## Minutes of Steering Committee No 15, 04th March 2021, 7.30pm to 9.30pm

**Present:** Mike Kelly (Chair), Rob Buick, Fred West, Terry Barnett, Alan Sloan, Debi Hallett, Melanie Frobisher.

1) **Apologies for Absence;** None absent
2) **Approval of Minutes of Meeting No 14;** Approved
3) **Declaration of personal interest in topics to be discussed**; None declared
4) **Financial Report**; Cost of advise from John Slater, Consultant in respect of the draft Plan has been added but we are still well within the amount granted to us by Locality. It was noted that any unspent grant allocation must be returned to Locality at the end of March and a new application made for whatever further funding we require.
5) **Progress on Actions arising from Meeting no 14;**
   Following the same order as the agenda;
   1) Alan has received confirmation from RHUL that they put a brief advertisement on their intranet on the 5th Nov 2020, and that they would probably do so again. they will not put the full page advert we suggested though. It was suggested that Alan approach the student union president to see if they were more sympathetic, and Alan will do so when all the students are back.
   2) Mike continues to liaise with AECOM intermittently. They were difficult to get hold of, but now say they will be back on the Design Codes this next week having been diverted to other work not associated with Englefield Green over the past month. Mike will continue to chase and also ask about the possibility of Master Planning for the Blays House site.
   3) John Slater was appointed and this meeting was delayed a week to allow him to comment on the work so far, which is the subject of our discussions tonight.
   4) Fred cannot get further with the highly unsatisfactory performance of the leaflet distributers. See section on Questionnaire for further actions.
   5) E mails to EGVRA and those who had answered the questionnaire yielded a further approx 45 responses.
   6) Mike has updated and distributed the schedule. He has allowed about 3 months for completion of the draft Plan to a level that satisfies our consultant.
   7) Alan reported on the 2 meetings we have now had regarding the Conservation Area. The review being carried out by Surrey CC on behalf of RBC is a statutory requirement, and will be limited to examining the existing Conservation Area and seeing if it is still justified and whether there should be any minor adjustments to its boundary. At both Meetings Alan and Mike strongly advocated a more radical extension to the Area and also a second Conservation Area in the Victorian Centre. Alan noted that in a report to RBC a few years ago it was recommended that the Victorian Centre should become a Conservation Area should become a Conservation Area, but nothing was done about it.Chris Reynolds (Surrey CC) and Helena Merriott (RBC Planning) will investigate. Alan will prompt.

6) **Writing the Plan**

The draft Plan was sent to the Consultant John Slater following his appointment and an initial meeting was held with him and the committee on Monday 22nd February. John was then commissioned to produce initial comments on the draft Plan during the week, in order that he could then discuss matters in further detail with Mike on Monday 21st March, and then we could discuss them at the monthly meeting, which was postponed to today to accommodate this arrangement.

Mike has produced and distributed to the committee notes of both meetings.

Discussion ensued, with the general opinion that we were roughly on the right track but clearly much more research needed on many of the Policies in order to justify them. Also there was some comments about Johns preferences for the order that the document should follow, given that we had followed the layout of some other approved Neighbourhood Plans. It was agreed that these general points could be put to one side for the moment and that the key points at this stage were;

a) Section 1 comments were relatively easy to rectify/ add. Debi agreed to do a SWOT analysis to replace the opportunities and constraints section, to review the Vision statement to put a more positive spin on it, and to review and combine the primary and secondary objectives into a single list. It was recognised that it was necessary, if we were to have a 'Town Hall' meeting to put these to attendees and get their approval as they are key elements from which flowed the Policies.

b) There should be one editor, with others contributing to the research, backup and providing justification research and input. Mike volunteered to be Editor.

c) Advised to concentrate on Planning Policies and not get diverted by 'aspirations' outside of the Planning remit. The need for justification of each Policy was emphasised. As a start, Mike agreed to produce one sample Policy page complete with all that John required, and to submit it to John for comment. After that we can swing into action on all the other policies and keep submitting them for comment until we get to the end.

   Given that John will only give advise and not write the Plan itself , there was some discussion as to whether we should try to find another consultant who could do that (ie write the Plan based on our Policies, complete the justification and advise on where we would need to strengthen it and how)

   Mike agreed to investigate, try to identify a suitable planner, and see if our budget would stretch to this approach.

7) **Residents Questionnaire**

Approximately 289 have now responded to the questionnaire, there having been a flurry of activity after a 'round robin' e mail was sent out to EGRA and those who had already replied to the questionnaire.

Melanie agreed to go out to the greenies again.

Fred reported that we were getting nowhere with the original distributors of the leaflet and as a consequence he had a total of 5000 A5 leaflets in his garage.

John Slater has suggested that there should be a termination date on the questionnaire, and also that a second questionnaire would probably be necessary to ask pertinent questions to justify some of the policies, and a Town Hall meeting at

whci a draft of the Plan should be shared with Residents and their comments received.
Mike has adjusted the Schedule accordingly, and after discussion it was agreed to close the current questionnaire at the end of April, to aim to have a draft plan compete by early/mid July, when a second brief Questionnaire with pertinent questions solely on Planning and Policy matters can be issued as well as the draft Plan, plus an invitation to attend a Town Hall presentation at which opinions can be gathered and incorporated in a revision to the Plan.
It was suggested that rather than issue a new leaflet, the old ones could be issued with a sticker on them. the additions needed was the ‘last chance’ date, and also a place where anyone without the internet could pick up and drop off a completed ‘hard copy’ of the questionnaire.
Fred agreed to investigate companies that might be able to print and stick the labels and undertake the distribution (afterthought- it may be cheaper to have new leaflets printed??)

8) **Housing Audit**
Melanie is working on the housing audit report, but had some doubts following Johns report as to exactly what it was aiming to achieve. It was agreed the report should illustrate typical architectural features of each zone within the Area with a short summary of what is typical, what is out of character or inconsistent, so that it supports the Design Codes,

9) **Progress against Schedule**
Mike has revised the schedule and issued it to the Committee. Key dates are completion of a draft Plan ( OK’ed by our consultant) by mid/ end July, adjusted for electronic feed back to a concise additional questionnaire (mid May to mid June), and a mid August ‘Town Hall’ presentation, followed by final adjustments to the draft plan.

10) **AOB**
Rob reported that a member of the EGRA committee had asked why the Forum was not putting its weight behind objections to planning applications. Our policy has always been to leave that to EGVA, but it was acknowledged that we were a statutory body and that an objection from us would carry more weight.We all receive a copy of each planning application and we agreed that if the matter was one of major importance then we would write.

11) **Next Monthly Meeting**
Thursday 1st April 2021, 7.30 pm

**Actions arising;**

1) Alan to approach the student union at RHUL to see if we have better luck with them than RHUL management re advertising the Forum and the questionnaire.
2) Mike to continue liaison with AECOM and to follow up on Master Planning for Blays House project.

**3)** Debi to do a SWOT analysis to replace the opportunities and constraints section, to review the Vision statement to put a more positive spin on it, and to review and combine the primary and secondary objectives into a single list.

**4)** Mike to produce one sample Policy page complete with all that John required, and to submit it to John for comment

**5)** Mike to investigate, try to identify a suitable planner, and see if our budget would stretch to this approach.

**6)** Alan to chase up why the Victorian Centre was never designated a Conservation Area

**7)** Melanie agreed to go out to the greenies again.

**8)** Fred to investigate companies that might be able to print and stick the labels and undertake the distribution (afterthought- it may be cheaper to have new leaflets printed??)

**9)** We all receive a copy of each planning application and we agreed that if the matter was one of major importance then we would write.