

CROXTON, BRETtenham & KILVERSTONE PARISH COUNCILS JOINT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

PROGRESS REPORT 1 30 April 2016

Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report is to provide Croxton Parish Council and Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Councillors with an update on progress made in respect of the production of the Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP). It covers the period January 2016 to 30 April 16.

Background and Context

Croxton Parish Council and Brettenham & Kilverstone Parish Councils have decided to produce a Joint Neighbourhood Plan (JNP). The Plan area covers the entire administrative areas of the three parishes. Some of this includes areas of land identified for development in the adopted Thetford Area Action Plan (TAAP). The Neighbourhood Area was formally designated in July 2014. In 2015, the Parish Councils conducted a survey of the views of the residents in the area by way of a questionnaire which was circulated to every resident in the Parish Council areas of Croxton, Brettenham & Kilverstone. These results have been analysed and are being used to inform the next stage of the plan process which is to prepare a draft Plan for consultation later in 2016. The analysed results are on the Parish Councils' and JNP web site.

Progress in 2016

In January 2016, the Parish Councils appointed me to assist with the preparation of the draft JNP. On 11 Feb 16, a workshop for Parish Councillors (from both Parish Councils) was held at Croxton. The purpose of this meeting was to establish whether Breckland Council would require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in addition to Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be undertaken of the JNP. It was important to establish this before progress could be made on formulating the draft JNP policies.

Following the meeting a Summary (Scoping) Document was produced which was submitted to Breckland District Council (BDC) on 25 Mar 16 for onward transmission by Breckland Council to the statutory Environmental bodies - Historic England, Environment Agency, and Natural England – in order to gain their views on whether a formal Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) will be required.

To date the Environment Agency has responded confirming they do not consider SEA will be required and Heritage England have raised some queries which are being addressed. Once BDC has received the responses from all 3 agencies they will be able to provide the Parish Councils with a formal Screening Opinion as to whether SEA is required. BDC has yet to confirm whether SEA is not required.

During this period some work has been able to be undertaken on the draft Preface and introductory chapters of the plan and these will be delivered to both parish councils in draft form by Mid May. Following receipt of the formal Screening Opinion, work can progress on options for draft policies.

PROPOSED OUTLINE STRUCTURE OF DRAFT PLAN

Vision

- The JNP area covers the 2 Parish Council areas of the 3 parishes of Croxton, Brettenham & Kilverstone
- JNP area includes the previously identified Sustainable Urban Extension (SUE), which is subject to the adopted TAAP
- Overarching need to integrate the SUE into the life of the residents of the 2 parish council areas.
- Key objective to enable the maintenance, protection and enhancement of rural character of the parishes albeit acknowledging the SUE development. This is the aim of the plan
- No allocations to be made for housing development
- Conservation led plan
- Focus on cultural, historical and natural character of the two parish council areas
- Key objective to maintain the individual identity of each parish
- However recognition of the need for “social, cultural integration” with SUE, with “physical integration” being seen as transport links to the SUE
- Plan period up to 2036
- Residents see their parishes as pleasant and safe places to live and wish to retain their rural character.
- Residents wish to see the “semi rural” character of the parishes acknowledged within any development with the adoption of appropriate building styles, choice of local materials and appropriate densities and levels of green infrastructure which reflect local character

Housing

- Policies will focus on Infill with specific emphasis on design, local materials and scale
- Policies will be underpinned by a Conservation area style appraisal – general policy - then a site specific and parish specific one
- Policies to look at and suggest enhancements – planting/materials/landscaping
- Housing requirement for both parish council areas considered to be satisfied by allocations already made (SUE)
- Affordable housing requirement considered to be satisfied within the SUE.
- However within Brettenham and Kilverstone there is a desire for more Alms houses – only 2 currently; 4-5 new ones might be appropriate under an exceptions policy.

Environment

- Policy focus on Importance of undeveloped areas in the conservation area policy
- Policy focus on identifying areas for enhancement – eg hard or soft landscaping, planting
- Policy to be underpinned by Conservation Area style appraisal.

Community Facilities

- Acknowledgement that increase in population arising from the SUE will drive the need for additional primary care, education, social (GP practice, schools, community centres, play areas and, acknowledging there are probably sufficient places of worship, additional burial grounds may be needed) but the new facility locations within the parish council areas needs to be considered.
- Policy Focus on open space provision – formal and informal

Transport

- Acknowledgement that within both parish council areas there is already heavy car reliance
- Policy focus on the need to integrate bus/public transport routes to and from the SUE to the 2 rural parish council areas
- Rat-runs in the parishes of concern and will investigate if there are any policy options around this.
- Policy focus on low impact footpaths to give better pedestrian accessibility with Brettenham & Kilverstone.

Employment

- Acknowledgement that SUE will accommodate the strategic employment needs of the parishes
- Policy focus – some support for small potential for small business
- Minor development, e.g. in B&K at Kilverstone Estate; garden centre

Croxton

- Conservation area appraisal for the existing conservation area
- Extend the Conservation Area Appraisal style approach to rest of parish
- Identify important features, buildings, spaces and opportunities for improvement
- Possible Policy focus on existing Play area – into the future – maintenance
- Policy focus on the important landscape Break, between Croxton and Thetford
- Policy focus on gateways and entrances to the parish.

Brettenham & Kilverstone

- Policies to be underpinned by Conservation Area Appraisal style survey for whole of parish outside of the SUE.
- Consideration of the implications of the only settlement boundary [in Brettenham] around Arlington Way
- Specific policies to identify important undeveloped area, areas for opportunities for improvement or enhancement (landscaping, planting)
- Identification of buildings of cultural, historical or architectural value
- Policy focus on the potential for developing new alms houses
- Improving the Alms houses provision
- Policy focus on enabling Informal kick-about area

Andrea Long MRTPI – April 2016