



Town Hall | 61 Newland Street | Witham | CM8 2FE  
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## AGENDA

Meeting of: **Planning & Transport Committee**

Date: **Tuesday, 28th May 2024** Time: **6.30 p.m.**

Place: **Town Hall, 61 Newland Street, Witham, Essex**

**Members are hereby summoned to attend the above Meeting to transact the following business. Members are respectfully reminded that each item on the Agenda should be carefully examined. If you have any interest, it must be duly declared.**

To be present: Councillors -

P.	Barlow	(Chairman)	T.	Hewitt
J.C.	Coleman	(Vice Chairman)	J.	Martin
E.	Adelaja		R.	Ramage
J.M.	Coleman		A.	Sloma
L.	Headley		E.	Williams

Nikki Smith  
Town Clerk  
GK/20.5.2024

**1. APOLOGIES**

To receive and approve apologies for absence.

**2. MINUTES**

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning & Transport Committee held 13th May 2024 (previously circulated).

**3. INTERESTS**

To receive any declarations of interests that Members may wish to give notice of on matters pertaining to any item on this Agenda.

**4. QUESTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Members of the press and public will be invited to address the Meeting.

*Order Note: A maximum of 30 minutes is designated for public participation time with no individual speaker exceeding three minutes unless otherwise granted an extension by the Chairman under Standing Order 3(F) & 3(G)*

**5. PLANNING OFFICER'S REPORT**

To receive a verbal report from the Planning Officer on any matters arising from previous Meeting.

**6. PART 1 APPLICATIONS**

To approve officer 'no objection' recommendations for applications listed under [Part 1](#) without debate. *Applications may be moved to Part 2 where Members are in disagreement with recommendations by giving 24 hours' notice to the Planning Officer.*

**7. PART 2 APPLICATIONS**

To consider applications in [Part 2](#).

**8. REVISED PLANS**

To consider any revised plans received by Braintree District Council that have previously been commented upon.

**9. DECISIONS**

To receive and note decisions on planning applications pertaining to Witham which have been received from Braintree District Council ([attached](#) at page 6).

**10. ON-STREET EV CHARGING**

To receive a letter from Essex County Council regarding on-street EV charging and to consider writing a letter of support for its proposed scheme ([attached](#) at page 7).

**11. NOTES FROM MEETING WITH COUNCILLOR LOUIS**

To receive the Notes from the informal meeting with Essex County Councillor Derrick Louis and his response plus HGV routing map ([attached](#) at page 9).

**12. TACKLING SPEEDING IN WITHAM/20s PLENTY**

To receive speed surveys for Hatfield Road, Maltings Lane, Flora Road and Humber Road (to be circulated separately).

**13. THE GREAT GRID UPDATE**

To receive a report regarding the recent public consultation and to consider the Town Council's response ([attached](#) at page 13).

**14. BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S LOCAL PLAN**

To receive a report ([attached](#) at page 15).

**15. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

To receive the Minutes from the Neighbourhood Plan Meeting held 16th April 2024 ([attached](#) at page 16).

**PART 1  
APPLICATIONS WITH OFFICER ‘NO OBJECTION’  
RECOMMENDATIONS TO BE CONSIDERED “EN BLOC” WITHOUT  
DEBATE.**

**Applications Received:**

The following applications have been made to the District Council for planning permission under the Town & Country Planning Acts and referred to the Town Council as a statutory consultee. Copies of the applications and accompanying plans may be seen at the Planning Department Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree or online at [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Under the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, representations cannot be treated in confidence. Witham Town Council is not responsible for issuing planning decisions.

24/01005/HH	116 Powers Hall End, Witham, Essex	West	Proposed new driveway with 3 no. brick faced retaining walls and permeable paving with Aco Drainage and Soakaway to form a vehicular access crossover and installation of a dropped kerb
24/00962/HH	The Old Rectory , 19 Guithavon Street, Witham	Central	Proposed drop kerb

## PART 2 APPLICATIONS FOR MEMBERS' DEBATE

### Applications Received:

The following applications have been made to the District Council for planning permission under the Town & Country Planning Acts and referred to the Town Council as a statutory consultee. Copies of the applications and accompanying plans may be seen at the Planning Department Causeway House, Bocking End, Braintree or online at [www.braintree.gov.uk](http://www.braintree.gov.uk)

**PLEASE NOTE:** Under the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, representations cannot be treated in confidence. Witham Town Council is not responsible for issuing planning decisions.

