



Minutes of NFGN Stakeholder Forum
 Tuesday 12th March 2024, 18.00 | Felixstowe Town Hall

1	<p>Welcome & Introductions</p> <p>Attendees: Mike Deacon, Seamus Bennett, Darren Aitchison, Michael Sharman, Jan Candy, Sue Cox, David Gledhill, Peter Constable, Ian Buxton, Barry Topple, Nigel Palmer, Rosie Smithson, Kate Cain, Shane Hurren, Charles Manning, Neville Farthing, Sharon Harkin, Laura Locke</p> <p>ESC Team: Paul Wood, James Goldberg, Tim Snook, Jeni Watts, Sheline Gledhill</p> <p>Avison Young: Patrick Ransom, Martyn Saunders, Georgina Iliff, Aba Shokunbi</p>
2	<p>Stakeholder Forum Terms of Reference</p> <p>Chair Mike Deacon confirmed the adoption of the TOR. Cllr Seamus Bennet confirmed as Deputy Chair of the Stakeholders Group</p>
3	<p>ESC Recap from Last Briefing</p> <p>JG recapped on the progress of the project over the last 6-12 months and reminded the group about the master planning process.</p> <p>He reiterated that the Stakeholder Forum was a chance for people to discuss and ask questions about the project. Following the first Stakeholders several issues/concerns had been raised, including the proposed leisure centre, and today we welcome Tim Snook, Leisure Development Partnership Manager to address the group.</p> <p>JG Invited feedback regarding the public event on February 3 at The Orwell Hotel.</p> <p>Jan Candy asked if ESC’s communications team would be involved in the next event. She also suggested running a presentation alongside other discussion groups didn’t work.</p> <p>JG Accepted the criticism and said the smaller group discussions were more productive and that would shape the next public event.</p> <p>Seamus Bennett asked about the make-up of the Citizen’s Panel and how often it was meeting, adding it would be good to get younger people involved.</p> <p>JG: The Citizen’s Panel is made up to 20-30 people that demographically represent Felixstowe.</p>

Rosie Smithson suggested events like this represent “information giving” and perhaps more “problem solving” breakouts would be beneficial.

JG: We have 3 separate workshop streams to share ideas and suggestions.

Bob Whitehouse of Felixstowe Country Park Group, who had a stand at the event, said he had received fantastic feedback and lots of interest, and that he would be keen to participate in the future.

Darren Aitchison (Felixstowe Society) asked if the turnout was that more than was expected, and whether the layout and orientation of the room was as good as it could be.

JG: Yes, more than we expected, and the room was at capacity, adding that there is a film on the website for anyone who couldn't see or missed it.

He added that there will also be a number of workshops, youth and thematic workshops running alongside the citizen's panel. Workshops will be more accessible to the public, and for those who could not make the citizens panel.

Final community engagement public meeting will be July/august time – we hope the demographics will be slightly different.

Seamus Bennett: How are you processing the Citizen's Panel work and what is 'design freeze' mentioned in the timeline.

JG: CP minutes will be published on the website. The design freeze is a pause to allow for the preparations of documents for planning.

David Gledhill (Landguard Trust) to what degree are the other land owners involved/engaged in the process?

JG: We meet the other landowners on a weekly basis. It's a different process to what they are used to – we have had to convince them that being more transparent with the community about the project is the right way to proceed. We are working to develop “Heads of terms” with them for the future development agreements. We are walking a bit of a tightrope whereby we have to meet their (financial) value expectations to make sure they are happy to engage with the project however ESC have a slightly different set of values.

Ian Buxton (Fairplay for FX): what is the application you will be submitting?

JG: Outline planning permission for the whole site with reserved matters application at the same time for the Leisure Centre – exact format is still to be agreed.

Sharon Harkin (ESC Communities Officer) suggested lots of people she talks to are still very concerned and that they may not know to look at the website and suggested a monthly article in the Flyer would help keep people informed.

