

Report to Beyton Parish Council
on a meeting held at
Thurston Sixth Beyton Campus
Wednesday 27th February 2019
To discuss the options regarding taking forward a
Neighbourhood Development Plan for Beyton

Present	Cllr Graham Jones	Chairman Beyton Parish Council
	Elizabeth Ling	Community Housing Enabling Officer, Babergh Mid Suffolk District Councils
	Sunila Osborne	Community Development Officer, Rural Affordable Housing, Community Action Suffolk (CAS)
	Ian Poole	People 4 Places Planning Consultants Ltd
	Adele Pope	Beyton Parish Council
Daphne Youngs	Chair, Drinkstone Parish Council	

104 members of the public

- 1 Cllr Jones (GJ) welcomed all present and confirmed that the purpose of the meeting was to ascertain public support for a Beyton Neighbourhood Development Plan (NP). He confirmed that there would be a vote by show of hands at the end of the session on the question, 'Does Beyton undertake a Neighbourhood Plan or do we leave the shape of future development in the village in the hands of others?'
- 2 Sunila Osborne (SN) explained that the Housing Needs Survey (HNS) is an important element of a NP and deals with:
- (a) Information about the household responding...length of occupancy, approximate value etc
 - (b) Seeking views on what type of housing is seen as being needed in the village
 - (c) Looking at people who would like to come back to Beyton having had to move away
- She confirmed that the survey is entirely anonymous and can be dealt with on line or in hard copy format.
- The survey would be hand-delivered by volunteers mid-April with a 2 week window for completion after which CAS handle all data processing towards the presentation of a full report and Executive Summary.
- 3 Elizabeth Ling (EL) explained that she was charged with looking at housing need throughout the District with funding from the Community Housing Fund.
- She confirmed that one of the objectives which she would adopt would be an assessment of any appetite for Community Led Housing in Beyton.
- 4 In response to a question from the floor, SN & EL briefly outlined the role and work of CAS.
- 5 Adele Pope spoke to explain that volunteers would be needed for the delivery of HNS forms and that, if the go-ahead is sanctioned, this would be on or about 13th April allowing for analysis over the summer towards the Executive Summary.
- The exercise addresses the next 10 years of projected housing need.
- 6 Ian Poole (IP) broadly outlined the NP process which must produce a Plan which is compliant with extant European, National and Local Planning policies and which cannot seek to stop development already agreed.
- He outlined a 6 step process, being:
- (a) Designation of the Plan area – usually the Civil Parish Boundary
 - (b) Draft Plan prepared as a pre-submission draft and open to consultation
 - (c) Suitably amended Draft submitted to Mid Suffolk District Council (MSDC)
 - (d) District Council consults on document
 - (e) Document goes for formal examination when amendments are suggested and incorporated
 - (f) Final document goes to local referendum requiring a simple majority in order to become Policy
- 7 IP explained that:
- (a) Beyton Parish Council must lead the process but that it must be a community team effort

headed by a working group of 6 – 8 individuals with others standing by for specific tasks.

(b) The community must be kept informed and consulted at all stages so that the Plan reflects the consensus view.

(c) The Plan is evidence based requiring research and data collection.

(d) Outcomes must conform with policies of other statutory agencies (as at 6 above) and must take account of existing statutory designations (conservation area etc).

(e) The Plan is a Planning document and can only deal with Planning issues, but 'Community Actions' can be recommended to deal with other issues such as dog fouling and speeding traffic.

8 IP explained that the problems consequent upon the lack of a provable MSDC 5 year housing land supply leaves the Planning situation vulnerable pending the adoption of a new Joint Local Plan (with Babergh) which may be drafted by June /July for adoption early 2020. A NP can help address the issues raised by this shortcoming. Furthermore, it can introduce standards regarding design, heritage and landscape which the Local Plan does not cover.

9 In general outline, IP suggested that Community engagement must be central to any NP initiative and that this might best identify sites where development would be appropriate using drop-in events, surveys, area character appraisals, specific site assessments etc. Further input would be appropriate regarding the overall vision and options together with support in formatting and writing the text. The due process might, with energy, be completed in 1 year. The exercise should be cost-neutral as far as the village is concerned given the existing grant aid structure dedicated to the production of NP's

10 Daphne Youngs explained that Drinkstone, a smaller community, had begun the NP process in frustration at the lack of protection afforded by the MSDC Local Plan in light of the District housing supply shortfall. Once begun, the process has attracted widespread and enthusiastic support through drop-in days, community walks and a community questionnaire yielding an 83% response feeding into 7 working groups dealing with areas such as landscape & bio-diversity, publicity etc. The process has proved to have wider benefits including landscape & 'character' awareness and looks to go to Referendum in January 2020. It is recommended as an extremely worthwhile exercise, as is the involvement of a Planning professional for guidance.

11 Questions / comments from the floor dealt with:

(a) The impending Joint Local Plan taking precedence over NP's...*This concerns an unknown time scale and, meanwhile, an emerging NP carries weight by way of proper local input eg HNS.*

(b) The funding (£8k.) to encourage site allocations is a bribe...*This element of a Plan is a great strengthening factor as a community can then be seen to be accepting of appropriate development rather than saying no to everything.*

(c) Could Hessett be involved as they will inevitably be affected by Beyton decisions, especially regarding Highways issues?...*A joint Plan is possible but needs careful thought.*

(d) Will MSDC respect NP's?...*they have to, as long as there is a 5 year housing land supply in the District, the NP is the Plan in force; this has worked in practice recently in Debenham & in Stowupland. NB the Plan must be regularly kept under review to remain effective.*

(e) What is a realistic timescale?...*1 year for production, 6 months to be added for statutory processes before formal completion.*

(f) Where does Beyton stand in the MSDC housing site allocation hierarchy?...*well below the large towns and villages such as Elmwell, Thurston & Woolpit – the 'Hinterland' designation is equivalent to '2nd division'.*

12 GJ confirmed that there were no further queries and asked for a show of hands to support the proposal that Beyton should proceed with a NP.

There was an overwhelming show of hands in favour with no dissent.

13 The Meeting ended at 9.10.