24/00897/FUL	Southview College, Conrad Road, Witham	North	Erection of 2no detached single-storey buildings to be used as a classroom and a shop
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## Witham Town Council – Planning Application Report

**Application No:-** 24/00897/FUL

**Address:-** Southview College, Conrad Road, Witham

**Ward:-** North

**Proposal:-** Erection of 2no detached single-storey buildings to be used as a classroom and a shop

**Relevant Site History:-**

**Representations:-**

**Summary:-** The proposal is to erect two detached single storey buildings to the front of the site. These two spaces would accommodate 35 children/students in two classrooms and a separate 'shop' which would provide essential work experience and potentially employment. There would be close links to the Rickstones Academy. The classroom building will be 15m by 8.4m and the shop 9m by 9.6m. The height will be 3.2m and the building made of composite cladding with uPVC windows.

**Recommendation:-** Additional facilities are required at Southview and the provision of a shop will forge greater links between South View and the adjacent academy. I am unsure whether additional places would be offered to students or whether this is to give better facilities. There is a traffic problem in Conrad Road but nevertheless I would suggest no objection.

**Policy References:-**

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Application & Address	Proposal	BDC Decision	WTC Decision	Agenda Item 9
24/00570/FUL - 3 Freebournes Road Witham Essex CM8 3UN	Alterations to fenestration, replacement of roof and wall cladding, replacement of roof lights windows and doors and installation of dock shelters.	Application Permitted	Recommend Approval	
24/00284/FUL - Appledale 1 Eastways Witham Essex	Change of use of commercial unit (Use Class E (g) (iii) and associated Class B8 and Class E (g) to Flexible Use Classes E (g) (iii) and associated Class B8 and Class	Application Permitted	Recommend Approval	

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Agenda Item 10

Sustainable Transport Team  
E2, County Hall  
Chelmsford  
CM1 1QH

Our Ref: LEVILOS2024

Dear Sir/Madam

re: Letter of support for ECC LEVI project

I am writing to ask for your help in delivering our Sustainable Transport strategy, and specifically ensuring we have the right electric vehicle chargepoints (EVCP) in the right places to support a sustainable transition to electric vehicles (EVs), where vehicular journeys are necessary. The emerging EV Strategy for Essex, set for public consultation in June 2023, forecasts that Essex needs at least 6,000 public charging points by 2030 to meet expected demands, and as you may be aware ECC has been tentatively allocated £8,382,000 funding towards this from The Department for Transport's (DfT) Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) Fund. We are exploring the opportunity to award 15-year concession contracts to more than one Charge Point Operator (CPO) which will help us to leverage additional private investment and deliver value for money for the public funding and the end user. This letter of support does not commit you to anything, but it does demonstrate to the DfT that there is wide support for residential charging and shows that we are collaborating with our key partners to develop the most effective plans which meets Essex's charging needs, now and in the future.

Key information about the LEVI Fund

- ☐ The fund is ringfenced for Tier 1 local authorities in England to plan and deliver chargepoint infrastructure
- ☐ The primary beneficiaries must be residents without access to off-street parking, with a focus on low power (<22kW) charging points
- ☐ It can also benefit other groups like tourists, customers, commuters, taxis, and commercial vehicles, provided the primary benefit is to residents.
- ☐ As outlined in our EV strategy, ECC will focus on rural and levelling up areas where commercial investment by itself would be difficult to attract.
- ☐ Projects must demonstrate value for money and highlight the strategic fit for Essex
- ☐ Funding cannot be used for any other Highway's projects.

ECC are working with partners to develop a business case and submit it for funding on July the 19th, 2024. We are keen to use this opportunity to work closely with you, recognising

that Parish Councils have an important part to play in the roll out of EV infrastructure and ensuring that we target rural areas.

