

Minutes of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee – 23rd January 2018 (Meeting commenced at 6:30pm)

1. **Chairman’s opening remarks:**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting. The chair said this is the first meeting of 2018 and he had been looking back at 2017 and it surprised him that in fact there had been 5 meetings take place in that year. He hoped that this big group of representatives would meet on a similar basis and that maybe that a smaller group or groups doing some of the ‘donkey work’ between these meetings. That is the sort of idea he had but is open to other ideas and suggestions as necessary.

The Chair also asked attendees if they know of any groups that would like to be represented on the Neighbourhood Plan Committee they should contact the Clerk so that they can be invited – he stressed the importance of this. He then asked all those attending to introduce themselves and who they represent.

2. **Attendance Register**

Present: David Casewell (Chair & Uppingham Town Council), Ron Simpson (Uppingham Town Council), Pat Taylor (Limes, Firs & Spurs Residents Association) Howard Thompson (Limes, Firs & Spurs Residents Association), Christine Edwards (Uppingham Town Council), Richard Reeve (Uppingham Town Council), Alec Crombie (Uppingham Town Council), Pam Dalby (Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum), David Ainslie (Uppingham Town Council), Kath Gilbert (Uppingham Business Forum), Edward Baines (Uppingham First), Miranda Jones (The Uppingham Partnership), Sharon Aumais (Scouts), Phil Wignell, Mark Shaw (The Beeches Residents Association) and Jane Lang (Uppingham Business Forum).

6:34 Chris Merricks for Leighfield School joined the meeting.

In the public gallery – Paul Bywater

3. **Apologies for absence.**

Margaret Simpson – these were noted.

4. **Declaration of member’s interests and applications for dispensation.**

Edward Baines declared an interest as a property owner and business interest in High Street West.

5. **To confirm the report of the meeting held on 24th August 2017.**

Proposed these be accepted by David Casewell, seconded by Richard Reeve, 16 in favour and 1 abstention.

6. **Democratic 15 minutes – an opportunity for the public to speak.**

No statements made.

7. **Update on the progress to date – paper from David Casewell:**

UPPINGHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN: REVIEW OF PROGRESS

CURRENT UPPINGHAM TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE

Uppingham Town Council has a Neighbourhood Plan Committee, which has the same status and requirements as other council committees, but has a much broader membership base. It is chaired by Cllr David Casewell, with Cllr Ron Simpson acting as vice chair. Membership currently consists of:

- Town Councillors
- Representatives of numerous local community organisations including
- Uppingham First
 - Uppingham Town Partnership
 - Beeches Residents Association
 - Limes Firs and Spurs Residents Association
 - Uppingham Neighbourhood Forum

- Uppingham Business Forum
 - Primary Schools
 - Uppingham School
 - Uppingham Community College
 - Scouts/Cubs/Brownies/Guides
 - Churches Together
 - And others as we travel the path
- Supported by Neil Wedge, Town Clerk.

THE STORY SO FAR...