	<p>Jeni Watts (ESC): Said the mood at the citizens panel was much more positive than the launch event.</p> <p>Rosie Smithson: Suggested people get more anxious about developments when there is no clear clarity of the infrastructure. People will feel more positive when they know green areas are not being wrecked.</p> <p>JG: We are working with SCC's transport and education teams and the NHS trust as those areas are not all in ESC's power. We will be looking to bring forward more detail on the project such as how we are managing existing woodlands in due course.</p> <p>Seamus Bennett: Local elected representatives should be more visible and accountable in the process and not leave it to ESC / JG.</p>
4	<p>Leisure Strategy – Tim Snook ESC's Leisure Development Partnership Manager</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure strategy and ESC ambition • Reasons for a new leisure centre in Felixstowe • Felixstowe wider leisure plan • Proposed new centre <p>Slides will be distributed with minutes.</p> <p>Questions</p> <p>MD: Will there be a car park on the roof?</p> <p>TS: No that would not be appropriate or affordable on this site.</p> <p>Michael Sharman (Felixstowe Sports and Leisure Council) questioned the lifetime of the new centre.</p> <p>TS: If we do it properly and maintain it properly the lifetime will be 60-80 years. He added that it will be designed so it could be expanded if there is demand. That is part of the business plan.</p> <p>Sue Cox (Parish Cllr) asked about plans for the redundant sites at Brackenbury and on the Seafront.</p> <p>JG: This will be key. The Local Plan identifies the Brackenbury site for housing; it is less specific regarding the seafront site but refers to leisure and community use, adding that ESC is keen to start that conversation.</p> <p>DA Referred to plans for an Ipswich Aquatic centre and asked if the catchment areas would overlap and that people would prefer to go to Ipswich.</p> <p>TS: It depends what people want but that would be factored in.</p> <p>BT: When will you decide the location of the new Leisure Centre?</p> <p>JG: Over the winter we undertook a wide-ranging piece of work looking at appraising the potential locations for the new leisure centre within the North Felixstowe Site. The</p>

preference was for a location within the Trinity Site, we are currently exploring this in more detail with Trinity's agents.

SB: Refurbishment work on the existing leisure centre is excellent and will increase usage. I'd like to re-emphasise the importance of countryside recreation at the Grove and the need to enhance that green space. A central location for the leisure centre should be given proper consideration as putting the leisure centre on the Trinity site will mean more people will have to travel to get there. Please look at location for locals. Minimise walking travel for locals, train station and high street etc.

JG: Travel is a concern and would be useful to address this in the next session.

SH: There was concern at the public event about the new location of the site, away from the seafront and local businesses.

Laura Locke (Felixstowe Radio) said she would lobby for a small theatre/arts venues/live music venue on the old seafront site.

5 **Avison Young**

Introduction by Martyn Saunders and Patrick Ransom

Avison Young has been appointed by East Suffolk Council to produce a Land Use Strategy for Felixstowe, incorporating the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood.

The strategy will set out the most appropriate residential and non-residential uses for different parts of the town to inform (a) the development of a Masterplan for the NFGN and (b) a Vision document for the town as a whole.

The Strategy will be underpinned by a detailed baseline evidence report which will provide an understanding of the context and identify the town's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats from an economic, social and commercial perspective.

The aim is to ensure that development that comes forward as part of the Masterplan and Vision document responds to the evidence gathered and reflects market demand signals. It represents an attempt to be more evidence led and objective in relation to future decision making in the town.

AY role is to help people think about the future of their places to provide an objective assessment and strategy to understand the future of Felixstowe and what part NFGN plays in that future.

Why are we doing this?

To inform ESC, and equipping ESC with rational, logical and evidence-based decisions in the future, particularly around residential and non-residential uses of land.

How will we do this? We will look at both publicly and privately available economic, commercial, and demographic data, both qualitative and quantitative.

	<p>We are interested to engage and meet with other stakeholders.</p> <p>BW: Where's the natural environment, biodiversity, and natural capital in this study?</p> <p>JG: ESC commissioned an Open Spaces Assessment as well as a Playing Pitch Assessment in 2021 to help inform direction on the future provision of accessible, high quality, sustainable open spaces in East Suffolk. This covers all manner of natural amenity spaces and forms the baseline understanding for the natural environment in the region much as the AY report will do for built environment land use.</p> <p>Within the masterplan the type and quantity of open space is driven by policy. We already have ecologists and landscape designers studying the natural habitats on the site and helping to advise the masterplan.</p> <p>DA: You have engaged with the Port and the BID, what about Freeport East?</p> <p>Martin AY: We are only at the start of this commission and will be aiming to engage with all key groups and bodies.</p> <p>BT: Should this work have really been done before the masterplan?</p> <p>JG: Yes in an ideal world we probably would have started this commission sooner, however there's a certain amount we can do before this study is complete without running the risk of abortive work. Avison Young are already in conversation with the design team to highlight areas which need to be forward planned.</p> <p>SB: Reiterated BW's comment. Asks do you not consider biodiversity and genuine natural space? Reassure people of Felixstowe you are considering their open space. The reason FX is so prosperous and attractive is because we have natural capital (beach and grove/woodlands).</p> <p>Martin AY- we do investigate open spaces and free to use spaces (play parks etc). I am not an ecologist (LDA have some), we can and will work with them, talk about the interfaces between physical uses and the open space, land use, biodiversity.</p> <p>We do consider the relationship between natural assets and the development, but we won't be advising on ecology, we link into the expert, specialist teams for that information.</p>
5	<p>AOB None</p>
6	<p>Date of next meeting: May 01, 2024</p>