

Diss & District Neighbourhood Plan

Business Summit Friday 18th May 2018, Diss Golf Club

A brief resume'

Chaired by Richard Bacon, MP for South Norfolk, 50+ local businesses and agencies met at Diss Golf Club to discuss the possible implications of Planning Arrangements for the next 20 -25 years.

It was confirmed that with a population of around 10,000 Diss and its environs was considered by Norfolk CC to be a medium sized town, but with a better than average range of shops and drew in shoppers from a fairly large (rural) hinterland.

A brief summary of the questionnaire issued to the local population in March was presented, in which it was confirmed that our assumptions on current problems regarding transport, employment and housing were correct with businesses concurring to these observations.

Housing:

Speakers confirmed that the Greater Norwich plan required 43,000 new homes by 2036, but given current planning applications, this meant that only space for only another 7,200 would be required, and these (should) be allocated where transport routes were already in place.

In addition to the above, growth (should) be anticipated (only) in "Service Villages" where there was already a shop, school and local facilities, in short something that was "deliverable".

It was confirmed that from a planning perspective Diss is linked with Harleston to service housing need.

Mid Suffolk DC confirmed that it is seeking to provide for up to 10,000 new homes in the same time period, again principally along existing lines of communication and facilities available.

Transport:

The Major Road Network (MRN) takes into account the A11, A47, and A146.

It is hoped that the A140 and A143 also be included, but at the moment the A1066 is not under consideration although the meeting suggested it should be.

It was mentioned that part of the considerations for transport was that it is possible that Long Stratton is likely to get a bypass within the next planning horizon – the "trade off" being land being released for development.

Local Enterprise Partnership:

This is a potential source of funding to raise money to demonstrate the unique character of Diss and District, and what we would like to achieve.

It has already been implemented successfully in Attleborough and other towns throughout East Anglia and the rest of the UK.

In summary – to create a unique selling point (USP) or “Brand” for ourselves.

Group Discussions:

To get a wider view from “the floor” the meeting was divided up into groups to discuss the three main headings as above, feedback was then presented to the meeting as a whole and comment invited.

Again, for the most part the key issue of transport was at the top of the list, with a (link road) to remove through traffic from Victoria Road in Diss being a consideration.

It was suggested that “youth” is not interested in cars (can’t believe that), and that there should be more encouragement for cycling (to work and from the work into town).

Employment was raised at this time, in that the two major employers were frustrated by the efforts of the town to resolve matters that have been deteriorating over the last five to ten years or so, with veiled threats to move elsewhere if they are not resolved = commercial implications on Diss and area.

Summary:

Richard Bacon concluded the meeting by making a short summary of the morning, in that the agenda for the future is for us to write and that businesses should be co-contributors to the Diss and District Neighbourhood Plan.