We have prepared the text of this letter of support, which you may choose to use.

Alternatively, feel free to draft your own version. The letter is attached. Please send it to Danielle.Macdonald@essex.gov.uk no later than Monday, June 10th. Your support is greatly appreciated and will contribute to the successful rollout of Essex's EV infrastructure."

Yours sincerely

Tracey Vickers

Head of Sustainable Transport

W: [www.essex.gov.uk](http://www.essex.gov.uk)

Please apply Parish Council letter head

Dear Tracey,

re: Letter of support for ECC LEVI bid

I am writing this Letter of Support to assist ECC in delivering its Sustainable Transport Strategy, specifically the implementation of much-needed electric vehicle charge points (EVCPs) within [insert Parish]. We endorse the idea of placing the right chargers in the right place to facilitate a sustainable transition to electric vehicles (EVs). Noting that Essex requires at least 6,000 publicly accessible charging points by 2030 to meet anticipated demands.

The Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding is crucial for the successful deployment of these charging points. [Insert Parish council name] will collaborate with ECC, where appropriate, to ensure adequate EVCP provision in suitable locations, benefiting residents without off-street parking and aligning with broader sustainable travel objectives.

Yours sincerely

(Signature)

[Name and position]

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Agenda 11

Notes from a meeting with Councillors Derrick Louis (ECC) and Phil Barlow (WTC) held 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

Officers: N. Smith and G. Kennedy.

The first point to be raised concerned 20 mph zones. Councillor Barlow said that he had hoped these could be introduced on housing estates with one entrance/exit. He cited Allectus Way and Humber Road as good examples. He said that Roger Hirst the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, was a supporter of the scheme. He asked how likely would the Town Council be to get such zones implemented. Would we have to undertake the survey ourselves, would this need to be house-to-house and what percentage of support would be needed?

**Councillor Louis undertook to find out percentage and how to survey.**

Councillor Louis said that now expensive schemes, such as crossings, had been taken away from the Local Highways Panel (LHP). He said that the LHP base its schemes on existing speeds, whether there have been accidents and how limits could be enforced.

Councillor Barlow asked about zones outside schools. Would they be 20 mph all day or just at school times. Councillor Louis said it would depend as often it would be 20's Plenty signage with flashing lights at school drop off/pick up times.

Councillor Barlow said that there was now funding in the budget to have a Speed Indicator Device (SID) and it was planned to start the process to get permission for several sites in Witham.

**Councillor Louis said that he would undertake to share speed surveys. He was also prepared to use some of his Locality Fund to help finance a SID for the town.**

Councillor Barlow then spoke about the problem of the pathway in Hatfield Road where vegetation had encroached making it difficult for pedestrians particularly for those with prams and mobility scooters. This had been a long standing issue that needed to be resolved.

**Councillor Louis said that he was working on this issue. The new Members' Scheme includes the cutting back of vegetation.**

Councillor Barlow said that it was disappointing that the pilot devolution scheme had ceased as the Open Spaces Team could have undertaken such projects (Nb. This would not have been possible in this case as it is a primary route and only licensed operatives can work on such projects).

Councillor Louis said that insufficient numbers of councils had taken part in the pilot to make it viable.

A discussion then took place about pot holes and temporary and permanent repairs.

**Geraldine would remind Members about the Members' Scheme to repair pot holes.** Councillor Louis asked that What Three Words should be used to locate the exact location of potholes or defects.

Councillor Barlow then asked about a street lamp in Saxon Drive which had been damaged and made safe by UK Power but since then the column had not been replaced.

A discussion then took place about the parking issues outside schools. The LHP has a North Essex Parking Partnership representative at its meetings so issues could be raised.

Comment was made about HGV routing and that it appeared unnecessary to defer decisions until the A12 was triple-laned when it was a local issue. HGVs using Maltings Lane was cited as an example when they could use Gershwin Boulevard.

**Councillor Louis said that he would supply the map of proposed routes that had been submitted in the past. Speed surveys also show how many HGVs use that road and the latest survey would be shared.**

Councillor Louis was asked about the On-Street Electric Vehicle consultation and whether any further information had been received. (Letters of support to charging schemes have now been requested by ECC and will be taken to Planning on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> May).

