

Sandy Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group
Thursday 18 February 2021 at 7pm via Zoom

Meeting Minutes

Present: Nigel Aldis, Robert Baker, Anne Elliott-Flockhart, Tim Gardiner, Amanda Gibson (Chair), Arnold Gilpin, Joanna Hewitt, Ruth Lock, Chris Patterson, Anne Ramsay and Gary Wearing.

Apologies: Richard Barlow.

1. Review and Approve Minutes from 21 January 2021

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

2. Drop Box and Document Sharing

Gary, Rob and Tim have set up a Drop Box account for the group. This is so that documents can be shared easily. All members of the group should have received an invitation to join the Drop Box account.

Tim showed the group how to use the account. Everyone can create folders, add files, edit and save documents. There is also an app which can be useful.

If anyone has any problems using Drop Box please contact Tim.

3. Review Tasks and Set up Sub Working Groups

The group went through the Chair's discussion document. The Chair explained that a neighbourhood plan is related to planning. Whilst there are a lot of things that we would like to see within the plan we need to ask ourselves how does it relate to planning.

A member asked if the plan can influence Town Council as well as Central Bedfordshire Council. The Chair responded that as we are a Working Group of the Town Council our plans will need to be approved by them before submission for consultation. They will also have oversight as we progress and anything that arises from evidence gathering will be shared.

Once adopted, when a planning application comes forward it will have to comply with the neighbourhood plan unless there is a material reason for accepting. Potton NP group created a crib sheet that Potton TC could use when assessing planning applications.

The Chair thanked everyone for their comments sent before the meeting and that she would go through them after the meeting for anything that might have been missed off the list.

Project Plan and Budget

Chris and Gary will lead on this. The group is happy for them to choose a suitable planning tool to use. Tools suggested were Trello, Kanban and Affinity.

Timelines

There are statutory timeframes for certain things such as the consultation and referendum. But the first thing the group is aiming for is to have a stall at the craft market at the end of May in the Market Square. And then at town other events once C-19 restrictions are lifted as well as using the Community Stand, Library and Council Chamber for displays of what is under consideration.

Grant Funding

The group will need to work with the Town Clerk to apply for grant funding as the application needs to come from the council. Localities have tranches of money to apply for but the group need to know what the money requested will be spent on.

Sandy Town Council have allocated a £10,000 in the 20/21 budget for development of the Neighbourhood Plan. To access any funds from this we will need to make a request via the Council's Policy, Finance and Resources Committee for approval of the spend.

Awareness of Group

Rob has set up Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts in the name of SandyBedsNP. These have been set up using the email SandyBedsNP@gmail.com

Rob and Amanda will go through the Facebook Profiles. Whilst the group wants people to be able to give feedback they need to monitor the feedback closely. **Rob** has agreed to deal with the social media accounts.

The group need to come up with a logo for the neighbourhood plan which can be used across all social media accounts. **Arnold and Joanna** will work on creating a logo.

The group will need to do regular press releases, including items for inclusion in the Sandy column in the Biggleswade Chronicle. **Anne**

EF to add chronicle to contacts list. **Rob and Tim** to work on content for press releases and social media.

The group could do a pre-consultation leaflet, explaining the aims of the group. The group would need a handout ready for the event in May. The group may need to wait to do a leaflet drop because of the current Covid situation, an alternative could be to use Royal Mail to deliver the leaflets.

The group could do a video trailer on social media. The group could use a drone to get footage of Sandy, but they would need to find someone who has a drone and make sure they comply with any licences needed and with the Town Council's drone policy. **Anne EF** to check STC's drone policy.

When it comes to proper consultation a member suggested that the group might want to buy targeted advertising to make sure it gets to as many Sandy residents as possible. **Rob** will look into the cost of this.

Engagement Plan

The group decided that there would be a two-stage engagement process.

Stage	Timeframe	Aim	Actions
First Stage	Easter - May	To advertise the group	Logo Teasers Photo montage
Second Stage	May onwards	Launch	Stall at Craft market 31 May

First stage

The group needs to publicise who they are and build an awareness of what they are trying to do.

There is a lot of information already in the public domain about neighbourhood plans that the group can use to raise awareness and start getting the message across about the importance of having a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish.

During this first stage the group can be getting people interested in the neighbourhood plan. People will be able to follow the progress of and engage with the NP group on social media.

The initial social medial posts /information can be very high level and generic about neighbourhood planning. Things like what a NP is trying to achieve, say that the group are interested in hearing from them, asking them to come and seek the group out to tell them their views.

