

## Neighbourhood Plan Meeting

1<sup>st</sup> March 2022

In attendance: Caroline Rackham, Amy Hardingson, Katherine, Lesley Edwards, Neville Penman, Richard Lewis, Susan Compton, Ann Page, Christine Farleigh

Time of Meeting start: 19.00

Caroline: No apologies from anyone. Let's start with going through the minutes from the last meeting. I'll bring those up on screen and we can go through the wording of the brief we decided last time and see if anyone has anything to add.

*Caroline shares screen showing minutes from February, reads through them*

Clare has said she will let us know what part we can play. I've emailed her to ask for another meeting date, especially since the announcement by NFDC about town centre regeneration and pulling in developers. So we need to make sure that we are heard.

It was agreed we could take on a consultant. We spoke with the town clerk about checking what we can do legally, and we've had the go-ahead to employ Richard as our consultant.

Has anyone got anything to raise on the minutes?

Katherine: Can you go over the announcement?

Caroline: The district is going to be putting money into redeveloping Totton and Eling town centre. Which we've suspected was coming due to all the other developments happening in the area and increased traffic etc. We also suspect they want to try and get more housing into the town centre, and to make it more vibrant than it is. That's the idea.

Nev: NFDC are buying land all over the place. They've bought by the new Starbucks, by the Salisbury Road arcade, all sorts.

Caroline: Yes they have the car parks, the post office building is up for sale.

Susan: the Royal British Legion wasn't bought by NFDC. That's just going to be used for storage. I'm surprised it wasn't bought by the property next door who is developing flats.

Caroline: NFDC have specific budget for buying land to make into housing. It's interesting to compile this list together through what we all know.

I'll stop sharing. Richard would you like to run through next?

Richard: Yes, I think the next thing will be lots of questions and hopefully arranging a face to face meeting for us so we can collate key points. I'll share this letter I sent to Caroline and we can go through that, but there's a lot of learning to do and things will undoubtedly change as we move forward.

*Richard shares screen*

At this stage it's less of a neighbourhood plan, and more of an agreed stakeholder input. You never know, that may be the best way forward. But funding for neighbourhood plans needs to be used for neighbourhood plans so we may need to shape what we have into that shape. That process normally takes 1-2 years in total.

What I've set out so far is a letter to inform Clare of the beginning of the Neighbourhood plan, which is at this stage a stakeholder input. Next we suggest boundaries of the NP, which I would suggest is the walkable distance to the town centre (5 minute walking zone). We can form any boundary we like. We can suggest a smaller boundary to involve less people, for instance, and make the process simpler. The referendum aspect is important to consider. If anything is controversial then we need to think about the boundary in those terms. We need to look at demographics from the census, and any studies that have been done on the town centre, transport and cycling routes, car park capacity & peak usage. Also things like Totton specific evidence that might need to be put in. How often a person visits and how they travel to town, what local people want.

The next stage would be to do a site visit, possibly with a group of us. We can look at opportunities for linkages and if it's possible to create new street patterns, open up the station – that sort of thing. We are looking at what needs to be done and the steps we could use to get there. Junction Road is a classic example. If the town centre encompasses the precinct but also Rumbridge Street then how do we encourage people to walk between them. Should we consider them as two things? Rumbridge Street cries out for creative industries and something a bit different which people visit for different reasons. So that's an idea.

I'll summarise what we have so far. And I'll share work with you all regularly.

The evidence is the background, the appendices. Next we'll have policies, which could be for instance – we want 400 new homes in town centre. Another policy could be around transport and streets. What happens to the health centre? What about the retail and entertainment? It's not a 24 hour town – how can we enliven the town centre in the evening to make it feel more welcoming and safer. What about employment? Totton could already be fairly sustainable with employment – would be interesting to find out. The success of the town is reliant on all the people who are here to visit-including for work.

We use the finding things out part of the plan to create our strategy. We can investigate obstacles to our ideas – how does a cycling lane affect a bus service? Forming ideas, aspirations, a vision which helps inform the local plan.

The local plan isn't a list of things that will happen. It's a list of things that might happen, we want to happen.

This is a very strategic time, and we need to think about how to use this funding. The framework that I'm developing can be used by specialists to develop the plan further. It's a beginning of something that is more detailed, and enables you as a group to start influencing part two of the local plan. And that's why I think working closely with Clare Upton Brown would be really helpful. And the more helpful we can be, the more likely we'll be to see our ideas included in the local plan.

A meeting and a site visit will be really important to gather key information. The vision will be something that I'll come up with for you and suggest to you. Then it will be up to you to say I like that, don't like that, and then we'll shape it together. The vision will come from the bigger context as well – climate change, air pollution, inclusion, mental health are all big things that the government are considering. Taking those strategic moves and also local moves. Totton has really not taken the opportunity since the 1980s to change. It hasn't changed much. Southampton has stolen the show, and now Totton needs to steal some of the show. There's a lot here, so much opportunity. And every car that comes here, relieves congestion in Southampton.

So that's it really – the result will be a concept neighbourhood plan.

Susan – the original application from the NP is on NFDC and that has a map of the whole town. Can we change that?

Richard: It's up to you. We can re-register with a smaller area. The plan could be dual level with policies about design principles etc and there could be other things about linking missing connections

Caroline: Maybe we want to keep that original defined area because we do have bigger goals, but we could use with re-defining the town centre as a second map. And we were talking about Bartley area which could be a walk, conservation area that flows through the whole of Totton. It would be great to have things like that in the NP

Richard: This would all be part of a strategic plan for beyond Totton. Because the detail needed for a neighbourhood plan area would be prohibitive. And that's where the money really goes – is into the core area. And it includes what the community really wants in broader sense.

