

Sandy Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Thursday 21 April 2022 at 7pm

At Sandy Town Council Chamber, 10 Cambridge Road, Sandy

Meeting Minutes

Present: Robert Baker, Richard Barlow, Anne Elliott-Flockhart, Arnold Gilpin, Joanna Hewitt (In Chair), Ruth Lock, Chris Patterson and Anne Ramsay.

Apologies: Nigel Aldis, Amanda Gibson and Jennifer Ivanciu-Wilkinson.

1. Approval of minutes from 17 March 2022.

The minutes were approved.

2. Timeline Update

Chris talked us through the timeline which was updated in December to build in consultation time. It now fits in with the Green Infrastructure plan timeline.

The building evidence phase ends in July then it will be time to start writing policies, though we could be making a start on that now.

3. Budget and grant awards

a) High Street Improvement Fund

The Chair had put in an application for a grant for High Street Improvement funding, which has been successful. This will provide funding to employ a traffic consultant to assess the high street. No improvements can be made in the town centre until the traffic has been sorted out. Once the traffic has been assessed there is further money available to look at an overall plan for the town centre.

The funding is for £15,000 and needs to be spent in the next financial year. The quote provided by the traffic consultant who helped Biggleswade with theirs came in at £17,000. We will probably need to get further quotes in line with council guidelines.

b) Miscellaneous Expenses

We have spent £2,500 of the budget provided by Sandy Town Council, but this will be topped up to £10,000 in this year's budget.

c) Green Infrastructure Plan

The Green Infrastructure plan is costing £1,500, which covers the first part of the plan. There will be extra costs involved in designating green spaces. **Anne R** will get a quote for the next phase of consultation. We

still don't know if Locality will be providing future funding to help with things like this.

d) Consultants

Joanna and Chris have identified three consultants who we could work with on developing policies for the NP and who will help us meet the relevant regulations.

- Sally Chapman – who used to work for CBC and knows the area has quoted £7,789.80.
- Dave Chetwyn – who Biggleswade used has quoted £6,600 + £4,675 'additional support
- Neil Homer – has quoted £19,500.

All are nett of VAT; All have very similar daily rates therefore the differences largely equate to the number of consultant days support that they think we need.

One of the consultants has suggested a Locality grant of £16,500 is available for this which needs to be verified.

Chris will go through the quotes to check against the deliverables which he will do by Wednesday next week. Then he will invite them to attend our next meeting on Thursday 19 May.

It was felt it would be better to get someone on board sooner rather than later. It might help provide guidance on how the working groups can move forward.

It was mentioned that we should ask them about their success rate – how many NP's have they helped with and how many have been approved.

4. Working Group updates

a) Environment and Green Infrastructure

The spring market went well, the weather was nice, and the event was well attended, with over 100 people attending our stall. The only problem was sometimes there were too many people inside the tent. The location of the tent was good, and the new banners made it clear who we were. Social media had been used in the run up to the event and on the day, which seems to have worked.

It was agreed that the dots worked well as they were very visual, though one member worried that people might be swayed by where other people have placed their dots.

Some people worried that if they were voting for the top six aspirations then the other aspirations would drop off the list completely. Which isn't the case. Some aspirations have already been removed either because they have already been completed or they are no longer viable. The aspirations available at the market would all be included but we were asking for people to choose their top six for prioritising.

A member noted that some people might not know the names of places which means people would only vote for the places they are familiar with.

Another noted that a couple of the questions were for the same places, but they were worded differently. One got support but the other didn't!

Regarding the listing for green space designation the top few will be the most likely to go through. There is a set of criteria they need to meet to be designated. A member asked if all the suggested places met the criteria already. **Anne R** will check with BRCC.

It was noted that from the demographics of those attending the spring market, we are missing out on reaching teenagers.

Joanna noted that she had been at a CBC Pride in Place event where there were representatives from different organisations that work in Sandy. One of these was a Youth Worker who works for Grand Union Housing, who goes into Sandy Secondary School to work with teenagers. Joanna asked her how much it would cost for her to work with us to reach this age range. She said it wouldn't cost us anything. She is willing to come and talk to us and find out what information we want to know from the teenagers, and she will find a way to gather that information.

A member asked if the walking groups and the RSPB had been targeted for their feedback during this phase of the consultation. It was noted that there wasn't enough time, but we would try and target them for the next phase.

BRCC are currently going through the results and will give us a full report in due course. However, they have said that the following were the top results for the green spaces designation:

- Joint 1st – Sandye Place and the Riddy
- 2nd - The Pinnacle
- 3rd – RSPB
- 4th – Sunderland Road Recreation Ground

b) Town Centre and High Street

Covered under budgets and grants.

c) Housing and Design Guide

- d) Arnie has done a lot of research but is still struggling to find a way to create a design guide as the different areas of Sandy do not have a commonality in terms of materials, form or colour. And we would not wish to impose an unwanted style on Sandy.

We discussed the street scene and how we could ask that designs fit into the street scene where they are located. It was also noted that development has to fit in with CBC's design guide.

There are a number of small sites in Sandy that would be suitable for infill.

If the Sandye Place site was given over for open space, then Bedford Road recreation ground could be built on. Or if the industrial area was moved north of the town, then that area could be built on, which would have the added benefit of keeping development closer to the town centre.

It would be good to create a green spine to link in with the green wheel, that would provide walking routes to local schools.

A member noted that maybe we need to look at what we don't want. Arnie asked that **members** take pictures of the things that they would not wish to see and send them to him.

Parking was noted as an issue that needs to be addressed. Houses that have had extensions which have increased the number of bedrooms don't necessarily have the space for the increased parking needed, which leads to on street parking. Similarly, houses have converted their garages which leads to an increase in on

street parking, or the garages built are not big enough to accommodate today's cars.

The group will meet again to discuss.

e) Infrastructure

Chris has had a look at other neighbourhood plans to see what they say in terms of infrastructure, but they don't say that much. Those that do mention infrastructure talk about existing facilities they would like to keep or improve.

Rob will talk to bus companies about timetables and capacity.

f) Leisure and Culture

This working group haven't had the opportunity to meet again. Hopefully the consultant's will be able to give advice on how to move forward.

5. Communications and future events

a) 2 June – Queen's Jubilee – Sandye Place

The Town Council are having a stand at this event, and we can have some NP stuff there. Which could be general awareness of the NP or we could give feedback and ask questions about the green infrastructure results.

b) 11 June – Sandy Carnival – Sandye Place

Anne R believes we have a stall booked for this event but will double check. We can repeat whatever we do for the jubilee.

c) 3 September – Sandy Historical Research Exhibition – Sandy Baptist Church

This is the same day as the Horticultural show which is being held at the Conservative Club. There is a modest charge for the hire of the Baptist Church hall which we can split with the Historical Research Group. **Richard** will check with the Historical Research Group if they are happy for us to join them for their event.

6. Any other business

A member asked about targeting other groups. Anne EF reported that there were a couple of groups on the council's community groups list that could be targeted for input on the green infrastructure/ environmental group work. A lot of the groups could be consulted regarding leisure, but there weren't any that could be targeted for the other working groups. The community groups list is available on the

council website and **Richard** would use this to create a letter that could go out to them.

Arnie reported that he would be attending the next meeting of the Ox Cam Arc and would report back.

7. Date and Time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on Thursday 19 May at Sandy Town Council Chamber, at the earlier time of 6pm so we can meet the three short listed consultants.