

Appendix 6

Schools Project

6.1 During the earlier public consultation events set out in the Statement of Consultation (see Supporting Documents), the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) became aware that there was little representation at those meetings from certain demographics within the community, especially younger people.

6.2 As the Residents Survey was for completion by those aged 15+, the decision was taken to actively seek out the opinions of young people aged 11+ who attended nearby secondary schools but who lived in the village. The three local secondary schools were contacted and two agreed that their Long Melford resident students could take part in a consultation exercise on the village and its Neighbourhood Plan.

6.3 Volunteers from the village who had expressed an interest in helping with the Plan project were contacted and from that group two volunteers offered to help with the schools' visits.

6.4 Contact was made with Stour Valley Community School, Ormiston Sudbury Academy and Thomas Gainsborough Academy to explain the Plan and to ask if the schools would allow its representatives to visit and consult their pupils who lived in Long Melford. A positive response was received from all three schools but subsequently no date was provided by Thomas Gainsborough Academy, so reluctantly that visit was not progressed.

6.5 The contact at Ormiston Sudbury Academy advised that the school had previously been involved in the 'Vision for Sudbury' project which had some similarities regarding the information the NPSG was looking to obtain, so the team were given details of the Economic Development Officer at Babergh District Council (BDC), who had run that project.

6.6 A meeting was arranged with BDC at the Long Melford Parish Council office on 28/03/18 and whilst they were unable to attend the visits to the schools, due to existing appointments, BDC confirmed they would be happy to share their lesson plans for the NPSG to use as a framework for the visits. Following that meeting Julie Thomson, representing the NPSG and Plan volunteer Pam Tonks agreed to oversee both visits.

6.7 The lesson plans, amended to suit the half days the NPSG representative and volunteer had been allocated by the two schools, were augmented by some specially tailored exercises and the outline for each visit was sent to the schools in advance. Arrangements were made for the schools to provide the necessary equipment, with the NPSG purchasing additional items as required. The NPSG also provided the requisite identification and CRB/DBS certificates for approval. Permission was sought to record the students' voices throughout the sessions, including discussion groups and presentations. Only one student refused this request. Consents were also obtained from all parents at Ormiston Academy for their children to be involved. This was not considered necessary at Stour Valley Community School.

6.8 The first visit took place on 24/04/18 at Ormiston Sudbury Academy and the NPSG representative and volunteer were advised that Long Melford parents were supportive of their children being involved in the project. There were 12 pupils in attendance aged between 11 and 16.

The session began with a PowerPoint presentation

<http://www.longmelfordnp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/Schools-Project-Powerpoint.pptx>)

to introduce the Plan representatives and to explain the purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan. The first exercise required the students to locate a number of well-known places on the Parish map as a way of familiarising them with the extent of the Plan area and to show the location of existing developments and amenities. The students then separated into small groups and they were asked to describe Long Melford as if it were a character, the purpose being to understand how they viewed the village in terms of its perceived character or personality. This also required them to think about how they could shape the village into a better character or personality in the future. The next task required the students to complete a 'SWOT' exercise to review the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats on various themes that had previously been identified during the village consultation events and a discussion then ensued on how to improve the village in those areas. This then led to the groups each preparing a five-minute presentation to deliver to the class using the 'SWOT' analyses, to demonstrate their vision for Long Melford over the next twenty years. Each presentation was recorded on a digital voice recorder.

6.9 The second visit took place on 26/04/18 at Stour Valley Community School, with assistance from the school librarian. There were 22 pupils in attendance aged between 12 and 15, one of whom did not live in Long Melford but was the Head of House and her inclusion had been a condition of the visit. The programme broadly reflected that set out above for Ormiston Academy. Five groups delivered presentations with their voices (one student excepted) recorded on a digital voice recorder.

6.10 See below for links to the presentation transcriptions from both schools.

6.11 At the end of both sessions the students were advised of what would happen next and asked for their help in making sure that when delivered, the Residents Survey should be completed by those eligible in their household and to encourage them to vote when the referendum took place. The NPSG representatives also gave both schools details of how to make contact if they had any more thoughts or suggestions.

6.12 The evidence then needed to be assessed.

6.13 The general class discussions which accompanied the exercises and the presentations were recorded and these were analysed by a Plan volunteer who captured the students' comments which were then transcribed. A selection of quotes from the transcriptions are shown below:

"In our opinion we want to keep Melford more old-fashioned and not too modern."

"We like how new houses are being built but we don't want too many cos it would ruin the quiet character of Long Melford."

"We love that Melford is popular and that everybody knows everybody and everyone is friendly, whether they are talking to a child or an adult."

"(To) attract younger adults into the village, flats should be built with communal gardens and accessible parking places. They should be built gradually over time so the village doesn't get overwhelmed with too many people at one time."

"Although we are having more built in our village, we want to restrict that so people who walk their dogs and stuff like that still have the enjoyment of enjoying the environment around them."

“The park needs improving as it’s been there for years.”

“We would still like an area that separates Long Melford and Sudbury.”

“In Melford we have a huge area of fields without anything to fill them, for these locations we believe they should have some more buildings so that Melford fits the name Long Melford because at the moment the area we use is quite short.”

“We do not want to change Melford totally, but we do want to give it many more aspects, so it will be recognized as a nice and unique place.”

“Long Melford is not as appealing to young people as the older generation.”

“We should extend or make a separate car park in the village cos it gets very busy. Especially with people moving in there is going to be more cars. You need more zebra crossings. Re (the) speed limit it’s 30 but you often see them going a lot faster.”

“(We) need some children signs. We thought we should have some zebra crossings, speed bumps, speed limits enforced more forcefully. We also thought we should have speed cameras and narrow the roads, so cars don’t go down there quickly.”

“The country park is mainly for dog walking. They could adapt this and put more play equipment there. We thought the Old School, which isn’t used very often, to perhaps modernise it to have some sections for games, arcades, pool, which would appeal to teens and young people while still retaining the character of the village.”

6.14 The testimonies above typified the feedback received in the wider transcriptions and this evidence from both school visits helped the NPSG in formulating the various Policies and Community Objectives of the Plan.

6.15 To view the presentation testimonies in more detail please use the following links (where OSA stands for Ormiston Sudbury Academy and SVA stands for Stour Valley Community School):

<http://www.longmelfordnp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/OSA-Vision-for-LM-1.pdf>

<http://www.longmelfordnp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/OSA-Vision-for-LM-2.pdf>

<http://www.longmelfordnp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/OSA-Vision-LM-3.pdf>

<http://www.longmelfordnp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SVA-Vision-LM-1.pdf>

<http://www.longmelfordnp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SVA-Vision-LM-2.pdf>

<http://www.longmelfordnp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SVA-Vision-LM-3.pdf>

<http://www.longmelfordnp.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/SVA-Vision-LM-4.pdf>

