

# CONGLETON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2015

## MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE HOUSING GROUP HELD AT PLUS DANE CONGLETON ON MONDAY 23 FEBRUARY 2015 AT 2:00PM

### 1. **Present:**

Jenny Unsworth (JU) – Chairman  
Amanda Martin (AM)  
Glyn Roberts (GR)  
Mike Watson (MW)  
Laura Tilston  
Gillian Kaloyeropoulos (GK)

In attendance: Tom Evans (TE)

### 2. **Apologies:**

Gordon Baxendale (GB)  
David Brown (DB)

### 3. **Previous minutes:**

Agreed as an accurate record of the last meeting.

### 4. **Matters arising:**

The meeting with Stephen Knowles of CEC is still out-standing. It was agreed to treat other matters arising under the specific agenda headings.

### 5. **Progress Reports from Working Groups**

Updates are still being exchanged by group members and work is still in progress on housing needs and housing numbers.

GR advised technical advice to AM e.g. columns required in statistical work.

There were no additional reports.

### 6. **Local Plan – Neighbourhood Plan Inter-relation. Tom Evans**

6.1 JU informed members of the Redrow comment on initial NP area consultation and the potential impact of this on the robustness of the NP. The potential for judicial review if this matter is not resolved was discussed at length. Comments from the professional planners in the team were that the Congleton parish boundary is very tightly drawn and that CKSC extends over more parish boundaries than is usually the case. There was no awareness of similar cases. From the point of view of CEC, this is not a strategic issue but it impinges significantly on the related parishes in drawing up their individual NPs. It was accepted that there is a duty to consult but not to co-operate and that the parishes were not obliged to accept a proposal to share policy.

**6.2** The NPs for the adjoining parishes are all at different stages and Somerford and Hulme Walfield do not have professional help at this time.

**6.3** TE reported that a Forum had now been set up by CEC to deal with the matter of cross parish NP groups. Date first meeting TBA.

**6.4** GR suggested that we could apply to CLG or PINS for guidance.

**Action:** JU to contact Keith Holland in PINS for advice on how best to deal with cross boundary issues and other known examples.

**Action:** JU to attend Parish Forum.

## **7. Housing Numbers.**

**7.1** It was agreed that CEC set the strategic number for the CKSC and that our group would look at the capacity of brownfield sites, the density at which they might they be used and the balance between this and the peripheral sites. The SHMA would be used as evidence and the group accepted that they were not empowered to reduce the number. However, the locations in the adjoining parishes might generate a need for increases in some services in Congleton and this was one of many cross boundary issues that need resolution.

**7.2** TE confirmed that CEC was now undertaking a Master Planning Exercise in response to the Inspector's comments on the Local Plan. This would probably involve some increase in housing numbers and the planners would be looking at sites in the town. It was not clear how long this process would take as the dates were subject to slippage but it was expected to be after April 1015 and probably mid-May at the earliest. CEC are working on housing land availability for release Mar/Apr but we need to consider sites in detail ourselves at this stage.

**7.3** LT – Clear in Planning Guidance that the latest plan takes precedence. Important, therefore to have alignment with the Local Plan so we may be held up by this.

**7.4** GR – CEC are re-visiting housing numbers. If we could understand briefs to consultants we could try to understand possible implications to avoid wasting time.

TE – understands the reason for the request but can make no promises to give us the information.

**7.5** It was suggested that we look at character of design and identify sub-areas. The consultants will review:-

- (a) Greenbelt
- (b) Housing Distribution
- (c) Economy
- (d) Overall Housing Numbers

**Action:** AM. Describe the Localities for next meeting and contact developers on progress. Continue to list and analyse planning permissions in relevant parishes.

**Action:** GR. Write to estate agents for evidence re housing demand in market sector.

**Action:** LT. Obtain the contact details for developers with interests in this area.

## **8. Site locations in Congleton.**

**8.1** Concerns were expressed about loss of green spaces within the town and the question was posed whether it was better to protect spaces in the town centre or to develop greenfield

sites. It was suggested that a sequential test could be applied. Government planning policy states that brownfield sites should be taken into account first. Concern was expressed about the contrast between the high level of growth currently being forecast and the historic trends. Again, the issue of reconciling the cross-boundary issues was raised. A long discussion was held on the issue of competing sites, how best to establish housing need and what evidence bases are available to inform these processes. This encompassed the following summary:

- 8.1.1 The need to develop a plan which would be attractive and acceptable to local people who will comment on it.
- 8.1.2 The need to ensure a sound evidence base for all decisions, such as the LA's evidence base, the census, the planning guidelines and so forth.
- 8.1.3 The position regarding constructions and permissions to date.
- 8.1.4 The opinions of the community as expressed through public consultation.
- 8.1.5 The need to connect meaningfully with the adjoining parishes and to address their needs, especially service provision and effects of any future commercial or industrial growth.
- 8.1.6 The need to ensure that the impacts of the strategies of the LP are taken into account, particularly the impact of the link road, the strategic sites and the growth strategy.
- 8.1.7 The need to ensure that the decisions and conclusions of the other working groups are taken into account. We need to press for information and feed-back on this.
- 8.1.8 The need to be aware of and abide by government guidelines.
- 8.1.9 The need to ensure that our proposals seek to address and inform the aspirations and policies of the Neighbourhood Planning group.
- 8.1.10 The need to ensure that housing types, locations and densities are appropriate to the recognised needs of the local and potential migrant population, including such issues as price, size and location.

**8.2** Feedback on housing allocations was given and this included the up-date that various sites were being brought forward, including plans by Bloor Homes at Tall Ash Avenue. There are various other schemes at different stages in the planning system including Padgbury Lane, and land off Canal Road and Waggs Road. These encompass most of the green areas that are still available inside the town boundary but outside the greenbelt.

## **9. The impact of factors outside our parish.**

In the NP we can assess the impact of factors outside our parish including:

### **9.1 The Link Road on**

- 9.1.1 Traffic, using feedback from the transport group and other data.
- 9.1.2 Environmental Impact, using feedback from the environmental group.

**9.2** We need to understand the housing implications of economic growth assumptions in the LP. The Economics Group are suggesting there will be 5,000 new jobs in CKSC of which 2,000 will be inside town of Congleton.

**9.3** JU and GR expressed the view that there is a need for clarity about jobs/economic growth and what planning principles underlie the growth assumptions for Congleton.

**9.4** TE explained that this will be addressed through the LP. The Link Road will facilitate business expansion on the designated sites and concurrently reduce the problems created by out-commuting.

**9.5** It was agreed that as there is a relationship between growth and housing need, that we need to explore and understand this relationship and to ask for further clarification.

## **10. Feedback from Communications Group and finalised Questionnaire**

Discussion took place concerning the issue about the proposed extra question on in-migration and also perhaps broad tick-box income level indicator and whether there would be further opportunity down the line to establish the information. AM/GK due to attend Communications Group meeting on 25 Feb and can feed back.

## **11. Draft Housing Policy Objectives**

It was agreed that we will take our proposed set of draft housing policy objectives to the Steering Group but believe they may need to be revisited as the plan progresses.

## **12. Any Other Business.**

Dates and times for other meetings relevant to the NP are:

The Steering Group – Wednesday 9am on 4<sup>th</sup> March.

Neighbourhood Plan Working Group – Wednesday 9am on 11<sup>th</sup> March

Meet the Developer – 12<sup>th</sup> March

**13. The Next Meeting** will be at 2 pm on Wednesday 18 March at Plus Dane on Worrall Street.