**Geraldine undertook to forward the Town Council's comments from the consultation to Derrick.**

**It was agreed that Councillor Barlow would talk to Councillor Tom Cunningham about devolution.**

**Councillor Louis said that it would be useful to meet on a regular basis.**

NS/GK/14.5.2024

Ref our recent meeting, please find an update.

**1. Streetlight Saxon Drive**

This looks like it is UKPN but I have asked Highways to chase them.



**2. Overgrown Vegetation on Hatfield Road**

Highways have confirmed that the responsibility for this is with the landowner. Highways enforcement wrote to them on 1<sup>st</sup> May and I will keep you updated.

**3. Hatfield Road Speed Surveys**

Please find attached the most recent ones.

**4. Potential 20 MPH Zones (Humber Road and Allectus Way Estates)**

I am still awaiting the info on this as the Officer has just returned from leave.

**5. HGV Routes and Advisory Sign for Maltings Lane**

A meeting is being set up with the A12 team to discuss the wider HGV Routes. I have attached what was previously submitted and it would be helpful if you would confirm you are happy with this or require any changes.

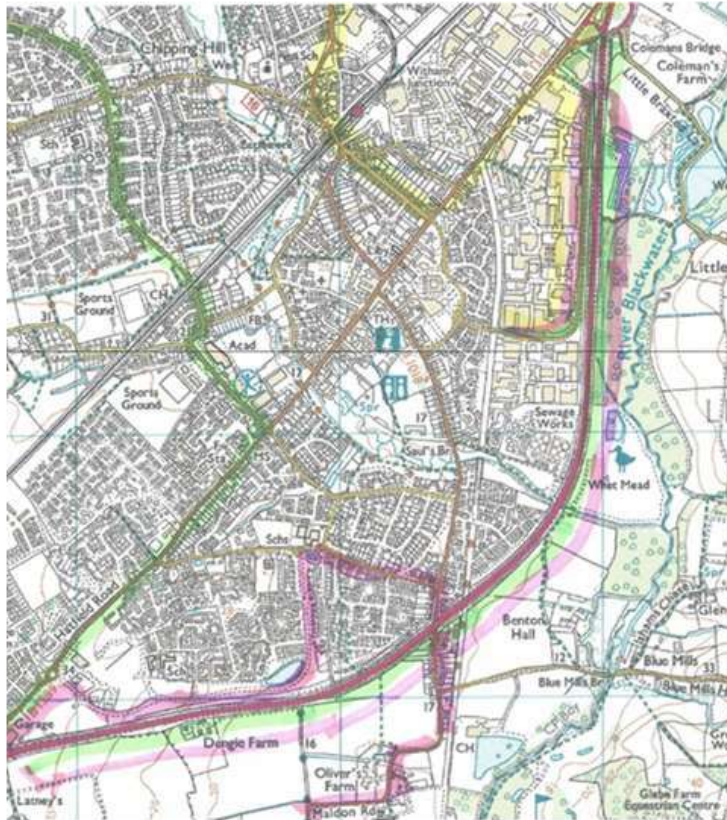
An advisory sign was mentioned elsewhere – if you could let me have the location and ideally a picture, I will pursue this for Maltings Lane separately.

Best regards,

*Derrick*

**Cllr Derrick Louis TD VR MBA CDir FloD**

*Member for Witham Southern Division (Hatfield Peverel, Witham South and Witham West)*



Yellow Route: Braintree ↔ Colchester (A12N)  
Chelmsford (A12S)

Green Route: Chelmsford ↔ Notleys  
↔ Braintree (A1)

Pink Route: Maldon ↔ Chelmsford (A12N)  
↔ Colchester (A12S)

All avoid Saul's Bridge + Ch. Hill

- Yellow Route - Braintree to Colchester (A12North) and to Chelmsford (A12South)
- Green Route – Chelmsford to Notleys and to Braintree (A12North and A12South)
- Pink Route – Maldon to Chelmsford (via Hatfield Peverel) to Colchester (via Tiptree)
- All routes Saul's Bridge and Chipping Hill Bridge)

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### Agenda Item 13

#### The Great Grid Upgrade – Norwich to Tilbury

On Tuesday, 14<sup>th</sup> May 2024 there was a public consultation regarding the above.

