



Agenda for NFGN Stakeholder Forum  
Tuesday 01<sup>st</sup> May 2024, 18.00 | Felixstowe Town Hall

1	<p><b>Welcome &amp; Introductions</b></p> <p>Attendees:</p> <p>Mike Deacon (chair)</p> <p>Seamus Bennet - Vice chair and Town Council</p> <p>Nigel Palmer – Fair Play for Felixstowe</p> <p>Claire Mackinder – Felixstowe Allotment Association</p> <p>Darren Aitchison – Felixstowe Society</p> <p>Chris Crisell – NHS</p> <p>Leigh Jenkins – Suffolk Constabulary</p> <p>Rosie Smithson – Community Partnership</p> <p>John Smithson – Felixstowe Country Park Group</p> <p>Charles Manning – Felixstowe BID and Mannings Amusements</p> <p>ESC: Paul Wood, James Goldberg, Sheline Gledhill</p> <p>Guest – Colin Young PJA Consultants</p>
2	<p><b>Recap From Last Briefing – 15 mins – ESC James Goldberg, Development Enabling Lead</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Leisure Strategy and Socio-Economics research by Avison Young</li><li>• Leisure Centre Location Site Appraisal.</li><li>• Programme going forward.</li></ul> <p>Recap from last meeting including the reasoning behind the preferred site of the leisure centre on the Trinity site and the emphasis on active travel. The scheme is not anti-car but aims to give people a choice of other means of transport/active travel.</p> <p>SB: A supporter of active travel, but what about public transport?</p> <p>JG: The scheme will include public transport and engagement with the bus companies will come at a later stage.</p>

SB: Will Gulpher Road be designated as an active travel route?

JG: Yes, the proposal is for it to be a quiet lane.

SB: That will be a challenge because of the houses at Laureate Fields and the fact that at the moment the buses come through the Trimleys.

MD: LF has had a big impact on Gulpher Road and I am very concerned about that.

SB: The reality of keeping it 'quiet' will be very challenging.

DA: Has consideration been given to building the leisure centre on the existing pitches at Eastward Ho?

JG: When we reviewed this option there was an immediate red flag from our planning department in having such a large building so close and visible from the National Landscape and the impact that would have on the views.

JP: Will the existing pitches stay where they are?

JG: We are looking into how much they are being used and seeking feedback from people who book the pitches. We know the changing facilities are not good, we could enhance them, but we are still working through the issues.

CC: Does the plan for the LC include parking?

JG: It does include parking the exact amount is still being debated. The leisure team estimate the need for around 250 spaces, although this may change.

JG: Announced that the second public event will be held on July 27 from 10am to 4pm and will be a drop-in session. It has been planned to coincide with Carnival weekend when there will be lots of people around. Location TBC

### 3 **Transport & Connectivity – 45 mins – Colin Young, PJA**

- Overview of masterplan
- Emerging Masterplan
- Key Transport Considerations
- Dealing with Transport Barriers

Colin ran through a set of slides to give an overview of Felixstowe demographics and the types of transport infrastructure that could be considered for NFGN site.

These would align with ESC's walking and cycling plan and connect with a wider network into the town and seafront.

The system would be attractive and safe. It will offer connected public transport, but would not be anti-car, although some restriction to cars could be implemented, such as designated parking away from walking and cycle routes.

He noted that the data presented relies on census information from 2011 (dated) and 2021 (skewed because of the lockdown) so is not perfect.

CY Outlined the theory of active travel including safe walking and cycling routes.

SB: Will this marry in with the walking and cycling strategy? I chair that group and didn't realise it would include this.

CY: This is an aspiration, and we are taking a steer from that work.

SB: This is a blank canvas so let's go big on this, it is essential

RS: We are an ageing population, will this balance?

CY: With the inclusion of social housing, we think the demographic will be below the town's average.

