

NOTES for the FAVERSHAM FUTURE FORUM held in The Guildhall Faversham on Monday 5 June 2017

Present: The Mayor, Cllr Shiel Campbell, Debbie Lawther, Antony Hook, Stephanie Peter, Graham Peter, Trevor Fentiman, Ben Martin, Mike Henderson, Harold Goodwin, Chris Wright, Alastair Gould, Frances Beaumont, Louise Bareham

The Mayor, Cllr Campbell, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their interest.

1. INTRODUCTION

Introductions were made and areas of interest noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Claire Belsom, Trevor and Margaret Abram, Sue Akhurst, Brian Wintle-Smith, Tim Stonor.

3. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

Minutes/notes were not available from the previous two meetings.

4. DRAFT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING GUIDELINES

Chris Wright had summarised the general guidelines, which had seen several updates following comments received.

MH thought item 4 should be in plain English to be more easily understood. He also thought an additional item should be added as follows: any proposed development should be linked to infrastructure of the town ie buses, health service, doctors, schools, dentists.

Social infrastructure should be separate to physical infrastructure. Some discussion took place over the meaning of permeable. COJ thought permeable meant being able to walk from A to B or via C, or being able to cycle, not just having to get into a car. Having a housing estate with more than one entry/exit which can be left in all directions. Permeable means ease of movement. The brickfields development has only one entrance, it's now too late for an entrance via Lower Road. Thinking is different now.

BM thought the word sustainability should be included. However SC believed the word had been hijacked and now meant profitability for developers. HG agreed that sustainability was not the right word. MH noted how sustainability was used in the NPPF.

FB thought something should be mentioned about low carbon or green energy within the guidelines. It was agreed that could be added to item 5.

CW thought if the guidelines were to be carried forward to a NHP it should not look too tree-hugging as it would receive resistance. HG thought water and sewage should be included.

BM noted that a large soak away had been built at the Gunpowder Mill rather than harvesting the water.

MH thought we should be looking to preserve parts of the town; many of the areas around the town were AONB or grade one agricultural land. The LP did not focus on individual house designs. Maybe further work could be done with Design SE.

BM said the LP is going forward regardless and the next LP is likely to include Brenley Corner and Ospringe. There was a lack of connectivity in the town. Was there enough detail for a NHP.

SC thought a huge amount had been achieved with just a few tweaks and thanked CW.

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

HG reported that the Faversham Society had written to FTC asking them to consider a town wide NHP if the referendum was successful. A discussion is needed on the area to be covered, but it may not be the most appropriate way forward to suit the objectives. Faversham Society is interested in the conservation of the built and natural environments. James Freeman saw the NHP as a means for additional housing. HG thought we needed to be sure it met the broad range of objectives that the town has. Would it include cycle routes for example. He also felt the FFFs needed to have representatives from far more groups within the town, such as health care, education etc.

COJ thought the FFFs was a bunch of volunteers with no clout and was an independent forum to bring ideas. FTC was the statutory body and the Faversham Society was a community society.

SC said the forum had started as a response at the Annual Town Meeting in 2016 and it had allowed her to talk to developers, KCC Highways and the LPA. She felt the threads were coming together and wondered where it should now go and proceeding with a town wide NHP was as good as anything right now. The FFF should present a request to pursue the idea of a NHP, but FTC should have a separate paid member of staff to undertake the work. This could be done with the help of a steering group, rather than expensive consultants.

HG noted that he had received an email from James Freeman which had confused him. He thought the group should spend the next three months considering how to move forward, he also thought there were important groups missing from the FFF. However, it was good that anyone could attend, but people needed to make the commitment to come every month. Young people were also missing from the group.

MH thought COJ was wrong, the group did have clout and potential influence with SBC and KCC. The major issue with Sittingbourne and

Sheppey was the Thames Gateway. Faversham had always been treated differently, but there is a growing voice in Sittingbourne that this shouldn't be the case. James Freeman and Andrew Bowles had always supported Faversham, we need to be cooperating with parish councils around Faversham, particularly Teynham, Ospringe, Oare, Graveney, Boughton, Selling, Newnham to strengthen our voice. However, he was not convinced that a NHP was the right way and the group should consider alternative options over the next 3-6 months.

COJ reminded people that the Creek NHP started as a Vanguard Project, which was a sub-committee of FTC and brought with it constraints. The Faversham & District Engagement Forum has links with parish councils. He agreed that the group needed consistent and ongoing membership, as it would not work if people just drifted in and out.

CW liked the set-up of the FFF as it was close to FTC but without the constraints

Concerns were raised that Faversham was outnumbered on the BC by others. SC reminded everyone of the financial rewards that came with NHPs. HG thought if the group was serious it needed to reach out to others who were not there; decide what we want; invite others. He noted Faversham Creek Trust, Brents Community Association, Abbey Street Residents, businesses, schools etc.

DL suggested a meeting to outline other options. AH liked the idea that the forum was open to everyone. Attendees could bring along others with them. AG thought formulating a vision should be the next process.

It was agreed that the interests in Faversham were diverse and should be looking at health of the old and not just the welfare of commuters from London. DL thought the development statement was good, but would it have an impact.

TF was concerned that Kiln Court and Osborne Court had just closed without much argument and the growing population would need more care not less.

AH agreed we needed to push change in the direction we wanted. Would the Thames Gateway have an effect, what about Canterbury – it's now in the top ten most expensive cities to live, student population is growing. We need some blue sky thinking about what are the potential forces of change.

MH thought we shouldn't get hooked up on a NHP, the decision didn't need to be made now. The NPPF made a NHP look attractive with the offer of CIL, but it didn't mean you could propose a lesser quantity of housing. Work on the next LP has started, we need to think quickly about Faversham. Influential management – the quality of arguments put forward and we must engage with the LP.

CW considered a vision would get others enthusiastic about the idea rather than just principles and priorities, so there was influence on all levels.

BM thought the FFFs should use the newsletter to reach out to groups and individuals. Otherwise specific groups could be invited.

DL thought it would be difficult to have a formal group that was too large; if people were unable to participate they would soon lose interest.

AG thought a vision was key, an open access forum. BM suggested speakers were invited to attend the meetings.

6. ACTIONS FROM THE MEETING

- CW to make amendments and forward the final version of the General Guidelines
- Group members to consider a 'Vision' and bring ideas back to the next meeting
- Spread the word of the group and bring a friend to the next meeting, to help improve the representative spread of people attending

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 10 July, 7pm, The Guildhall