The new infrastructure will run north of Witham between Silver End and Rivenhall crossing the Cressing Road and go between White Notley and Faulkbourne. The reason why this new infrastructure will be required by 2030 is that the off-shore wind turbines will be operational and if not NG will have to pay compensation to the power generator.

We took the opportunity to ask a representative a number of pertinent questions.

#### Rivenhall Incinerator

We asked whether Nation Grid (NG) were aware of the incinerator at Rivenhall and the potential for electricity generation.

Apparently they are aware. It was explained that NG keep abreast of new sources of electricity generation and will need to provide the infrastructure to get the power on line.

It confirmed that they are responsible for taking electricity to where it is needed and not responsible for generation of electricity.

#### Underground Cables

We asked about underground cables and the swathes of land that would be disrupted when the cables are buried. They would need to be one metre deep and separated from each other hence the wide trench that would be required.

#### Off-shore Cables

This has been mooted as a compromise but of course it would disrupt the bio-diversity of the sea bed. When asked it was explained that for every on-shore cable, three would be required off shore. Six new 'sub-stations' would be required along the shore line plus pylons to bring the power to its required location.

#### Existing Network

There are existing cables running to the north of Witham but apparently low wattage on poles rather than pylons. It would appear from maps that these would be decommissioned and new pylons installed.

#### Traffic generation

When this item first came up for discussion, a member of the public complained about disruption which would be caused by the additional traffic during the construction stage. We were assured that every effort would be taken to reduce disruption. The cabling would be done in sections, rather like the A12 widening, and that local conditions would be taken into consideration. Page 46 and 47 of the Project Background Document gives details of the construction.

Compensation

We asked too about whether local authorities would be able to obtain financial assistance to improve facilities for those who will be affected by this scheme and this would be available.

Health issues

In the past there had been lots of concerns about the possible harm caused by overhead cables. We were assured that whilst there is no evidence to support this, the NG try to route its cables away from the population.

Need for Electricity

We must remember that in Witham it was necessary to build a gas turbine at Cut Throat Lane to augment electricity supply in the town. We will need this clean electricity which will come from the wind turbines in the North Sea.

GK/15.5.2024

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Agenda Item 14

**Report for Planning and Transport Committee Meeting to be held 28<sup>th</sup> May 2024**

Review of Adopted Local Plan – Minute 275 from Meeting held 29<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

A letter was received from Braintree District Council with a ‘call for sites’. In receiving the details Members discussed what they would wish to see for the town in the future as it was recognised that no growth was not an option. At this stage it would not be appropriate to comment to the District Council but comments could be incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

The importance of infrastructure was stressed. Members were aware that ‘tacking’ on housing estates would affect highways and the suggestion was made that a purposely built area would be better and this could be developed through the NP.

Members thought that there was scope to build new housing once the A12 widening scheme was completed.

GK/20.5.2024

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Agenda Item 15

**NOTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING GROUP AT WITHAM TOWN COUNCIL HELD 16<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2024 AT 10 A.M. VIA ZOOM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	Councillors	S. Ager, P. Barlow, J.C. Coleman, L. Headley, J. Martin,
<b>Co-optees:</b>		J. Goodman, M. Lager and J. Palombi (Witham & Countryside Society)
<b>DAC Planning:</b>		Tim Parton
<b>Officers:</b>		N. Smith (Town Clerk) and G. Kennedy (Planning Officer)

Following introductions, Tim detailed the agenda which would consider the Neighbourhood Plan Scoping Report. He listed the events that had been held to gain feedback for the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) which had now been included in the report. He reminded Members that the Report needed to provide both national and local policies, contain a summary of outcomes from the activities and to develop a draft plan vision based on the existing 2018 Town Plan vision statements. Then draft objectives would be considered on those extracted issues along with draft policies.

He then asked Members whether the themes listed captured all the relevant issues.

