

Wantage Neighbourhood Plan

Notes from a Workshop held on 21.01.15

Table C

Employment and Housing

- New homes should minimise the opportunities for disturbance and trouble (as mentioned by the TV Police) by
 - ensuring sufficient soundproofing
 - Not giving the appearance of being overlooked (into windows or gardens)
 - Ensuring that there is off-street parking for at least two cars per dwelling
- There was discussion about the need for eco homes but a realisation that developers won't pay for it – it would be good if the new homes were at least designed to align with the sun for the opportunity to add solar panels in the future
- Parking is the biggest priority and private space is also important.
- East Site was discussed, S Spiers making it clear that he wants to sell it for housing to fund his other developments and a strong argument from the rest of the table for green space to be retained.
 - Could it be the site of the new Leisure Centre?
- Any loss of green space to the town should be compensated by new green space. Either like for like or keep what we have, accessibility to all areas of the town is also important. Manor Park is a long way from Crab Hill.
- The leisure centre should be expanded /upgraded
- All existing commercial developments should be retained as employment in the Town is going to be important as the number of houses expands
- We do want to keep attractive entrances to the town and the idea of putting industrial developments at the edge of town would detract from this.

Travel

- Cycleways must be
 - well lit and visible not secluded (mentioned by the TV Police)
 - Continuous and linked up
 - Provide safe routes for children to get to school (particularly as the secondary school is going to be a long way from housing)
- There should be secure parking for cycles – not hidden away but as open as car parks to avoid any security problems
- The cycleway from Grove/Mably Way/ Stink Pipes needs to be completed?
- Parking is extremely important both
 - to ensure that residential parking is sufficient to stop on-street parking and
 - to create sufficient legal parking for the town centre (both all day parking for people working in town and short stay parking for shoppers etc.)
- Lack of enough residential parking creates disputes between neighbours (mentioned by the TV Police)

- Residential parking should be permeable and as green as possible.
- Short stay parking (20 mins) doesn't encourage use of retail in town – it needs to be longer to achieve the “full retail experience”. The two hour free parking does achieve that.
- If the illegal on-street parking is to be made legal then the streets should be widened enough to allow space for cyclists and pedestrians as well as parking – this may require changes to create one-way roads.
- The parking in the town centre is already inadequate with insufficient spaces at the leisure centre and in the town centre car parks. Any further developments in the town centre should comprise a combination of commercial and public parking (with possibly some residential to pay for it?).
- It is important to ensure sufficient access for emergency services (is this space to land the air ambulance given that roads will be clogged?).
- Road safety is also important and on-street parking makes it difficult to see pedestrians
- More pedestrian crossings are required as roads get busier
- Footpaths need to be wide enough to take push-chairs and cyclists if they can't cycle on the roads
- Interconnected green paths across the town should be created, maintained and promoted.
- Buses shouldn't be allowed to wait in the market place – the bus stop should only be for drop-off and pick-up. A new location for a bus waiting area should be found (possibly Seesen Way?).
- Ensuring that schools have sufficient parking for buses/mini-buses/car parking/ areas where parents can safely drop off children without getting in the way of other traffic is also important.

Heritage and Nature

- Design guidance must be very clear – it's often very easy for it to be misinterpreted
- It is recognised that everything costs money and that we should help developers to prioritise – important uses of space include:
 - Parking spaces
 - Trees
 - Pavements
 - Cycleways
- In-fill developments should match the character of existing streets (but not every design feature of the street in one building, we need to document what we want each area to emphasise)
- Conservation areas are very important and we want to ensure that shop-frontages and signage is enforced and that the take-away signage (like Wallingford Street) is not maintained.
- Character areas must be identified and developments match the character. These could include (but are not limited to)
 - Charlton Road
 - Mill Street

- Newbury Street
- Ormond Road
- A green infrastructure plan is required to ensure that local green spaces can be joined up and maintained or expanded.

Town Centre

- There is a problem if the Town Centre expands East to Broadway Motors/St Katherine's as there is a 100m gap between the end of the existing retail offer and these new sites
- Expanding South towards the Beacon means that the Police Station site is very important as is the Post Office depot. The Academy are very eager to ensure that the Large Community Space in the Beacon is retained as they use it a great deal and would like to use it more.
- Expanding on the Limborough Road might be difficult as it is difficult to get them to agree on anything, but there are a limited number of owners so it could be an easier option than expanding in other directions.
- There are already 7 empty sites in town which are difficult to occupy so uses should be found for these – these include:
 - The ex-Villa Chinese Restaurant on Mill Street
 - No 1 Alfred Street
 - 13 & 15 Mill Street
 - 20 Mill Street
 - Ex WH Smith next to Waitrose on Wallingford Street.
 - 2 on the retail park (7 and 13, 7 across from WH Smiths, 13 between Pampurred Pets and New Look)
- The Blanchards site on Wallingford Street is having difficulty getting planning permission so why should the Volvo garage or the Post office depot find it easier?
- Perhaps we need two plan periods – smaller scale expansion for 0-10 years and larger expansion for 10-20 years?