

Neighbourhood Plan  
Steering Group Meeting Minutes  
Monday 12th October 2015

Present

Brian Hogan  
Andrew Thomson (consultant)  
Cllr David Brown  
Cllr Paul Bates  
Cllr Bob Edwards  
Cllr Amanda Martin  
Cllr Suzie Akers Smith  
Tom Evans (CEC)  
Peter Aston  
Peter Hirst  
Peter Minshull  
Steve Foster  
Jackie MacArthur  
Nino Mancini  
Laura Tilston  
Gillian Kaloyeropoulos  
Jenny Unsworth

Apologies were received from Tim McCloud and David Watson

1. Coordination of themed groups – key issues

There may be a need to produce some generic policies particularly for Health and Wellbeing and possibly Transport. Establishing how the policies coordinate together is a key issue in determining how this should be fed into the questionnaire

Whilst the Local Plan is making progress it could be sometime before it is in place assuming the developers don't succeed in scuppering it first.

Thus getting the Neighbourhood Plan completed and in place is still imperative. Amendments to the Local Plan can be written in at a later date and there ought to be a 5 year review of the NP built into the process.

a. Town Centre

Congleton town centre should remain the key retail and service centre for the town. As the town's population is set to grow considerably, the town centre needs to be able to expand to meet the growing needs of a bigger population. There is a desire to make the town centre more visible and attractive – much of the town is currently hidden from passing traffic – and to allow unit sizes and structures that will enable

Congleton to attract a wider retail and leisure mix. There is also recognition that more funding is needed to make public realm changes, and that town centre housing may be the way to release much needed capital into the Town Centre.

The Town Centre Group has looked at six potential areas for future development of the town. These are largely along the Mountbatten Way corridor. The Town Centre group is suggesting

Zone 1 – Police Station/ Fairground Car Park/ Borough Offices/ Library area should be predominately retail and leisure

Zone 2 – Morrison's, Market, Princess Street area – again predominantly retail and leisure

Zone 3 areas between Mountbatten Way and Lawton Street including car park – could be more residential and open space

Zone 4 – Between Worrall Street and Mountbatten Way – could also be more residential – with additional commercial indoor leisure nearer the Leisure Centre

Zone 5 – Area by Paddling Pool and Theatre in Park Road – to leave as is – but to note that both are assets for the town and if a change was to happen in this area these facilities would need to be relocated and not lost.

Zone 6 – The area at the bottom of Mill Street/ around Bossons Mill – main desire is to bring this area back into use and to make it an attractive gateway into the town.

Note: Any employment land lost needs to be met elsewhere within the plan (Tom Evans to help identify hectares involved.) The town centre group doesn't want to see a net loss of Town Centre car parking spaces – recognising that public transport is poor and a high percentage of the housing is a mile or more from the centre. If people can't park they won't come!

#### b. Housing

As a consequence of the various developments taking place in the Town the housing allocation requirement for Congleton is probably complete particular if the Canal Road development takes place.

A key issue is ensuring there is sufficient green space available.

Some of the other issues are the specific type of housing required to cater for the requirements of an ageing population

There is a need to put in something about housing design which includes car parking, comments relating to the size of rooms, gardens and green areas, and the need for sheltered accommodation

c. Sustainability

6 key spaces have been designated around the Town to try and keep control of green open space and areas of scientific interest from Timbersbrook and the Cloud, to north of Lamberts Lane, Priestly Fields, Dane in Shaw pastures and the corridors around the canal and River Dane and out to Barn Road

Hundreds of other green open spaces and being mapped so that it can be acknowledged that they exist and possible protected.

d. Transport

The transport group is focussing on the lack of an effective public transport system coupled with a lack of enough people walking is putting a severe strain on the Towns road network which will only be exacerbated by the new developments.

The group was clear though that knocking down existing housing to widen roads in the Town was not the answer, the answer to some extent lies in reducing the reliability on cars, improving public transport and accessibility for safe walking.

It was considered that there was a need to produce reliable travel survey to complement the work being undertaken. Consequently it was suggested that the group produce a brief which can then be used to provide a suitable expert to carry out a travel survey

e. Economic Development

There is a long term plan to relocate the Green Island and Buglawton businesses to the new employment sites, but, any release of land from existing employment sites needs to be matched with an equal amount of new employment land located elsewhere within the immediate vicinity of the Town

Improve public transport to service the employment areas and increase focus on cycle and walkways within the town centre and surrounding areas to improve accessibility

2. Matrix

A matrix of key issues affecting all the teams was produced, TE will circulate the results for the teams to consider and include in their objectives and policies

### 3. Questionnaire

It was agreed that proposals for the questionnaire would be submitted by all teams within a two week time frame

The second questionnaire should be focusing on policies and asking the public for their view on such statements that may be included in the Plan

An article will go in the Chronicle reminding residents about the forthcoming questionnaire and asking them to register their email addresses with the Town Council. Social media will also be used for this purpose

- Questions for questionnaire to be returned by the 30th October 2015

### 4. Actions

- a. Start producing questions for the next questionnaire – All
- b. How do we lobby and market ourselves to attract new retail and a hotel
- c. Identify costs for analysing data and traffic modelling – PM
- d. Produce a brief for travel survey – PM
- e. Circulate matrix findings - TE
- f. Consider matrix findings and adjust themed groups objections and policies if required - All

### 5. Date of next meeting

9.30am Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November 2015

Brian Hogan