**Vision for the town**

He explained that usually there would be a condensed summary of the vision for the town but there could be individual visions for each section based on the Town Plan.

He then went through each of the visions.

**Housing**

Comment was made that whilst it was being based on new developments, there should be something about the need to avoid older housing stock deteriorating and the need to retrofit insulation, etc. Tim said that it would be important to consider how this could be delivered and how the NP could influence it, this could be included in the next steps.

A discussion then took place about planning applications for extensions and house improvements and perhaps a guide could be issued.

The need for a Housing Needs Assessment was stressed and the Town Clerk advised that the final report was now awaited.

**Community**

Access to both medical and educational facilities was discussed. Members stressed that it was not just for Witham's residents but surrounding villages look to Witham as a hub. Mention was made of accessibility and parking in the town centre.

**Economy and Business**



Tim said following feedback point 6 had been added about a thriving town centre/High Street with retail facilities which meet the needs of residents.

#### Traffic, Transport and Parking

Comment was made about the shift to electric vehicles and the need to have appropriate infrastructure for motorists on a journey, those at their destination and at home. It was suggested that with technology there was less need to travel and other forms of vehicles, such as hydrogen powered vehicles, could have been developed by 2050. Tim suggested amended wording to take this into account. The need to provide cycle parking was also stressed.

#### Climate Change mitigation and adaption

Two points had been added to include the impacts of climate change and to have resilience and low-carbon new developments to protect the local environment.

#### Green Infrastructure and Open Space

Two points had been added to have plentiful open space and its natural habitats conserved; and to have easy access to the open countryside.

#### Design and Character

To have good quality and well-designed built environment that respects the local character of the area had been added. Members commented about the two conservation areas and the difficulties of using modern materials on new homes. More flexibility was required to allow UPVC windows when it would not detract from Listed Buildings.

#### Heritage

The point about having an attractive and conserved historic character had been added.

#### Coalescence

Tim said that this section had been added to include a distinctive character and be separate settlement distinct from its neighbours.

Tim then went through the alternative Vision which was a paragraph bringing together the necessary points. He said that this could be used and the individual vision statements included within the objectives.

Members thought that a summary would be concise.

#### **Objectives and policy ideas**

Tim asked what members would like to do regarding the strengths and weaknesses and what was necessary to be included.

#### New development and housing needs

Comment was made about sustainable locations and how they could be identified and what would be infrastructure improvements. Tim explained that this would be set out in the NP. The objectives would have supporting texts explaining that in Witham this is what is meant by sustainable. Expectations would be set out along with what was hoped to be achieved by the NP. The Inspector would look at the policies and supporting texts.

Tim asked if the NP should include allocations for new developments. If included more work would be required, a housing needs assessment would be commissioned through the Local Plan. Mention was made that with an aging population suitable housing was required. Tim said that this could be included in the policies. It would be necessary to work with BDC to identify appropriate areas. More weight would be added to the NP. Tim suggested that important matters should be included in the NP and then additional items could be added in later versions as it would be a living document.

Comment was made that residents resent having the District Council imposing housing on Witham in places where they disagree. It was hoped that the NP would give the weight to allocate sites where residents wished it to be. It was hoped to allocate to the west of the town which would be controversial. It was important not to have more housing to the north and coalesce with Rivenhall. Infrastructure cannot be added to already cluttered sites.

It was considered that ‘bolt-on’ housing was the norm and there needed to be a long-term solution rather than allocating further sites in the already over-built areas in the north and south of Witham. There were opportunities to take advantage of the NP.

*John Palombi arrived at the meeting.*

Tim said that a conversation was needed with BDC about housing development to fulfil local needs. More weight and control were needed to ensure that housing was not allocated in the wrong place where facilities were inadequate. Likewise it was important to address needs. Evidence would be needed to show that all sites have been investigated and this would be tested during the examination.

The question was asked where improving existing housing stock could be added in the NP. Tim undertook to incorporate.

Later in the meeting, the discussion turned again to housing and the need for accommodation for the elderly but the importance to balance with the needs of young families was stressed. There was a rich diversity of all ages and housing was required for single people. Housing for the elderly near the town centre with easy access to facilities and transport was stressed.

