

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

Meeting with Developers

Wednesday 29th July 2015

Present

Brian Hogan (Chairman)

Cllrs

Paul Bates

Bob Edwards

George Hayes

Amanda Martin

Laura Tilston

Steve Foster

Peter Minshull

Jackie MacArthur

David Watson

Mike Smith

David McGifford

Glyn Roberts

1. Declaration of Interest

Cllr G Hayes declared a non-pecuniary interest as a consequence of being a member of Cheshire East Strategic Planning Board and took no part in any subsequent discussion with Developers.

2. Gladman

David Gladman and Martin Twigg

Gladman's based in Congleton employ more than 150 people and have recently recruited many young people to the company

They pointed out some concerns with the CEC Local Plan; particularly a view that there was insufficient land identified to meet the housing numbers, this has been exacerbated by the increase in the revised strategy from 3500 to 4150 homes in the Congleton Key Service Centre.

They also considered that the economic assessment produced by CEC was unduly pessimistic and that employment growth was likely to be greater than 0.7% forecasted by CEC

They pointed out that the land up to the Link Road was faced with many constraints, whilst the land to the west of the town, around Padgbury Lane had none and new land in their view would need to be identified to accommodate 4150 dwellings.

Constraints to the west of the town in their view were few and it was not dependant on the Link Road, but, an extension of the Link Road to the A34 could be funded by such development. In this area there was an opportunity to provide residential, and employment development.

3. Bellway Homes

Stuart Gray, David Diggle and Andrew Cane

Bellway is a FTSE 250 company which has been operating for over 70 years and has delivered many developments in Cheshire East

Waggs Road is a site they are seeking to develop, it is highly sustainable and the 104 homes they would like to plan to build would be built to reflect the local character and context of the area and would include 30% affordable homes

A planning application for the site submitted in 2013 was refused on appeal because of concerns over highway/pedestrian safety.

Since the refusal Bellway have been working with CEC Highways with a new package of measures to mitigate such concerns which include widening the footpath in certain areas and reducing the width of the carriageway. This would result in the first 80m of footpath becoming 2m wide and the remaining 90m being 1.5m wide.

Some concern though was expressed at the effect still of traffic on Waggs Road and Fol Hollow. But, Bellway pointed out that traffic modelling had indicated that the roads had sufficient capacity to deal with extra traffic emanating from the development

4. Bloor Homes

Diane Howcroft Bloor Homes and John Coxain Emery Planning

Bloor Homes want to develop Tall Ash Farm which is approximately 1.5km from the Town Centre. The site consists of 16 hectares of land with a few buildings on it, but, in the main it is agricultural grade 3b land.

Bloor Homes already has planning permission for 20 dwellings in the area. The site itself it not dependent upon the Link Road and to date there has been stakeholder and public consultation including press releases and leaflets about the proposed development.

Originally the plan was to build up to 300 dwellings but, this has been reduced to about 250. An outline planning application was submitted in May 2015 to develop the site of 16

hectares, but only about 10 hectares of the site will be used for residential development, leaving the rest for leisure and open space. This results in a housing density of 27 per hectare

Access to the site is off Buxton Road and CEC have agreed in principle to the access proposals for the 20 dwellings. The proposals for 250 dwellings will incorporate landscaping to the front of the site and a bus route.

Improvements to the canal tow path will also be included. It was acknowledged that there will be a loss of open countryside which is an adverse impact, but, it was suggested this had to be offset in terms of the need for additional housing.

Some comments were made relating to the site being identified in the SHLAA as having constraints, but, Bloor suggested this does not mean it can't be developed

Comments were also made about extending the Link Road to Buxton Road

5. Richborough Estates

Paul Campbell and John Bloor

Richborough have been building in Congleton for some years and started building homes in Bath Vale in 2006 which were completed in 2009. They have interests in many areas in Cheshire including Sandbach, Willaston and Haslington.

Richborough have an interest in land in SL6 to the west of the arc in the Somerford triangle and have a proposal for 170 homes. However, this application is being frustrated because local inhabitants have embarked on a campaign to apply for village green status in the area; this was dismissed by Cheshire East, but, is now going out for judicial review. Development though should commence in in early 2016

One fundamental principle that needs to be understood is whether the Link Road is a barrier to development or not. In fact it was pointed out that because of some of the topographical constraints and in particular the varying levels, there are some challenges in determining how the Link Road links up with Radnor Park.

6. Ainscough Strategic Land

Paul Martin and Rachael Ainscough

ASL was formed in 2007 after the sale of the former business Ainscough Crane Hire. Their core business is land and planning and they currently control 1400 acres of land with the potential to deliver 6600 residential units

ASL has a promotional agreement with the owners of the land at Back Lane Congleton, which consists of 90 acres and is owned by Simon King.

It was suggested that there are no topographical constraints in land in this area and the site could be capable of delivering more than the 500 units proposed such that some of the shortfall of 334 units could be accommodated in this area

The site can provide or contribute towards the improved infra structure including highway upgrades, new schools and improved leisure and recreational facilities.

The proposal suggested up to 5.5 hectares of employment land would be provided, but, this did not seem to be proportional to the amount of employment land required around the Link Road

7. Bower Mattin Partnership

Joe Mattin

It was pointed out that industrial land in the area of Brook Street could be vacated within the next decade opening up the area around Timbers Brook and into Bath Vale near to Tommy's Lane

Then development could consist of a mixture of developer built homes and self-build or open market homes for rent and could contain up to 230 dwellings. The scheme is very much embryonic at the moment and Bower Mattin Partnership would welcome feedback from the Neighbourhood Plan team on this idea.

A second consideration is to develop the Fairground site. There is the potential for about 100,00sq ft. of space to develop which could consist of 25,000 sq. ft. for a supermarket, up to 50,000 sq. ft. for medical facilities and 25,000 sq. ft. for other retail.

It was pointed out that Congleton would welcome a high quality supermarket operator such as Waitrose or Booths if such organisations could be attracted to the area

Again Bower Mattin would welcome feedback from the team on such proposals

8. Seddon Homes

Michael Johnson Seddon Homes and Sarah Wozencroft Indigo Planning

Seddon's has been in existence for over 120 years and had been operating in Cheshire for about 50 years and operates a variety of housing and construction sites.

In Congleton it has an interest in a number of areas:-

Falcon Rise

There is planning approval for 40 units at the Moorings and 40 units at Goldfinch Close, but, Seddon's had applied for planning permission for a further 220 units which has just been refused by Cheshire East.

Back Lane Triangle SL6

There is a site opposite Back Lane industrial estate which could accommodate 115 dwellings depending upon density which could come forward in 2 phases and consists of 9 acres.

Padgbury Lane –Belgrove Farm

Seddon's are promoting this site which borders Astbury and is in two parts with 20 units on one part and a further 100 units on the larger adjacent site

At the far end of Padgbury Lane is a further site with up to 150 dwellings, this application is the subject of an appeal which could be announced on the 7th August

Brian Hogan

29.07.15