

Neighbourhood Plan

Steering Group Meeting

Tuesday 4th March 2015

Present

Andrew Thomson
Peter Aston
Bob Edwards
Laura Tilston
Paul Bates
George Hayes
David Gifford
Steve Foster
Peter Minshull
Tim McCloud
Jenny Unsworth
David Watson
Brian Hogan

Guests

Amanda Martin
Chis Jones
Jackie MacArthur

1. Apologies

Glyn Roberts

2. Other parishes

CEC have been contacted in respect of the concerns relating to the lack of involvement from other parishes and a meeting of parish representatives is taking place this afternoon at Cheshire East in Sandbach at 5pm

During the meeting it will be strongly emphasized that the CEC Master Planners need to involve both the Congleton NP group and involve the parishes in their deliberations

3. Vision

At the workshop which will take place on the 11th March it was noted that at least one member of each team should come prepared to produce a vision for their particular theme group and to take part in the creation of an overall vision for the Neighbourhood Plan, all team members are welcome to attend.

Groups don't have to necessarily have produced a mass of data and evidence at this stage but, do need to be moving towards the creation of an overall vision and aims and objectives to go into a composite document.

4. Data and evidence

There are still issues with CEC in respect of their evidence base which need to be resolved. Some of this is already being worked on with the consultants working with CEC to work on the Local Plan, but, it maybe Easter before sufficient information is available to feed into our NP

It was noted that the housing allocation may have to go up to 33,000 – 35,000 homes

However, at this stage the housing numbers are not that important as there is a need to get on with producing the objectives and policies. Although it was noted that the housing numbers for Congleton are contained in a global figure for the area and aren't that easy to break down, particularly those sites which straddle the borders for the town council and adjoining parishes

A policy from CEC on how to deal with such problems needs to be urgently addressed

The NP can't be produced in isolation from the Local Plan as there is a danger they will conflict, therefore the Master Planners need to work with us and understand the problem of how the Key Service Centres operate in the Hinterland and develop a policy to cater for such issues

5. Protocol

The importance of producing a protocol and a constitution was discussed and whilst both principles were accepted, members were asked to provide any feedback on the wording of the protocol which is shown below in italics. AT will also provide a template for a constitution for consideration

In the process of developing the neighbourhood plan a clear process and set of protocols need to be established if the groups are going to work successfully together.

- I. Members of each Neighbourhood Planning group primarily communicate only with each other and their respective Chairman.*
- II. The Chairman communicates with the Steering Group.*
- III. Each Chairman feeds back from the Steering Group meetings to the members of their group.*
- IV. Intergroup discussions can and should be encouraged, but set up by and managed by the Chairs of the relevant groups.*
- V. Since some people are members of more than one group, the title of all emails should clearly indicate which group they relate to.*

- VI. *Each group should decide on what constitutes a 'working' email and a group wide 'informative' email to allow for productive working. Group decisions should be made at meetings. Informative emails sent between meetings should be copied in to all members of the group.*
- VII. *Minutes of all meetings, once approved, should then be circulated to group members and to the Steering Group.*
- VIII. *Version control should be put in place for all groups.*

6. Themed Group Reports

I. Economic Development

The group have been examining data and current job density and making good progress on determining where to accommodate employment land, but, it is abundantly clear that there is a need to get involved with the Master Planners to deal with the cross boundary issues.

The team is looking to support some of objectives it has created with evidence and considers the Link Road justification could be a good place to start as it contained jobs growth as part of the justification to the government to obtain the grant.

It was note that Staffordshire Council had provided serviced land to facilitate employment development in its area and this is something that should be considered here.

The team is also looking at the CEC average job density of 0.74 to be the figure to aim at for jobs growth combined with the population in the new housing. The current job density in Congleton is 0.57

II. Town Centre Heritage

The group has based most of its work on the Town Plan 2008, Town Strategy and Public Realm Strategy.

The Town Centre Group does overlap with other groups work, but where this occurs there will need to be some overarching principles agreed which can be cross referenced with other groups

The group though have produced objectives for shopping, employment, housing, parking, events, heritage, visitors and attractions

III. Sustainability

The group have produced a vison and 9 objectives encompassing key themes which include, renewable energy, a commitment to developing footpaths and cycle ways, off road transport and other links so that people who live in the area can live in one place and easily get to work in another location.

They are looking at the green belt and green space, although it was suggested that they should also look at the notion of the green gap.

An environmental Impact Assessment needs to be undertaken, but, this should be carried out by CEC

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

IV. Transport

There are now 6 members of the group and PM is group chairman

The team has looked at the vision and objectives and will make comments on how transport should link up, how inhabitants at the west side of the Town get to the train station and the problem with the train service generally.

They haven't yet got a view on how much sustainable transport there is in the area but, suspect it is less than 10%.

They will consider safe routes to school and will speak to the youth council about their ideas and concerns in respect of transport.

A concern was expressed about the number of houses that might be built without the Link Road being in place by 2018.

V. Health and Education

The group is focusing on health and well-being and is involving health professionals in this process.

Congleton Education and Community Partnership have been approached, but they have declined to be involved, but, perhaps don't understand the importance of the NP. Nonetheless the group will be meeting with senior officers for CEC responsible for education to get some input from them.

VI. Housing

One of the issues the team is still wrestling with is determining the precise housing allocation numbers and are still waiting for information from CEC to clarify this issue.

They have produced some objectives such as brownfield first, affordable and specialised housing.

It was pointed out though that the planning inspector reviewing the Malpas NP stated that there is no hierarchy of sites and you can't prioritise brownfield first.

7. Publicity and Communication

The notion of branding the NP was considered and the brand and design for “MyCongleton” was approved. The branding would be used on all communication to the public and would be the name used for the website.

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.

The notion of sourcing the website was discussed and agreed that it should be offered to suitable Congleton companies to quote for the work, which will be a marketing based package containing the website, designs for the leaflets, questionnaire, display boards, roadshows and so on.

8. Timetable

Andrew Thomson to provide a revised timetable.

9. Date of next meeting

TBA

NB. A workshop is arranged at 9am on the 11th March, to agree the overall vision and coordinate the themed Groups objectives