The requirement for home offices, albeit in sheds in the garden, was stressed as people increasingly work from home.

Tim commented that whilst encouraging accommodation for the elderly it would give those with larger families the opportunity to access larger houses. Comment was made that some older residents cannot afford to move nor run their larger homes.

### Community facilities and services

It was explained that there were a number of policy ideas included but no comment was made by members.

### Economy and business

It was considered that policy ideas would support business and encourage new employment opportunities.

Members asked if business areas could be addressed in the Local Plan (LP) as opposed to employment areas. BDC had opposed gyms and dance studios on the industrial estates which had not been included in the definition of the LP. The government had made change of use easier so that former offices could be converted into housing. Flexibility was required as positive benefit for alternative uses should be encouraged. Definition of use should be considered. Tim found this point interesting, he considered the wording too restrictive and there should be more positive wording to show support for a variety of activities and add suggestions in the supporting texts.

Members commented on 'out commuting' and asked if this was necessary to be included. A significant number of commuters still use trains to access London.

### Traffic, Transport and Parking

Members commented that the town centre is reasonably well provided for parking but some estate roads are too narrow. It was short-sighted of the County Council not to make parking provision for schools. Tim explained that there was not a lot that could be done except influence development in the future. Comment was made that there was a shortage of school places so pupils could not attend their local schools.

The suggestion was made that parking areas should be created away from people's front doors to reduce danger. Tim said that parking would be linked to design codes.

### Climate change mitigation and adaptation

Tim said that he would incorporate into this the comment made previously about electric vehicles and other technologies.

Comment was made that better use should be made of solar panels especially on industrial estates. The suggestion was made that all planning applications should be required to make a positive impact on the climate. Houses should be built south facing to benefit from sunshine and other measures retrofitted. Tim said that this could be encouraged in the NP. Members were concerned about increased costs particularly for affordable housing and this would need to be balanced. Better insulated homes were required to reduce energy costs. These comments would be incorporated into the report.

Tim said that flooding had not been included. Members explained that there had been more flooding in the past but mitigation had ensured that heavy rain no longer had a huge impact on the town. Bad drainage was cited as the reason and this had been remedied.

### Green Infrastructure and open space

Comment was made about blue infrastructure which is a technical term concerning water assets in an urban area. Should this be restricted just to the River Walk as James Cooke Wood and Whetmead are to be actively improved. Tim said that these would be named within the NP.

The point was made that the NP should toughen up rules as developers want to remove hedges and trees. It was important to safeguard existing vegetation. Tim said that this would be added and that new developments should increase biodiversity. He would also add a definition of blue infrastructure.

Tim explained that smaller areas of green should be included as well to protect against the loss of green spaces cherished by residents.

*Councillor Phil Barlow left the Meeting*

### Design and Character

The Town Clerk explained that the Design Code was just back.

Tim said that members might find further items to be included or considered.

### Heritage

Tim said that particular buildings might want to be identified along with important views. Members explained that there was already a Heritage List of buildings and structures but this had not been adopted by BDC. The importance of keeping the list updated was stressed and this could be reviewed with the NP.

### Coalescence

Tim spoke of the need to identify areas where this could occur. He spoke of the impact on character and what could be done to address this. A visual assessment would be required and consideration given as to how to take this forward. It could be collectively with neighbouring parish councils but it would be evidence-based.

Members spoke about the developments which go beyond the town boundary and whether therefore the boundary should be reviewed. Tim said that the NP area had already been defined and that extending would only be possible with an agreement with neighbours.

Tim then looked at the next steps and beyond.

He said that the Scoping Report needed to be updated to reflect the workshop discussion. He would do this shortly and circulate.

Drafting of the NP would be required and then submitted to BDC. The importance of checking that the NP was consistent with national and local policies was stressed.

In answer to a question regarding time scales, Tim explained that it depended on who was going to do the work and whether housing allocations was to be included. Employing a consultant would be quicker.

The meeting then closed.

Councillor P. Barlow  
Chairman

NS/GK/26.4.2024

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