

Wantage Neighbourhood Plan

Notes from a Workshop held on 21.01.15

Table B

TRAVEL

- Public transport – lack of buses. No direct buses from Grove to Didcot need to change in Wantage; need to extend bus routes.
- No bus from Wantage to Swindon.
- If new housing developments take place could there be a policy regarding infrastructure e.g. subsidised bus routes for a few years.
- Could a priority regarding public transport be included in the NP.
- Regarding the town centre if more buses are using the town centre then that might mean less parking issues.
- A417 congestion regarding cars if no buses.
- Most of the KA students are coming to school by bus.
- Key issue is to define where the bus terminus is to be situated.

- Allocating public car parking spaces – How many car parking spaces will the suggested new retail area need in order to be viable.
- The group felt that if the Magistrates Court area of land were to come up again that the Town Council should be involved in any negotiations.
- The group all agreed that there is a car parking issue to address. Perhaps the area where the Magistrates Court and old Police Station are could be a small retail/office space and parking? Good cycle racks and facilities would help the parking issue. More secure parking within the CCTV area are needed.
- It should be noted that if there is an increase in public transport this would mean a number of cars would not move during the day.
- The Police note that there are too many cars per household therefore parking on the footpaths.
- Cycleways,pathways- constant problem of the areas not being cleared. Cycle ways need maintaining, if there is lots of debris cyclists will use the roads instead.
- The group felt that a policy should state that all roads have be adopted upon development.

Heritage and Nature

- The group proposed that the Letcombe Brook corridor is a “character area”. A policy is needed for the brook. May tie into the green infrastructure network. Plan would be very specific with a 10 metres boundary- a continuous green corridor. A guidance policy as there is no protection on the brook at the moment. This could also include the canal.
- Cycleways were suggested to run continuously around the Letcombe brook corridor. It was also noted that there is a lack of cycleway between Grove and West Site.

- The group were concerned that the funding may not be available for all the ideas.
- A policy facilitating a safe guarded area, community aspiration. Could look at ensuring a certain percentage of land is allocated for projects when looking at any new developments. Policy identifying community policies from developments and other funding.

Local Green Spaces

- Certain areas protected in Local Plan as urban green spaces. The working group are currently producing a map showing all the current green spaces.

Time ran out before the group could discuss this any further.

Town Centre

- With regard to the intention to increase the town centres retail space the group discussed the area comprising of the Broadway Motors and St Katherine's adjacent. This is a big site whilst not the first thought regarding the town centre extension however if we made this choice we may not need to look at other areas. The area is within walking distance of the town centre, it is noted however that work would needed to make the walk between the two more attractive. If this were achievable it would move the centre of gravity back to the town centre.
- A policy would be needed for the sites, there are lots of options for usage not just retail.
- The current Sainsburys area was discussed and an option could be that changing the mix there could help i.e. a leisure, retail mix.

Working and living in Wantage

- The group discussed and agreed there is an increasing demand for more allotment plots, not sure that proposed allotments will be enough.
- A policy to protect gardens in order to prohibit larger gardens infill to continue.
- There is a great need for more leisure facilities to include athletics. Currently KA are renting an area that they use for sports. Ideally this area would be ideal for leisure activities for the community to use. There is also a brook in that area to improve.
- The area of the Beacon and Leisure Centre could be looked at for a retail, housing and leisure area.
- The group commented on their disappointment on the update by young people completing surveys. There is a need for better youth facilities, ideally a bespoke youth centre. Bespoke engagement with the youth is vital to ensure they are included within this process.
- It was noted that there is a legal trust in place attached to the Convent area that has obligations to do with young people.

- There is a change in demographic in next few years with lots more teenagers. There is a need for a multi provision for youth, increasing sports facilities.

Employment

- There is very little employment opportunities in Wantage. They appear to be gravitating towards Harwell.
- Nature of work is changing, more home workers perhaps within housing developments there should be a mix of housing stock to enable home working.
- New business start up hubs would encourage people to work more locally.
- Business hubs with wifi, meeting rooms.