

Memorandum

To: Tysoe Parish Council (PC)
Re: Meeting with Matthew Neal (MN), Planning Officer,
Stratford District Council (SDC)

In attendance: Cllr Keith Risk (KR) ; Cllr Beverley Cressman (BC)

Date: Thursday 14th January 2016

Purpose

- 1) **Update** MN on the progress of the Tysoe Neighbourhood Plan (NP) following the resignation of the NP Steering Committee
- 2) **Guidance** on next steps for NP and potentially available resources
- 3) **Review** progress of SDC Core Strategy and implications for Tysoe NP

Update

A summary of events re NP leading up to resignation of NP Steering Committee was provided; with a copy of the PC Summary of December 2015 (information only).

MN confirmed that Inspectors reviewing NP Final Submissions are being extremely thorough, and will reject submissions that do not give robust evidence of full and effective community consultation; reassurance that NP's aims/objectives fully reflect these consultations; and that NP's meets all planning requirements (the 'golden thread' for 'sustainability' referred to in NPPF). Inspectors will not be satisfied with token 'box ticking' approaches to consultation. Inspectors are very sensitive to potential challenges to NP's by developers and communities.

MN confirmed the vital role of the PC in ensuring proper governance of the NP process, and effective supervision of any steering committee/group with delegated responsibility for NP, under proper terms of reference. The PC's role is that of 'critical friend'.

KR/BC provided outline of proposed formation of working groups to assess and report on (a) status of 2nd draft of NP (b) key policies of NP on housing, and LSV; and (c) need for consultations and communications with the community about the NP. These would lead to formation of a new steering committee, with terms of reference, to take the NP to Final Submission stage. MN confirmed that these measures, and these topics, seemed appropriate.

Guidance

MN advised that consideration should be given to the need for a housing needs survey; and a further survey on NP aims and potential policy matters. The last housing needs survey was conducted in 2010, and probably now out of date. The validity of the NP survey conducted in 2014 might also now be questionable.

MN advised that Sarah Brooke Taylor from Warwickshire Rural Community Council could advise on a housing needs survey, under 'Rural Exception Schemes'. Simon Purfield of SDC Insights team could advise on NP survey to help set questions and ensure robustness of process. Use of an officially authorised consultant like this would be very helpful in providing the needed impartiality and expertise, particularly in preparing questions in any Survey's. This has been done for other NP's.

MN advised that conversations with residents, in whatever form: workshops, informal and formal meetings, village events, are vital. It is also important that there are conversations to engage with known land-owners, potential developers and other NP stakeholders to seek a cooperative approach, and assess intentions and plans. These will all be closely examined by the Inspector to ensure that evidence of adequate and effective consultation has been provided.

While there will be a need to undertake these consultations almost 'from the beginning' (as per NP Guides) this need not mean that the work undertaken to date has no value – there may be material in the current NP draft that can be used in future draft(s).

MN advised that a conversation with Locality to assess and apply for potential source(s) of funding would be useful.

The PC might also consider advisability of employing an independent consultant to oversee and guide NP process. A consultant like this was employed by Kineton in preparing its NP. This might be of particular value in preparation of NP housing policies, site allocations, and the status/boundary of Tysoe as LSV. There are, for example, Planning Inspectors who provide consultancy services (Body of Independent Inspectors) of this kind.

Review

There are 30 areas in SDC district which have currently been designated for an NP. Only Long Compton and Kineton are at Final Submission stage, and awaiting approvals before going to referendum. The Inspector's report on the Kineton NP is now available on the Kineton NP website.

Other areas are at various stages of development of their NP. MN confirmed that communities are advised not to rush the consultation stages; these will require at very least 9 months, even ignoring the time required to ensure that communities and stakeholders have been adequately consulted.

While there may be understandable concerns about the submission of planning applications by developers before an NP is completed, communities will be ill-served if an NP is rushed. The NP aims and policies need to be fully evidenced. If the system is 'short-circuited', the Inspector is likely to reject the NP, or require an element to be done again.

MN confirmed that SDC's Core Strategy is being reviewed this week by the Inspector. It is possible that, if he is satisfied, the report on the Core Strategy could be published by March 2016, and potentially approved by June 2016. At this stage it is impossible to predict if this will be the time-scale.

KR/BC enquired if there was a risk that LSV's might be required to take a greater allocation of new housing if key proposals of the SDC housing policy are rejected. MN confirmed that there was no indication of this. The Core Strategy's current proposal re LSV housing allocation has been accepted by the Inspector; and if there was to be any change to this it would have to be part of the agenda for current discussions on the Core Strategy. There is no such item on the Agenda.

MN confirmed that he is very willing to be helpful and supportive of the PC and the community with the NP. He attends meetings regularly with PC's and communities to consult and provide advice. He was appreciative of the meeting, which had been helpful to give him a sense of progress, and of Tysoe's NP needs; and to allow him to gauge the form and nature of assistance required.

KR/BC

January 14th, 2016