RS: This is a very sensitive area with so much bio-diversity, including badger sets. How can you say we are improving the area when you are destroying places. This is a huge plea to protect the badgers.

MD: If the Persimmon development is to be integrated into this, how will that work when the site is almost finished?

CY: It is not ideal. They have a footpath/cycling route to the Grove and Gulpher Road linking with the Bridleway and a second along the top of the site. They are good for walking in the day but not necessarily safe when it is dark. This development could do better and that is the aim.

CM: People are using the gate into the allotments to walk through instead of walking along Candlet Road as it is so busy, and they don't feel safe.

RS: What is the route to the High School?

CY: There could be a route from Gulpher Road to the High School with a new crossing and through the Bloor homes development. Candlet Road is a barrier.

MD: Gulpher Rod is very busy and dangerous to walk along, and that is worse since Laureate Fields has been built.

CY: They could walk from Trinity site under the bridge and Walton High Street. There are mechanisms to slow the traffic such as chicanes or create a break in the lane, so it is no longer a rat run.

SB: The key to an integrated transport system will be connection to the train station.

CY: We could look at electric bikes at the station and car clubs. A new bus service which may have to be subsidised to start with.

SB: The key is crossing Candlet Road, has a bridge or underpass been considered?

CY: Underpasses can encourage anti-social behaviour and bridges take up a lot of space.

MD: Putting crossings in will put a lot of pressure on Walton High Street.

CY: There may be scope to put something into Beatrice Avenue to improve and calm it and include cycling routes.

DA: To reiterate the concerns of having 300 children on the new site and all of the schools on the other side of Candlet Road.

SB: Particularly pupils going to the High School.

NP: Traffic does stack up there. The dock spur roundabout is pretty lethal and there will be a cumulative effect of all these developments on the roundabout and surrounding roads.

CM: Turning into the allotments is already very difficult.

SB: The cycling and walking strategy has been studied in great details and passed by the council so has great weight and should influence this development. The gold standard for cycling may not be achievable but let's not let perfect be the enemy of good.

PC: Pleased that we have a new leisure centre, but please consider including an Olympic sized pool that the whole of East of England can enjoy; that would be a great benefit to Felixstowe. The extra cost would be worthwhile.

JG: The leisure team are aware of the request, and we will get a response <please see note below>

JS: Crossing Candlet Road: Take the point that a bridge takes lots of space, but the idea of an underpass has legs and any associated problems are solvable and would be a better option for active travel.

SB: We are looking at the feasibility of an electric shuttle bus to link with the train station, town and seafront.

On the issue of the Olympic-sized swimming pool, please note this response from Tim Snook, Leisure Development Partnership Manager at East Suffolk Council.

A 50m pool was included in the initial discussions but has been ruled out. There are several reasons for this. Most importantly the current two leisure facilities in Felixstowe cost a significant amount to provide annually and the new leisure centre needs to have facilities that support the financial sustainability of providing leisure centres.

Leisure is not a statutory service, therefore the operation of the leisure centres needs to be financially sustainable without an annual revenue cost to provide. The proposed new leisure centre is planning to increase the existing provision at the seafront Felixstowe Leisure Centre, which has a pool of 25m with 6 lanes, to a 25m pool with 8 lanes. This meets Sport England's future swimming space modelling demand, but also allows future development of the Felixstowe Swimming Club to allow the hosting of competitions.

The cost of providing a 50m pool is not affordable within the funding available for the new Felixstowe Leisure Centre and the operation of a 50m pool would mean the facility is not sustainable. The cost of operating pools has risen significantly over the past few years, and this is unlikely to ever reduce to pre pandemic levels. Finally, Swim England support 50m pools in areas of high conurbation and the only area they would recommend this in Suffolk is Ipswich and not Felixstowe.

There are many different facilities included within the new Leisure Centre that will offer a wide range of sport, leisure and health activity for the Felixstowe and wider community.

4	<b>AOB: None</b>
5	<b>Date of next meeting: July 9</b>