

**Minutes of the Public Meeting
on a Neighbourhood Plan
held on
Wednesday 13th October 2021 at 7.30pm in Chappel & Wakes Colne Village Hall**

In the Chair: Cllr. M. Taylor (Wakes Colne Parish Council), Cllr. S. Chamley (Chappel Parish Council)

Present Guest Speakers: Sandra Scott (Place Strategy Manager, Colchester Borough Council)
John Allcock and Steve Brown (Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan Team)

41 members of the public.

	SUBJECT
21/01	<p>Welcome</p> <p>The Chairwoman, Cllr. Taylor (Wakes Colne Parish Council), welcomed everyone and introduced Sandra Scott (Place Strategy Manager, Colchester Borough Council (CBC)) and chaired questions to her.</p> <p>The Chairwoman, Cllr. Chamley (Chappel Parish Council), welcomed everyone and introduced John Allcock and Steve Brown (Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan Team) and chaired questions to them.</p>
21/02	<p>Sandra Scott (Place Strategy Manager, Colchester Borough Council)</p> <p>Reported on the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, the benefits and challenges of making a Neighbourhood Plan and the role in decision making it may have.</p> <p>A Neighbourhood Plan is led and produced by a team of committed volunteers from within the local community, as well as members of the parish council(s). It is evidence-based and depends on the community's objectives. It requires considerable local research and community involvement and must fit with national policies, sustainable development, and strategic development in CBC. It is likely to take 4-6 years to produce, with funding and technical support from CBC, which will check and make recommendations before it goes to a formal examiner. If successful it is then put to a local referendum, and if more than 50% are in favour of the plan it will become adopted by CBC. It then has the same weight in local planning decisions as a local plan and should enable more local control and influence. The Neighbourhood Plan should run in line with the Local Plan which is reviewed every 5 years.</p> <p>More information can be found at: https://www.colchester.gov.uk/info/category/?id=neighbourhood-planning</p>
21/03	<p>Public Participation Session. Questions and Answers.</p> <p>These included:</p> <p>Question - What is the difference between a Parish Plan/Neighbourhood Plan?</p> <p>Answer - A Parish Plan is more of an action plan on what the community would like to see in the village; it carries no weight when making planning decisions. A Neighbourhood Plan has a formal status which planners must consult before making decisions. They have to be able to show good reasons to go against the Neighbourhood Plan but could still do so.</p> <p>Question - Speeding traffic is a local issue; could a Neighbourhood Plan highlight problem areas?</p> <p>Answer - Speeding is not a planning matter it is an Essex County Council Highways issue, but a Neighbourhood Plan might be used to try to engage on the issues.</p> <p>Question - Which CBC Local Plan would a local Neighbourhood Plan follow?</p> <p>Answer – A new Local Plan is expected in 2022, so it is likely that any Neighbourhood Plan starting to be developed should be in line with this and the existing Local Plan.</p>
21/04	<p>John Allcock and Steve Brown (Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan Team)</p> <p>Reported on the realities of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, the small, dedicated team (7 people) who went through the 327-step process, the time commitment with regular meetings, agenda/minutes over 5 years and the technical and administrative challenges involved.</p> <p>It was important to adhere to a vision of what the local community wanted, not just about housing but also to attract business to boost the local economy and look to future developments and needs. CBC gave helpful advice, as did the Rural Community Council for Essex. Good communications with the local community (all age and interest groups) were vital (website, newsletters public meetings, flyers, etc). A questionnaire (11 drafts) was distributed to all households. Housing and Business surveys were undertaken, and local landowners contacted. Records need to be kept at each stage. There was a six-week public consultation in the village followed by another through CBC. The final report was revised 20 times. About 90% agreed with the plan. The cost was £6k. The speakers gave many insights and practical tips. A final version of the Eight Ash Green Neighbourhood Plan is available on their website at https://eightashgreenvillage.files.wordpress.com/2020/01/np-referendum-final-version.pdf and a copy of the 44-page document is available on request.</p>

<p>21/05</p>	<p>Public Participation Session. Questions and answers.</p> <p>These included:</p> <p>Question - Would you have engaged in this process if you had known how much commitment and work was involved?</p> <p>Answer - Yes, it worked because they had a multi-skilled dedicated/committed team of volunteers.</p> <p>Question - Is it worth all the effort?</p> <p>Answer - Yes, because it is for all the village, but the whole community needs to be involved. CBC Planning Department do have an obligation to take into consideration the adopted Neighbourhood Plan, and this must work alongside the Local plan. The Neighbourhood Plan could also suggest control over future development beyond the next five years.</p> <p>There was some discussion about land supply for planning development in the Colchester area for the next 5 years and also about proposed developments in Chappel and Wakes Colne. (The Local Plan currently allows for a housing development of 30 homes off Swan Grove, Chappel.)</p> <p>Cllr. Chamley asked members of the public to consider all the information provided, and to contact the respective Parish Councils if they wish to commit to producing a Neighbourhood Plan.</p>
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Meeting Closed at 9.25pm.