

CONGLETON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2015

MINUTES OF THE FOURTH MEETING OF THE HOUSING GROUP HELD AT PLUS DANE CONGLETON ON WEDNESDAY 18 MARCH 2015 AT 2:00PM

1. **Present:**

Jenny Unsworth (JU) – Chairman
Amanda Martin (AM)
Glyn Roberts (GR)
Laura Tilston (LT)
Gordon Baxendale (GB)
David Brown (DB)
Chris Tyrer (CT)
Gillian Kaloyeropoulos (GK)

2. **Apologies:**

Mike Watson (MW)
Andrew Thomson

3. **Previous minutes:**

Agreed as an accurate record of the last meeting.

4. **Matters arising:**

4.1 Affordable Housing The meeting with Stephen Knowles of CEC is still out-standing.

GR re-iterated reasons for requesting it – NP group needs evidence base particularly re C2 and C3.

LT expressed doubts that CEC would have the information.

Action: DB to progress via Karen Carsberg

4.2 AM commented upon the matter of affordable housing and in particular social housing. She had heard that several hostels for vulnerable people were placing people from distances as far away as Liverpool. Her concern was that this was placing extra demand on CKSC's general social housing stock and lessening availability for local people. It was agreed that clarification could be sought from S. Knowles at CEC.

DB/LT both confirmed that CEC are looking at inward migration as part of the Master-Planning exercise.

GB stated that Loachbrook Farm's affordable housing went to Aspire in Newcastle-under-Lyme who were not members of Cheshire Homechoice. DB stated that Aspire had since joined that register.

4.3 GR suggested that in addition to 'Affordable Housing' as defined in national /borough planning policies our group should be looking at starter homes for local people.

Action: GR/GK to find out about Low Cost housing and Inward Migration, housing for vulnerable people and evidence of pressure on affordable stock at their meeting with Stephen Knowles.

4.4 Housing Numbers Any revision to CKSC's housing numbers from the CEC LP in

suspension are still awaited. The group revisited the constraints map. A summary indicated position as follows; Padgbury Lane under Appeal, Meadow Avenue/Waggs Road at Judicial Review, Priestly Fields area under Appeal. Just coming into the frame are also; Bath Vale/Tommy's Walk which has a proposal being mooted and Tall Ash Farm 300 dwelling proposal being consulted upon.

It was acknowledged that although we want to identify needs there is only a limited amount of greenfield land left within Congleton itself.

LT stated that if all these were to receive permission, Congleton would then have to expand into the surrounding parishes.

DB summarised that based on CEC figures, the CKSC area needs 208 dwellings to meet its allocation.

LT qualified that this is the case subject to no increase in the CKSC quota from CEC.

DB nevertheless proposed that we conform with the 208 in the LP.

LT summarised that if we go for the full 208 within Congleton parish boundary more speculative development could be deterred.

GR thought we should look site by site and get CEC to concur on capacities of each.

It was pointed out that the two sets of existing housing data do not match. GR suggested we take list produced by AM to Tom Evans to get CEC to check those figures as CEC will hold exact data. Subject to CEC providing capacity figure site by site, we can then plot them onto the map and thus identify which fall within Congleton Town's boundary.

Action: DB/JU to arrange this with CEC.

4.5 Site Locations

JU commented that we need minutes from other groups so that, for example, brownfield sites in the town centre, which may have land use proposed/identified by the Town Centre group is known to this group. North Rode Timber was a site in point.

GR was able as a member of that group to advise that the Town Centre group had identified that site as perhaps being suitable for housing.

DB was interested to know how many dwellings that site could accommodate.

LT thought perhaps 90-100 units high density.

DB asked whether windfalls had been calculated.

24 are coming forward in a proposal at Radnor Park. LT suggested that about 5% was the likely rate. It was agreed that we will treat 10 units as the threshold for major windfall sites. A proposal was made that we should accept the value of a planned environment and accept the housing numbers and site allocations as proposed in the Local Plan currently under examination.

Action: JU write to Brian Hogan for inter group communication of minutes

Action: LT obtain the official windfall % which CEC apply

Action: AM will count separately the minor windfalls (less than 10 dwellings).

5. Reports from:

5.1 JU reported from the Steering Group that there was a contract for publicity and advertising and that there was some concern at the way in which this was being done and whether this conformed with the proposed constitution and best practice.

