

Minutes from the meeting for the Review of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) Steering Group held on 16 May 2018

In attendance were

Cllor James Stewart (Chairman)

Cllor Lucy Ashworth (Deputy Mayor)

Nigel Draffan

Geoff Thorpe

David Wood

Jeremy Johnstone

Barry Hopkins

James Seller

Victoria Holland

Leani Haim

Sue Simpson

Apologies received from Councillor Kay Wagland

The Chairman had previously circulated identified topics for discussion at the three focus group meetings. These comprised Connectivity and Economy.

The groups all indicated that the meetings had been well attended and that views had been expressed as follows:

The West of Arundel Task Group

- Arundel is in a distinct market position, some retailers are successful others fail, need a new type of retailer, broaden the offer?
- It was noted that there was competition nearby.
- Concerns centred on the danger of accessing Ford Station from the Town
Suggestions were to provide a combined pedestrian and cyclist path on the eastern side of Ford Road which could possibly link up with South Coast Cycle route and linking to existing footpaths from the river path;
- Provision of a road bridge at Ford crossing over the railway line to avoid delays, liaison with Climping and Ford on this;
- Speeds along Ford Rd were a concern and, thus, the possibility of a community speed watch but it was recognised that this would require commitment from local residents;
- Unanimous agreement that the commerce had suffered since the top gate of the castle had been closed – footfall was crucial and, as 200,000 tourists visit the castle, its reopening would not only benefit the Cathedral, St Nicolas church but the commercial units at the top end of the High Street.;

- Pedestrianisation of Tarrant Street was advocated to take place as soon as possible (the Chairman at this point indicated the funding that had been received from ADC to secure consultants to design a “street scene Project” which could feed into the NP);
- Arundel need not be a ‘through road’ and so parking strategy should try to keep visitors cars to the edges;
- Parking remained an issue and suggestions were for short term free parking and to reintroduce a parking strategy in the Review of the NP.

The Riverside Task Group

- The view was expressed that there should be a junction along the new route of A27 for development at Ford;
- Shared surfaces for the pedestrian and cyclist route from the top of town to Ford Station was supported;
- Regret that better links with nearby villages (e.g Wepham) and Monarchs way had not been better established and advocated the formation of the same;
- Parking remained an issue and therefore a suggestion that additional parking spaces could be provided as an extension to the Castle and/or Lido car parks;
- Discussions then emerged and centred upon the vision conceived some years ago by Neil Holland for a footbridge over the river to the bottom of Arun Street;
- Views were expressed that market forces dictated the type of units in the town and reference was made to the underused units at Fitzalan Road;
- Did not consider that it was necessary to restrict the types of commercial use of units within the main shopping area;
- The development of housing at Ford was considered a positive for the Arundel economy;
- The old Victorian Swallow Brewery structure at Blastreat should be retained;
- Considered that the live/work space should be encouraged as should business hubs (maybe at the Post office and those at Mill Farm Barn)..

The Old Town Task Group

- Support for the pedestrian/cycle path along Ford Road, and so reduce traffic along there particularly at School drop off & collection times;
- Shared surfaces for Tarrant Street with priority being given to pedestrians;
- Different surfaces (e.g. cobbles) should be encouraged to ensure speed awareness for example along Maltravers Street as per 20 mph zones;
- Concerns about the loss of bus services;
- Promote establishing better and firm relationships with outlying areas such as Crossbush and Wepham as they use Arundel services and facilities;

- Support the business hub concept and the possibility that the Victoria Institute could provide such a facility with less experienced business people being mentored by more experienced ones;
- Recognition of the existing hubs in outlying business parks (e.g Park Farm) and the possibility that these could cross over to the Town and smaller units would be attractive for this purpose.
- Recognised that generally Arundel is doing OK compared to Chichester & Worthing where there are higher vacancy rates, but average spend has gone down in shops with emphasis on eating & drinking.

The groups were thanked for their hard work and emphasis was placed on the fact that, in due course, the steering group would have to ensure that all of the matters outlined in the discussion documents had been covered and that feed back was more than aspirational but had a reasonable prospect of being implemented during the lifetime of the Reviewed NP.

Towards the close of the meeting Geoff (Thorpe) produced a plan to advance his views upon better connectivity between areas in Arundel. A marked up map was discussed as attached. Points discussed included:

- Elevate footpath on river between the bridges.
- Riverside has major potential for development
- Make more of River to connect communities and to Littlehampton
- Retail centre of Town is Co-op.
- Do not need more roads in Town, need more pedestrian/cycle connectivity
- Riverside bungalows & business units will be developed at some point
- New car park adjacent to allotments at Fitzalan Road to replace Crown Yard?

The Chairman confirmed that the NP timetable would have to be changed and that there was now the possibility that the referendum would take place in July 2019.

The next meeting is on 12 June 2018 when further feedback will be received from the Task Groups on Housing Development.

