



**Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Sub-Committee held on
Friday 27th September 2024 at 2.00 pm, at The Town Hall, Sleaford**

Present: Cllrs David Darmon, Robert Oates (Chairman), Alison Snookes and David Suiter and Community Members Mr Mark Bamford, Mr Tony Dobson and Mr Keith Maltby.

In attendance: Mr Chris Pilkington (Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer), Mrs Debbie Scott (Administrative Support), Mr Steve Kemp (OpenPlan) and Mr Nick Dibben (Guest)

24.52 CHAIRMAN'S WELCOME

Cllr Oates welcomed all to the meeting. He explained that he had invited Mr Dibben, a former Chairman of the group that had taken the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan to its Regulation 14 Consultation in 2023. Introductions around the table were made.

24.53 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Linda Edwards-Shea and Ken Fernandes and Mr David Marriage. The meeting was quorate.

RESOLVED: Apologies from Cllrs Linda Edwards-Shea, Ken Fernandes and Mr David Marriage and their reasons for absence were approved.

24.54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) TO RECEIVE DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OF ANY DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS FOR THE PURPOSES OF SECTION 31 OF THE LOCALISM ACT 2011 AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT INTERESTS UNDER THE MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT

There were no other declarations of interest.

(b) TO RECEIVE AND DECIDE UPON REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS TO MEMBERS TO TAKE PART IN DISCUSSIONS AND VOTES WHERE THEY HAVE DECLARED DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no requests for dispensations.

24.55 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION SESSION

There were no Members of the Public present.

24.56 MINUTES OF THE LAST SLEAFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee held on 25th July 2024, be confirmed as an accurate record, to be signed by the Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

24.57 DRAFT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

a. Draft Neighbourhood Plan

Cllr Oates reminded the meeting that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and the associated promotional literature had been approved by the Town Council before the process had been interrupted by the advice from NKDC that the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) process should be completed first. It was noted that the SEA process was now underway and NKDC had advised that the closing date for statutory responses had been set at 9th October and officers hoped to be able to let the Town Council have the results soon after that date. Early indicators were that the outcome should be positive for the plan as it stood.

Mr Kemp advised that if any responses from the SEA process needed to be considered and the draft plan be amended then that could be a lengthy process but this was very unlikely in this case as the plan is not proposing any development that is not already included in the Central Lincolnshire Local Plan.

It was noted that the next Full Council Meeting was scheduled for 16th October, by which time the SEA outcome could be known, but if not, the Town Clerk confirmed that an additional meeting could be convened to receive the formal outcome and formally approve the consultation plan.

Following a meeting between Cllr Oates, the Town Clerk and Mrs Scott the previous week, Mrs Scott had redrafted the timescales of the Regulation 14 Consultation Plan. She explained that, providing no changes were required to the Draft Plan, the 'pinch point' would be designer's work on changing the dates on the promotional literature and committing the documents to print in time for delivery to Your Local Lincs at the beginning of November for distribution at the end of November with the December edition. The timescales proposed gave a start date of 16th November, ending in mid-January. This would allow an 8-week consultation period, instead of the minimum statutory period of six weeks.

It was noted that Mr Dibben had spoken to Cllr Oates and made a number of comments which had since been shared with the Sub-Committee. Cllr Oates asked him to elaborate on those comments. Mr Dibben explained that he had seen the draft consultation process document and commended the extra consultation period.

He felt that it was impossible to say which time of year would work best for such a consultation but agreed that eight weeks would be better than six. He advised against committing to attending every market during the period. He agreed that a mid-consultation review of responses so far, as planned, could be useful for identifying any 'myths' or misunderstandings that needed to be corrected and said that a note should be incorporated giving the SEA outcome. He confirmed that the plan to include NKDC's formal letter of confirmation on the website should be sufficient.

In answer to questions, Mr Dibben said that the Plan read well. He had reservations about some of the maps used and links to other documents. He would have liked to have seen references to 'Changing Places' facilities and other evidence for encouraging walking/cycling/public transport such as Census data on car ownership. He also had comments about protecting facilities beyond the town centre and would support a multi-functional venue.

He explained that the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 consultation had taken place over eight week from October to December, with copies of documents available online and in hard copy, leaflets distributed to each household using a local free newsheet, and stands at the Farmers' Markets, with display boards for each policy.

Members of the St Ives NP Working Group had also given talks to local organisations. They had had little response from local schools, nor the statutory consultees. He added that the analysis of the responses would be considered by the Planning Inspector in the Regulation 16 consultation and may take a long time. He added that it made sense to try and coincide the referendum with the normal elections in May, if the timescales could be met.

The meeting found it re-assuring that most of Mr Dibben's suggestions were already incorporated in the consultation plan. It was noted that his comments on the content of the plan and the policies should be submitted via the consultation process, preferably using the online questionnaire for easier consideration and analysis. Mr Kemp added that 60% of the survey responses were likely to be received towards the end of the period, but nonetheless, the mid-term review would be useful in identifying any misconceptions.

It was noted that the St Ives Plan contained no photographs. The meeting debated whether those included in the Sleaford Neighbourhood Plan should be taken as depicting exemplars of good practice. It was noted that they were intended to help the readability of the document rather than presenting it as dry text, and to make it clear that the Plan was very specific to Sleaford. It was pointed out that the photographs in the Design Code document were more directly related to the policies.

b. Regulation 14 Consultation and Communications

As above

c. Communications

Cllr Oates reported that he and Mr Kemp had attended a presentation by the Central Lincs Local Plan Team about a proposed Design Guide for the Local Plan area. He had been assured that any such document would not over-ride any existing Design Guides already produced as part of a Neighbourhood Plan. It was not clear whether the wider Design Guide would go ahead or how it might be affected by the latest Government proposals to change to NPPF. He would continue to attend consultation meetings on the wider Design Guide as the representative of Sleaford Town Council. Mr Kemp added that he had responded to the revised NPPF consultation.

d. Finance

Cllr Oates reported that he, the Town Clerk and Mrs Scott had submitted a further application to Locality in the summer and a grant of £4,715 had been awarded to add to the Council's budget for taking the Neighbourhood Plan process through to Referendum. Mrs Scott explained that it was important to commit to as much of the expenditure as possible before the 31st March otherwise the grant would need to be repaid once again.

e. Community Member Vacancy on the Sub-Committee.

Cllr Oates reminded the meeting that the Sub-Committee had carried a vacancy for some months. He asked for suggestions of suitable people. Mr Dibben commented that the group was quite large as it was but indicated a willingness to stand. He confirmed that he was no longer involved in the St Ives Neighbourhood Plan.

RESOLVED: That Mr Dibben's name be recommended to the Planning Committee for appointment as a Community Member of the Sub-Committee.

It was noted that the next meeting of the Planning Committee would be held on 22nd October. The Town Clerk agreed to add the item to the agenda.

24.58 DATE AND VENUE OF NEXT MEETING

Dates for future meetings of the Sub-Committee were agreed, at the Town Hall:
Friday 25th October 2024 at 2.00 pm
Thursday 12th December 2024 at 2.00 pm (Mr Maltby advised that he may arrive late) – mid-consultation review.

There being no further business, the Chairman thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 3.30 pm.