Katherine: I think we should keep the original boundary, because we can update Neighbourhood plans over time and focus on different areas

Nev: There are two things I've been looking at. Goods yard at junction road is hardly used. If we ever had a more regular service perhaps that could be used for the Fawley line and stop the train gates from closing all those extra minutes in the hour.

Caroline: That would keep the level crossing up. Richard had another idea of using the goods yard to have a bridge.

Richard: That would be expensive though. 2 solutions is moving the whole station and creating an extra platform. Also very expensive. Or have another station for the Fawley line with a walking interchange between stations – cheaper option. Other option is to have bridge over the rail line but the ramps would have to be very steep. There's a question of if it's viable or if there's enough space or other things would need to move. Or another thing is if we decide it's not a good through route at all, and should be bus-only and provide an alternative by-pass route on a new bridge structure. Taking the traffic out would have a positive effect in making it more pleasant for pedestrians.

Caroline: The trouble is it's a long way around from Eling to use the by-pass

Richard: The trouble is when these things were built everyone walked or cycled and the infrastructure reflects that. We also need to have a thought for the climate crisis and obesity crisis, even if it is controversial

Ann: The practicality is there are older people who have to drive, we have to face that fact that there will be traffic in the future, especially with more people coming through Totton. It's fab to hear about the bridge idea being discussed because I've seen it in other countries and I think it's the best solution. The bus doesn't necessarily have to go over the bridge – they could still go over the rail line and factor the trains into their schedule. I think it needs considering properly.

Richard: It's a difficult issue. Presumably you've been fighting for a better crossing for 30-40 years. And we could well only see a bridge built in another 40 years if we go down that route, and we do need to look at things which we can do now.

Lesley: The air quality is atrocious in that area

Richard: We have particulate from braking. Barely anything comes out a modern exhaust – most of the fine particles come from stopping. Harmful particulates will still be there, even with electric cars.

Caroline: The problem is there's just the one way in and out of Eling. If you could take the traffic from Eling over the wharf that would help but can you imagine everyone queuing down the high street rather than down the level crossing each day?

Nev: I spoke to Keith Mans about the General Hospital and a direct bus service. I spoke to Xelsior again who have expressed some interest

Caroline: With or without subsidy?

Nev: Apparently they have some funding already. An ageing population such that we have, we would take cars off the road

Richard: Another thing NP can do is to lobby for bus lanes into Southampton. We're not looking at excluding journeys that are essential by car, we're looking at reducing those non-essential car journeys and making it easier. It's a brilliant idea to have a bus to hospital.

Susan: My concern is the number of landowners we have. How can we influence them to work together?

Caroline: The hope is that Clare will be able to access those landowners, and hopefully us as well. Pre pandemic we had begun those conversations. I'm disappointed we didn't have that meeting with the precinct and hopefully we can arrange that again.

Richard: Once we start to put circles on maps, they will be interested. They might not know what would be supported by the community. We won't know until we go to them with our aspirations. And that's when we'll get the engagement.

Nev: With all the new people coming into the area, they should be interested. We don't want people to go around us- we want to encourage people in.

Caroline: So there are maybe a few things we can do to help Richard out. The walking and cycling routes and circuits is something we can all do – we can all think about those and make suggestions. And routes that are possible out of Totton as well such as into Winsor and into the Forest. Identifying walking and cycling routes that could be improved.

Ann: One of the main things is if we want people to cycle into Totton we need a secure place to store them. My grandson has had 4 stolen so far.

Richard: Central Totton active repair shop? People come and park their bikes

Ann: Parents won't encourage their children to buy bikes if they are being stolen

Caroline: A storage hub is a good one to add that we could highlight where that could go.

There's great potential with some of the weirs and river crossings which could be improved.

And there's the Bartley park conservation area idea

Katherine: I think that's a great idea. Ties into ecology, so many things

Richard: The biodiversity game is important because there's money to be tapped into there

Katherine: It gives something else as well as an off-setting for developers

Caroline: Depending on what happens there, we might also need another crossing over the river for pedestrians. Perhaps we can talk about that Nev and look at a map together?

Richard: It's difficult because the rail is on embankment at that point

Nev: We need to get Clare interested in this to get this going

Caroline: And we need to organise a town visit asap – during the day for daylight

Susan – a walk to Eling tide mill would be good, and to the football ground at Calmore would be good.

*Richard discusses voluntary work he's done and how that will help with funding cut off in March. Means that his work can carry on for us into April.*

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 10am-2pm for site visit, meeting at Totton and Eling Community Centre**

Caroline: Anything else to say

Amy: Salmon leap to Testwood lakes walk is another route we can look at improving

Lesley: Would be good if you could use the private lakes as a footpath to get to public lakes

Christine: There's a stile that leads you back down to the salmon leap that could be improved

Richard: I think if what I do is I build up that proposal, pick up some of the things we've discussed and we can circulate that for comments. I can do that regularly and work on it and incorporate comments as they come in. The more of that sort of information about bus routes etc that I can include, the better. And inviting stakeholders to comment – like the Hampshire bus contacts.

Caroline: One more thing to think about is a plan for the next consultation which would need to be end of March

Richard: the deadline for end of March is just for the funding, so it includes April as well

Caroline: Let's work on April then. April weekend afternoon would be best.

*Ann to check Community Centre.*

*Amy reminds everyone to like Fb page.*

Meeting end 20.30

## **Action points**

- Everyone to think about walking and cycling routes and linkages that could be improved
- Caroline and Nev to look at maps together and look for possible places for pedestrian crossing river
- Site Visit Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> March 10am-2pm

## **Ideas and miscellaneous**

- Central Totton bike storage and repairs
- Bus to General Hospital
- Utilising Goods Yard at Junction Road
- Walking routes – to Tide Mill, to football ground in Calmore, to Testwood Lakes from Salmon Leap