Rob, Arnold, Joanna and Tim will lead on awareness marketing.

Second stage

Other local NP Steering Groups, such as Potton & Sutton, launched at local events or had town meetings. They invited representatives from CBC and BRCC present about NP as well as introducing the Steering Group to the community. It is felt that the group can reach more people in person but need to be prepared for it.

For the launch at the craft market in May the group will need

- Here's Sandy boards with information about the town
- Demographics – lots in town that people don't necessarily know who lives here. (The Benchmarking study makes interesting reading and can be found on the drop box.)
- Topics that relate to planning, key themes for the plan

Nigel, Ruth Amanda and Anne R will lead the launch working group.

Ruth and Nigel have put together a list of places where consultations can be held and have researched costs. There is a wider list of stakeholders than first thought which will need to be taken on board.

A member asked how the group would be able to cover all the age groups, for example schools. Another member mentioned that Northill had done a primary consultation on one sheet of paper, asking children to draw a picture of the house they would like to live in, what job they would like to do and where they would like to live when they grow up.

The group will need to find an engagement mechanism for collecting people's ideas.

Pre-vision questionnaire

The group will use Potton's pre-vision questionnaire as a guide to create one tailored for Sandy.

The group need ideas to put to residents without being leading.

Plan

The group needs to decide on how they are formatting the plan using categories or areas or both.

The plan will need to include:

- An introduction with history and scope
- What makes Sandy Unique; what the community values
- Use of Land based on evidence, such as housing needs
- How people in Sandy would like the Town to develop over the plan timeframe 2025 – 2035 (we should try and align with CBC Local Plan and vision 2050).
- Policies based on evidence gathered
- Show how plan complies with CBC's Local Plan and NPPF

Key Topics for Initial Engagement

- Traffic and transport - railway and A1, footpaths, connectivity between Sandy and RSPB, and Sandy's green spaces
- Environmental goes across all topics – housing, less dependence on cars, connectivity to nearby towns
- Designated Green Spaces, leverage Greensands Country
- Employment
- Further education
- Town Centre regeneration - use of SPA such as a further education learning centre
- Renewable energy – Little Paxton have just had go ahead for hydro electric power. There is lots of energy in Ouse and Ivel. Little Paxton could be the blueprint for capturing energy for low cost.
- Flood Plain and flood protection

Whilst it was felt that this was a lot of topics to cover some could be sub-topics under a broader heading. It was also felt that it was important to keep all suggestions in at this stage to be grouped under broader headings.

It was noted that Sutton's NP is based round the fact it's a rural village but Sandy doesn't have just one focus point. Sandy has lots of different issues that are not easily comparable to other towns that have completed their plans within Central Beds. Sandy has a mix of rural, residential and industrial needs to consider.

Members are concerned that Sandy will stagnate and lose services unless there is some housing development. Equally members would not wish to see the town grow as big as Biggleswade.

Sandy is a well-connected medium sized town, but it doesn't have an easily identified focal point. There are opportunities to create an extended town centre and potential to create a cultural hub within Sandye Place. A cultural hub would have the benefit of encouraging people to visit Sandy which would have a knock-on effect of improving footfall to the High Street. It may also increase the town's attractiveness as a place to live.

The group all have personal views and need to be mindful of the fact that residents will also have their own views that might not coincide with the groups. However, we have the opportunity to steer the discussion to the main topics and gather evidence.

Mapping

Members of the group need to be familiar with areas of Sandy. The group need to consider the whole of Sandy including Beeston and Seddington.

Tom Price from CBC has created some maps and these will be shared on the drop box. More detailed maps will be needed as the versions that we have are not able to be edited and don't show enough detail of the buildings within the conservation area, footpaths, or designated industrial areas. The group needs maps that are vector based and can be tailored to show potential alternative uses for land. **Anne EF** to set up a meeting with Arnold and Tom to discuss mapping needs.

A member mentioned the Land App which was developed by farmers as a collaborative tool. It is free to use but there may be a charge to print. **Anne R** to send a link to the app so we can investigate it.

CBC have mapping layers on their website which can be found under My Central Beds, it appears that you cannot print from this tool.

4. Any Other Business

Anne EF will add the contacts list to the drop box.

5. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting will be held on 18 March 2021 at 7pm via Zoom. Items for the agenda need to be with the Chair and Anne EF by 11 March. Working groups report back on progress at the meeting.