- We HAVE a Neighbourhood Plan which will be current until 2026. This was (as required) broadly in line with RCC's Strategic plans. It has the status (currently) of a prime county planning document
- WE SHOULD BE VERY PROUD OF THIS PLAN
- The council owes a considerable debt of gratitude to Cllr Ron Simpson who guided and advised the working group through much of the plan's development. The plan was overwhelmingly approved by a town referendum in 2014 under the mayor- ship of Cllr Dave Ainslie.
- BUT it was held up by a challenge from LARKFLEET homes which led to an unnecessary, fruitless and publically expensive case in the High Court.. Eventually the Neighbourhood Plan came legally into existence in 2015
- This plan was at the forefront of Neighbourhood Plans throughout the country. As a result we were all feeling our way in the dark, with advice from both
 - Rutland County Council
 - Department for Communities & Local Government
- Due to a dearth of case history advice, our current plan has some deficiencies, for example, in terms of a lack of detail as regards housing styles, and some imprecise definitions... 'clusters' of housing.
- BUT WE DO HAVE A PLAN!
 - which is currently steering housing locations, density and layout, by bringing developers into negotiation with UTC BEFORE submitting plans to RCC.
 - which entitles UTC to 25% (as opposed to 15%) of all CIL(Construction Infra structure Levy) payable by developers
 - Which also laid out future sites for development
 - And gave UTC a reputation as a forward thinking council
- Our NP acknowledged the fact that RCC was planning to review its over-arching 'Local Plan', and that some further housing requirements may be required, and ALSO that some strategic objectives of RCC may change. Hence in the Neighbourhood Plan there is a commitment to review and update the NP plan in 3 years time... which is about now.
- Should RCC's Local Plan be finalised before our NP is refreshed then this plan, due to its immediacy, will 'trump' our plan should 'push come to shove'. Our refreshed plan should restore its primacy.
- The process of refreshing our NP is under way
- RCC has published its first draft of their local plan, including new housing targets and possible new development sites for Uppingham
- The UTC Neighbourhood Plan committee has responded to this draft plan and has some challenges
 - Some proposed development sites did not find favour with the community in the past
 - Some sites favoured by the early thinking of the NP committee were not included in the draft RCC LP
 - RCC were proposing some alterations to the planning status of some Town Centre sites, making them easier to convert to non- retail usage
- The Chair of the UTC NP Committee and the Chair of the UTC planning committee met with the RCC senior planner in order to outline these issues, and to offer a simple solution; namely to leave the detail of plans for Uppingham to the developing Uppingham Neighbourhood Plan Refresh.
- RCC's response to our written response plus the meeting as above is awaited!
- This discussion over RCC's local plan has thus been the first steps along the path to refresh the NP. We hope to encourage future collaborative working with RCC.
- It has become apparent that any challenges to the RCC Local Plan, and any proposals for the refreshed Neighbourhood Plan, MUST be backed by expert evidence as WELL as public support. To this end UTC, using both grant funding and council funds, are currently beginning the process of engaging appropriate expert consultants to gain such data.

- The next steps on this road will be agreed at the next NP committee which is scheduled for 23 January.
Dave Casewell - Chair Neighbourhood Plan Committee

8. **Neighbourhood Planning Champion update.**

Ron Simpson provided a brief overview of the changes at DCLG (now known as Ministry for Housing, Communities & Local Government) and said it is still not clear if Locality will be the source of funding for plan refreshes nor is there any further guidance on how to update plans and it may be better to defer to the side of caution until clear.

9. **Budget proposals for 2018/19 for the Neighbourhood Plan Committee.**

Proposed by David Ainslie that monies should be accrued from the current year in light of the fact we agreed to spend the budget previously. Seconded by Mark Shaw and unanimously agreed.

Clerk to add an item for Council on earmarked reserves and to also look out for details of grants available and the source. An update on quotes and costs from specialists currently being contacted to be shared as soon as they are available.

10. **Rutland County Council Local Plan update.**

Roger Ranson had confirmed that RCC will be in touch for an update towards the end of March 2018.

11. **Progress update on the consultant / specialist report requirements.**

Action for Clerk: Continue to pull together quotes and specialist reports with a view to sharing the information to members as it comes in and for review potentially at a meeting in late February or early March 2018. Clerk will give Chair/ Vice Chair updates on progress.

The following declared non-pecuniary interests in item 12 – Ron Simpson, David Ainslie, Jane Lang, Edward Baines, Christine Edwards, Kath Gilbert and Mark Shaw.

12. **To consider the necessary action regarding Uppingham First's 'Town Centre & Business Zones Plan'.**

Resolution: Proposed by David Casewell that the Clerk is empowered to write to Uppingham First seeking their views on what should be brought forward to the Neighbourhood Plan Committee from the Uppingham Town Centre & Business Zones Plan for inclusion or otherwise in the refresh of the Neighbourhood Plan. Seconded by Chris Merricks, 9 in favour and 8 abstentions.

Action for the Clerk – to be added to a subsequent meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Committee. Clerk to check if any resolutions had been passed seeking a presentation of the UTC&BZ Plan.

13. **Review of existing plan with a view to begin to form a picture of content headings for revised plan.**

- *Feedback was received by members of the committee and a schedule will be created by the Clerk for review at a future meeting by the committee with the feedback submitted under the point below.*
- *Action for members to go back to the groups they represent and send any views or feedback into the Clerk.*

14. **Identification of a working group to continue this process and to further identify possible evidence / data requirements.**

It was suggested by David Ainslie that this matter be deferred to the next meeting and would also give us a chance to ask the community groups how they feel about the use of working groups.

Meeting closed at 8.01 pm.