

## **Neighbourhood Plan**

### **Town Centre and Heritage Group**

**April 2<sup>nd</sup> – 9.30 – 11.30am**

**Present :** David McGifford, Glyn Roberts, Mike Warke, Dr David Roffe, Steve Foster (Chair), Jackie MacArthur, Nino Mancini

**Apologies** – None noted

**Meeting Purpose** – to look through version 3 of the Town Centre Objectives and policies and note what evidence would be needed and where we may be able to get it from.

**NEW MEMBER** Dr David Roffe introduced himself. Has a background in research and academia and a particular interest in history and architecture.

Steve explained keen to move the group forward and to start looking at the evidence that we need to support the policies and objectives.

Started going through the policies – Suggest group look at Planning and Practice Guidance notes from CLG (Community and Local Government department)

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/>

**Shopping Provision - query over name – retail and services more appropriate.**

Can't ignore satellite and other shopping areas – West Heath, Barn Road, High Town. West Heath and High Town largely serving local walking needs. Barn Road Retail Park attracts large nationals. The Town Centre currently doesn't have suitable size units with good access to accommodate the needs of these businesses. We recognise that we need to attract more anchor stores into the Town Centre to attract people. Niche independents are not enough on their own. We should anticipate greater pressure to expand in the Barn Road area if and when the Link Road is built – and recognise that people living in the housing near the link road will need to travel through the Barn Road Retail Park to get to the town. The town offer needs to be strong to entice them to travel the extra ½ mile. These needs more consideration re vision and objectives.

Need to understand the impact that an increased catchment area of 9,000 will have on the attractiveness of Congleton as a Town Centre

- **Suggestions to check – Winsford Neighbourhood plan – as similar large size town**
- Do we need a Retail Assessment - one carried out by White Young and Green in 2011 – out of date but worth checking. Post meeting David McGifford confirmed

Cheshire East planning to update in 2015 – date to be confirmed – can we ask for Congleton to be done first? Middlewich has paid for a separate retail assessment.

- Town Centre Health Check – again been done in the past, then followed by Action for Market Towns Annual Benchmark. Worth revisiting and carrying out another Health Check following CLG guidance – **ACTION JACKIE TO MAKE A START!**
- Look out research carried out by MMU students –Action Jackie
- Look at responses to Congleton Town Strategy Consultation – carried out April 2012 – 72 page document – lots of individual comments.  
[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial\\_planning/cheshire\\_east\\_local\\_plan/local\\_plan\\_consultations/town\\_strategies\\_2012/congleton\\_town\\_strategy\\_2012.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/planning/spatial_planning/cheshire_east_local_plan/local_plan_consultations/town_strategies_2012/congleton_town_strategy_2012.aspx) scroll through and full report on consultation and consultation findings (2012)
- Look at the Atkins Study into the Fairground area – **ACTION JACKIE** to find and circulate.

### **Employment in Town Centre**

Need to link with the Economic Development Group who are looking at where economic development and job opportunities should be located. Suggest Town Centre could be a place for small business set up and incubator units - check availability at Riverside.

How do you get small businesses to think about Congleton Town Centre as a good base?

**Action Steve to talk to Dave Watson (Economic Development/East Cheshire Chamber)**

We want to see micro businesses in the town centre as retail space will shrink and employees mean people that potentially will spend in town.

### **Housing**

Need to talk to Jenny Unsworth and Housing group. – what type of housing would the town centre be suitable for? Are there zones that we can identify where change of use to housing should be encouraged.

For the reputation of the town centre is there a way of limiting the number of hostels and houses of multiple occupation in the town centre? A concentration of this type of housing changes the nature of the town.

**Action Steve to talk to Jenny**

### **Parking**

Issues around the amount of land space given to car parks – could it be condensed without losing spaces (multi-storey)

Can we have figures for Car Parking occupancy (ACTION DAVID MCG ) – but also remember town may expand by 30%! So don't want to lose spaces and then have a larger town centre where people can't find parking!

## **Infrastructure**

Getting people into and out of and around the town centre is vital for its success. May be traffic modelling in the ATKINS report and in the SCARBOROUGH REPORT (ACTION DAVID – can you ask Tom for the Scarborough Planning App details – we don't have them in the Town Hall – it was a box full of documents)

Peter Minshull has written a detailed report on the Link Road consultation and impacts and access to the Town Centre – Action STEVE to get a copy

Peter Minshull skilled at traffic modelling – Steve to ask him if he would take the worst case scenario of the traffic implications of proposals for the Fair Ground and Scarborough site and model them – Action Steve

Need information on Bus routes and details of usage – Jackie to ask SST (new CEC public transport company) Is there any chance of a shuttle bus to circle town and link to station?

## **HERITAGE**

What evidence is needed? How do you get evidence for an aspiration?

Can we get hold of listed building and map locations -

<http://www.britishlistedbuildings.co.uk/england/cheshire+east/congleton>

Invite conservation officer to next meeting – ACTION NINO

Details of the conservation areas – do we need extensions to the areas? – to discuss

[http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/heritage\\_natural\\_environment/conservation\\_listed\\_buildings/conservation\\_areas/conservation\\_areas\\_appraisals/conservation\\_area\\_maps.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/environment/heritage_natural_environment/conservation_listed_buildings/conservation_areas/conservation_areas_appraisals/conservation_area_maps.aspx)

Need to pick up Leisure and Town Centre environment at next meeting

## **ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS RAISED FOR THE GROUP TO PONDER**

1. Very Town Centre based – as this is the remit of the group – but who is looking out for the heritage aspects of outlying 'suburbs' such as Buglawton, Mossley, Lower Heath etc that have some important historical building to protect? NEED TO CROSS OVER WITH OTHER GROUPS
2. Infrastructure fundamental to the success of the Town Centre – if the access into town isn't easy then people won't come. Potential changes to traffic flow could have

a big impact on the centre. Equally developments in the centre could have a big impact on the network (Fairground and Bridestones developments)

3. Link Road is a lynch pin to a lot of the plans – what's the plan B if it doesn't happen.
4. Need for an examination library that groups can access – could be through dropbox or sharepoint. Web site will host public documents. But also a need for discussion documents that the NP Team can share. JACKIE MENTIONED TO COMMS TEAM. JACKIE JONES SENDING JACKIE M some details. Also need to start sharing minutes between groups.
5. Need all the groups to actively consider the Town Centre in their thinking – and share their thinking.
6. Cheshire East is holding surgeries every two weeks for towns going through Neighbourhood Plans – could do with putting together a list of all the evidence that the various groups need to take to one of these meetings. – ACTION STEVE TO RAISE AT STEERING GROUP