5.2 JU advised that although the surrounding parishes will try to work with us over cross-boundary sites, they want separation of their identities and not a merger. DB pointed out that Sandbach NP had dealt well with this kind of issue by identifying green gaps.

5.3 AM had already emailed group members with update from Meet the Developer so her only comment was that she had identified in particular one small developer she would very much like to see constructing some of Congleton's homes.

6. **Local Plan – Neighbourhood Plan Inter-relation**

6.1 JU reminded members that she had circulated them with the response from DCLG to the effect that they are unable to provide any policy guidance catering for the multitude of cross boundary issues being faced within the CKSC.

6.2 Forum set up by CEC to deal with the matter of cross parish NP groups ongoing.

6.3 The Master Planning exercise continues and we should like to have some cross-communication with these planners.

7. **Vision Statement for Housing**

7.1 The draft vision statement proposed by GR and amended by MW was discussed at some length, given further slight amendments and identified further actions agreed for immediate action. It was agreed that GK would send the draft statement to GR and LT to look at and amend as agreed at the meeting as follows:

CONGLETON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – DRAFT HOUSING VISION

Action – as discussed at NP Housing group meeting Wed 18 March 2015

GR - to suggest wording for an Open Countryside Policy to add to second paragraph

LT/GR- to address the wording in the second point of final paragraph

“New housing will be developed at densities sufficient to support appropriate provision of local services, including public transport” to ensure clarity of intended meaning viz a viz housing ratios

The Congleton Neighbourhood plan has been prepared to ensure a strategic and considered approach can be given to providing new homes for people in Congleton. We would like to see the town's housing evolve to accommodate future growth whilst enhancing the natural, built and historic environments and recognising the needs and visions of our neighbouring parishes.

The Neighbourhood plan has been based upon the Cheshire East Local Plan strategy giving priority to development on;

1. Brownfield and/or town centre sites or buildings (if available, viable and deliverable)
2. Sites which do not adversely affect the environmentally sensitive designated land/buildings or their settings;
3. Infill opportunities within a defined boundary for Timbersbrook village.

The Neighbourhood Plan places greatest emphasis on the provision of homes for local people requiring;

4. Affordable housing for rent and shared ownership;
5. Specialist housing designed to meet the needs of the elderly and persons with mobility problems;
6. First time buyer homes for younger people.

7. Homes for single person households.

The Neighbourhood Plan also seeks to;

8. Ensure that new housing and alterations and extensions to existing housing are designed appropriately to good environmental and sustainability standards.
9. New housing will be developed at densities sufficient to support appropriate provision of local services, including public transport.
10. Housing design will respect the traditional character of Congleton as a market town and its wider rural setting while allowing for innovation in appropriate circumstances.
11. New housing development will meet the needs of both present and future occupiers, including those with special requirements, and to provide for local needs.
12. To encourage renovation or redevelopment of eyesore sites, poor quality buildings or empty homes in disrepair in order to avoid adverse effects upon neighbouring properties.

8. House Prices in Congleton 2004-2013.

8.1 AM had emailed the group with information she had obtained on house prices over the period in question. Despite some recent improvements local housing has yet to return to pre-recession prices.

8.2 Market information from estate agents still to be obtained

Action: GR to liaise with Estate Agents

9. Next Steps

9.1 JU will be asking for copy minutes from the other groups

9.2 LT made reminder that Andrew Thomson wants the vision worked on

9.3 LT Suggests that we deal with housing policy objectives at next meeting

10. Any Other Business

10.1 GK pointed out that we had not covered item 10 from previous minutes viz feedback from 25 Feb Communications Group meeting, though she thought that feedback may have taken place at intervening 4 March Steering Group Meeting. She expressed concern that Andrew Thomson had, both at the 25 Feb Communications and 11 March NP Workshop stressed that the vision needs to be conveyed and that detailed levels of questioning not necessary at this stage. However, in light of DB's proposal that the issue of housing is to receive urgent priority more generalised questions being drafted may be inappropriate and it was felt that the detailed housing questions this group had submitted would appear to be more appropriate. LT agreed and also commented upon an email Steering Group members had received earlier in the day from Brian Hogan concerning quotes for the website etc.

Action: GK to ask that housing questions are not diluted or over-simplified and that those submitted by this group are included in the questionnaire being prepared for the community.

11. The Next Meeting will be at 9:30am on Wednesday 1 April at Plus Dane on Worrall Street.