



Minutes of NFGN Stakeholder Forum
Thursday 11th Jan 2024, 18.00 | Felixstowe Town Hall

1	<p>Welcome & Introductions</p> <p>ESC Team: Paul Wood, James Goldberg, Neil Cockshaw, Sheline Gledhill</p> <p>LDA Consultants: Tom Shopland (via video link)</p>
2	<p>Stakeholder Forum Terms of Reference – 10 mins – ESC</p> <p>Chair Paul Wood introduced the TOR covering its Objectives, Membership, Principles, Operations & Administration. He highlighted that the Stakeholders role was advisory and would act as an information exchange. He also urged those present to communicate any obvious omissions from the group, as the aim as to attract knowledge and expertise to inform the project.</p> <p>The TOR will be finalised at the next meeting and would be reviewed on an annual basis.</p> <p>Questions:</p> <p>Michael Sharman of Sports Council raised a concern that the final version of the TOR had removed a paragraph setting out the new opportunities the project will provide.</p> <p>Paul Wood confirmed the aims were still the same, but it was not the role of the chair specifically as he/she is impartial, independent and neutral. ToR to be updated for next meeting.</p> <p>Bob Whitehouse of Fxt Country Park Group asked about the use of the term ‘regeneration’ which usually refers to derelict urban areas, which this is not. He also asked for clarification on the word ‘lifetime’ in relation to the project.</p> <p>Paul Wood agreed ‘development’ was a better term than ‘regeneration’ and that ‘lifetime’ needs clarification. TOR to be updated for next meeting.</p>
3	<p>ESC Project Team Update – 15 mins – ESC James Goldberg, Development Enabling Lead</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood? • What has happened so far? • Sitewide Brief & Vision • Draft Concept Plan

- Programme

Questions:

CLlr Rosie Smithson (Felixstowe Community Partnership): Have any developers shown an interest and can we expect high specification for the houses?

JG: Expectation is high and the benefit of ESC master planning this project is that it can take the lead in those conversations.

Nigel Palmer (Fair Play for Felixstowe): Nigel aired concern that the time for most leverage in detailed design is when seeking outline planning permission, but the outline plans are vague, noting detail would come at the reserved matters stage.

JG: ESC shares the frustration and would work hard to lock in details to ensure a high-quality design. That can be guaranteed on council land and ESC will negotiate with other landowners in the hope they will follow suit.

Michael Sharman (Felixstowe Sports Council): Location of the leisure centre is key. How far along are you in deciding the location of the sports centre?

JG referred to the red circles on the map which has been earmarked for public spaces and said ESC is still exploring options and negotiating with landowners on the matter, adding frontage would be important for the leisure centre. He also added that what will be in the leisure centre is under review and suggested a representative of the leisure team attend the next meeting.

CLlr Jan Candy: Jan asked for confirmation that the project would include social/affordable housing.

JG confirmed that the ambition is for the masterplan to be policy compliant and would not be just the bare minimum in terms of social housing.

PW suggested a more specialist housing-provisions-officers be invited to a future meeting,

Miles Vartan Port Users Association: Asked if bridle paths on the site would be preserved. JG confirmed that all key characteristics such as bridle paths would be preserved.

CLlr Seamus Bennett asked whether other more central sites had been considered for the leisure centre.

JG: The brief was to find a suitable location in North Felixstowe as there is not space for a leisure centre in the town if it is to meet the business case demands to cover costs as well as achieve the high quality and sustainability aspirations the council is aiming for.

Nigel Palmer (Fair Play for Felixstowe): Asked for reassurance that housing design would be sympathetic to the local vernacular, adding that Laureate Fields development was not.

JG: Agreed and reassured the meeting that the local vernacular would be considered and incorporated.

Bob Whitehouse Felixstowe Country Park Group: FCPG has been trying to get a designated country park and asked if this would be considered.

JG: ESC is looking at a number of stewardship options and how the area will be maintained with an appropriate management structure.

CLlr Bennett picked up the CP point adding that the development should be leisure-led, not leisure centre-led, and that being bold and creating a country park would result in beautiful and accessible countryside for everyone.

Henley Road in Ipswich was cited as an example where the CP was in place first and the development created around it.

	<p>Cllr Rosie Smithson: Raised the issue of biodiversity. JG assured the meeting that open spaces would be preserved and enhanced, particularly looking at how habitats can be restored in the northern fields of the development to reinstate natural wetland habitats which can also help manage drainage demands from the site in a more natural way in balance with the ecosystems.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Engagement Strategy – 10 mins – Tom Shopland of LDA Consultants</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ambition for Engagement & Consultation • How you can get involved. • Public Launch Event. <p>Tom Shopland of Consultants LDA Design introduced the idea of the Citizens Panel, the desire to engage with young people through workshops and bringing them into the design process. He also shared details of the public launch event taking place on Saturday, February 3rd at The Orwell Hotel in Felixstowe. All welcome.</p> <p>Questions Cllr Jan Candy asked if the tiny urban forest had been considered. JG and PW confirmed that it had.</p> <p>Cllr Seamus Bennett asked for clarification of the term ‘meanwhile project’. JG: These are aspects of the project that could be delivered sooner, which would also help keep interest and momentum in the scheme and achieve some early benefits. Local groups would be involved in deciding the priorities.</p> <p>Nigel Palmer (Fair Play for Felixstowe): Given the complexity of the site and shared ownership, what is in the council’s gift particularly in terms of housing numbers and density, which was different in earlier iterations of the Local Plan?</p> <p>JG: Agreed this was a difficult issue but emphasised that there will be equalisation across the site to necessitate the flow of finance. In terms of density, there should be a full range of housing across the site. ESC will negotiate a trade off with other landowners to lock in quality across the scheme.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>AOB</p> <p>Cllr Seamus Bennett asked about public transport and how and when engagement will take place with local bus companies and others.</p> <p>JG: Confirmed that engagement with transport operators and Suffolk County Council would take place to discuss the provision of buses and wider issues around transport.</p> <p>Shane Hurren (Felixstowe School): The provision of a new primary school on site will have an impact on the secondary school, which is already close to capacity.</p> <p>JG: Issues and concerns would be shared with SCC’s education team, who will take the lead.</p>

	<p>PW: This is another topic for discussion that should be added to the agenda for future meetings.</p> <p>JG thanked everyone for coming and said he reassured the meeting that ESC is not a typical developer and that the master planning process would be an exemplar in terms of how we engage and progress with this important development.</p>
5	<p>Date of next meeting</p> <p>Tuesday March 12, 2024. Felixstowe Town Hall from 6pm – 7.30pm</p>