Health & Social, Education & Other Infrastructure

Ms. Foulger raised the matter of the next steps for the employment team. Cllr. Middleton replied that the working groups would need to come up with ideas for both the Health & Social Care and Sports & Leisure aspects. Ms. Foulger and Mr. Leslie offered to assist while they had some time and would liaise with Cllr. Bond. Cllr. Perkins advised that he had spoken with sports teams in the area who felt that independent facilities, outside of school sites, would be preferred to ensure better access for all. Cllrs. Middleton and Bond acknowledged this but revenue to maintain such facilities would be the issue. Mr. Kilby and Ms. Foulger shared their own experiences of local people currently having difficulties accessing over-subscribed facilities and having to use sports clubs or facilities in other towns.

Ms. McLean advised that there was nothing relevant to update the group with but that she would provide the Chairman with an update on discussions with NHS England later. Mr. Cracknell offered to liaise with Dr. Martin and Ms. McLean about ideas and plans for Health & Social Care facilities. Cllr. Middleton said that he would move ahead with the Health & Social Care project with Mr. Cracknell and the surgery, together with Jenny Manser of Aylsham & District Care Trust, Elizabeth Burrows of Attleborough Day Care Centre and Edward Hare, an advisor to healthcare organisations.

On the education side, Cllr. Middleton said that he would invite Mr. Hey to talk about plans for schools in the area. District Cllr. Joel advised that there was a meeting in June to discuss schools in the area and after that, Mr. Hey would have a better understanding of the matter.

Cllr. Middleton suggested that the SG should get in touch with Connaught Hall Trustees and Cllr. Perkins offered to make contact, which was approved.

- ❖ ACTION: Cllr. Perkins to liaise with local sports teams & Connaught Hall trustees.
- ❖ ACTION: Employment team to liaise with Cllr. Bond re sports and Sports England.
- ❖ ACTION: Cllr. Middleton & Mr. Cracknell to liaise with Ms. Manser, Mr. Hare & Ms. Burrows on Health & Social Care project.
- ❖ ACTION: Cllr. Middleton to contact Mr. Hey re school plans.

5.3. Developers & Breckland Council

Cllr. Tyrer would meet with Mr. Mileham of BC to get information on due diligence, tying in with the Local Plan and where the Council were with upcoming plans for the area.

The employment team suggested developer discussions begin with Attleborough Land who had done a great deal of research but they asked that a councillor lead on this as the developer preferred to share information direct with the council. Cllr. Bond had already been in contact so he would lead. The SG agreed that they did not want to favour any one developer so discussed the possibility of an informal forum at the Town Hall to share ideas with all developers at the same time.

- ❖ ACTION: Cllr. Tyrer to meet with Mr. Mileham.
- ❖ ACTION: Cllr. Bond to make contact with Attleborough Land and obtain info.
- ❖ ACTION: At their next meeting, the steering group to consider organising a forum for developers.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 24th June at 6:30 p.m. at Attleborough Town Hall.

Cllr. Middleton brought the meeting to a close at 8:10 p.m. and thanked everyone for their time.

(Note-taker: Sarah Seaman)