

Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

Tuesday 3rd February 2015

Present

Andrew Thomson
Peter Aston
Paul Bates
David Gifford
Steve Foster
Peter Minshull
Tim McCloud
Glyn Roberts
Jenny Unsworth
David Watson
Brian Hogan

1. Apologies

Bob Edwards

2. Other parishes

CEC have been contacted in respect of the concerns relating to the lack of involvement from other parishes. Andrew has spoken to Adrian Fisher of CEC and pointed out that the CEC Spatial Strategy won't work without the cooperation and coordination with the Towns and parishes. Such coordination though needs to happen now. CEC will host discussions with neighbouring parishes and are commissioning a master planning exercise to look at the proposed local sites north of Congleton, but, the consultants need to be appointed now so that this work can commence quickly. BH/DMc and AT to action this.

Need to determine whether or not Hulme Walfield is going to create a Parish Council, BH to contact David Worth to ascertain what is happening.

Brereton has an advanced Neighbourhood Plan and has consulted with its immediate neighbours including Somferford, they will send Congleton a form and will meet with us if necessary

Somerford PC and Astbury have agreed in principle to meet up with us.

3. Grants

Noted that the government have provided a grant that must be used by the end of March of £5914. The Town Council have provided £8500 and CEC have provided 20 days of consultant support.

4. Technical Workshop

CEC are undertaking 4 studies which cover:-

The Economy
Housing
Spatial Distribution
Green Belt

To examine each area consultants have been recruited, three are in place so far and have lots of experience and knowledge in the areas concerned, which is encouraging

The Local Plan needs to be both aspirational achievable in terms of delivering economic growth which is looking to deliver in a period of about 10 years, 90,000 jobs.

Spatial Distribution which concerns what goes where will look hard at every site in every town and village, examining housing density, capacity and housing numbers to identify where increases in housing numbers can be accommodated.

The Green Belt does not impact too much on the Town although north of Lamberts Lane is not designated as green belt

5. Economic Development

The team members have been selected and have been drawn from a variety of businesses in the town, the Town Council, CEC and from members of the public. The team is now full.

The group have been examining data and current job density, determining where to accommodate employment land etc.

Currently there is a lot of interest in the town from developers and tenants with 200,000 sq. ft. for business possibly being created.

Noted that the team need to look at outflows from large employers such as Astra Zeneca to identify how this affects employment.

6. Sustainability

Need to coordinate the two groups looking at green space and to find a way of linking together their ideas.

The group is looking at green corridors and how this can link to the Town Centre and other key areas

Flooding is an issue that should be taken into account in the Town. Community energy is another issue particularly the use of solar panels

It was noted that Cheshire is one of the poorest counties in the country for tree density. Suggested looking at the Tattenthall NP could provide some insights into the aspirations and objectives the group should consider

Worth inviting Cheshire Wildlife Trust to undertake some workshops, they will charge £150 per day, AS to organise

7. Town Centre Heritage

The group revisited the Town Plan 2008 to determine what had and had not been actioned, which included a walkabout around the Town

They have broken into two teams, one looking at heritage and the other concentrating on the Town Centre. The aim is to produce a set of draft objectives

8. Transport

There are only 4 members and further input from additional members would be useful, Simon Critchley is joining but, suggested that we ask Jacobs to send a member for Highways

The Town Centre has specific issues related to traffic and congestion not all of which will be met by the current Link Road proposal. The team is looking at the notion of having a further link from Manchester Road to Buxton Road; this would move a lot of traffic from Mountbatten Way.

It was noted that when Strategic Highways consider planning applications they don't always consider the effect of increased traffic on the smaller roads around the development, such implications should be included in the NP

Questions that need to be considered are:-

- Modelling date for the Link Road and the Town
- How much would it cost to build phase 2 and 3 and the Link Road, can funding be secured from the LEP, CEC or other sources

9. Housing

The Housing Group is a large group assisted by 3 planners, with Town and Borough Councillors present and a member of Dane Housing is also on the team

One of the issues the team is wrestling with is determining the precise housing allocation numbers. The starting point should be April 2010 then taking into account the number of dwellings built and those with permissions.

The team are using a map with housing development and their positions located on the map, it includes the Town boundaries to clarify their thinking. They are also looking at the effect of an ageing population on the type of housing needs, affordable housing and social housing.

They will be looking at how the NP links into social problems and needs, particularly as housing associations don't provide extra care facilities

Demographics and the range of housing stock and jobs growth will be factored in when determining the type of dwellings required

10. Communication

The task of the team is to be a conduit between the themed groups and the public. This will be achieved via a multi-channel and multi-function communication strategy. But communication must be easy to understand and not over complex.

Key objectives are:-

Visibility

Accessibility

A key action will be communicating face to face with the public via roadshows in key areas of the Town.

Each themed group needs to provide one key/prime question for use in the questionnaire with the next top 3 questions they would like responses on from the public.

Mapping will be used when the road shows are produced to aid understanding

11. Timetable

Andrew Thomson to provide a revised timetable. A workshop will be arranged in March, to agree the overall vision and coordinate the themed Groups objectives

Date of next meeting

9am Wednesday 4th March