

WANTAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN WORKSHOP
HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2015

Notes of discussion on Table D

Town Centre

- 50/50 cyclists and pedestrianisation.
- Where does traffic go if fully pedestrianised ?
- Encourage mix of retail and offices.
- Change of office use to flats results in lost office space.
- Appears to be 2 town centres – Market Square and Sainsbury's area, being totally different spaces. A need to integrate these areas. Function, use and design of these areas. Pedestrian use and connection between the two.
- Integrate old and new.
- Suggest good shops around the square.
- Suggest areas for retail – possibly outside town centre e.g. Metal Box.
- Spare land at Limborough Road could be a development area.
- Park and ride to town centre – ring road area (Mably Way roundabout, adopted road, A338 to town centre to attract new shops.
- Need for more car parking, car park is always full.
- Letcombe Brook issues.
- Sainsbury's garage – Letcombe Brook problem. Undercroft car park is dark and a bad design, too close to Letcombe Brook.
- Recorrect problems at Limborough Road area – whole space needs to function better.
- PO depot – should be retail rather than flats creating more employment for the town on this site.
- Limborough Road area should be fully utilised and developed, compatible in character/design exclusively), some form of open eating place overlooking green space. Possibly develop both sides of the Brook with a walkway in front ?
- Possible areas for development – Limborough Road – easier to deliver, police station site and PO sorting office.

Employment and Housing

Living and Working

- Breakspear's Scrap Yard – potential for housing, some in Limborough Road.
- Density in Crab Hill – requires a viable bus service. Concentrating development along bus route. Crab Hill is a huge development – transport, cycleways, and integration with Charlton area. Could split up the development with footpaths and also to Grove. Rural corridor. Lots of open spaces in the development. Walking routes – make more of these to draw people out.
- Link areas using natural areas. Green space strategy for the WHOLE town
- Must have a financial structure in place for upkeep and enhancement.

- Willow Walk Nature Reserve is drying out. Diversity is not there and management is not there. Involve volunteers, commercial sponsorship. Area ideal for educational purposes.
- Views from Segsbury to Crab Hill are high density. Things have an impact a long way away. How is money from developer contributions spent ? Could some go to Willow Walk and not as a boundary. Integration ! Is this / we do not want a repeat of St Mary's. Mixture of different styles of housing - not rows, but clumps, cul-de-sacs etc. Does not create a coherent approach to the town. We need to hold onto as much open space/green areas, trees etc. Shared spaces, nature areas.
- Wantage has huge potential to become a 'Garden Town' on a smaller scale than other towns.
- Interconnect with other areas. Unifying factor. Vision to create this 'Garden Town'.
- What does the town aspire to ? Stop infilling, back garden development. Open plan strategy – private land as well as public land. 'Borrowed landscape'. Coherent structure in gardens as well.
- Protection of ongoing green corridor. Extra care housing, independent disability housing. Housing for older/younger – age integration. Do not need anymore over 55's flats.
- Grove Technology Park is an ideal area, cycleways, walkways which are properly funded and managed. Connectivity – green corridor, Old Canal route, make more of this route.
- Sell attractiveness. The Gateway to the South ! Tourism strategy, living/working, landscape. Wantage needs to promote these. Footpaths along the road for safety and walkway.

Getting around Wantage

- Cycleways and pathways – integrate new with Market Place – access. A 'Garden Town' concept, but Canal must be protected. Link Grove with Wantage.
- As much detail as possible to enable this. Costing and delivery. We can be strategists for cycleways, crossings etc. Money available for cycling schemes – where should it go ? What does it consist of ? Join up to employment.
- Get cyclists off A417 – linking in with national cycleways – villages included. Safe, well lit cycleways – schools.
- Wider footpaths. Physical separation for cyclists/pedestrians where possible. Visual connection with open space. Landscape needs to accommodate pressure, footpath across farm. Sensitive, safe crossing. Take account of landscape structure. Safe crossings at schools.
- Town Centre parking – new areas for new parking. Below ground or above – multi-storey ? Park and Ride for work, visiting, shopping. Station to be opened. Bus, Lorry Park to encourage new people into the town – at Grove station ? Re-figure parking in the Market Place, being mindful if disabled parking with taxis' nearby. Buses within Market Place, sustainability. Holding area for buses outside.
- There is no enforcement policy – this is needed. Short term parking as opposed to long term parking. Ideally 'Jiffy' buses, but these need financing. Parking places

- allocated on new development. Usual appears to be 1 bed property – 1 parking place. Street parking not ideal, but dependent on how streets are designed.
- Off-street spaces will be required and for flexibility. Good regular transport, reliable to tie-in with employment and schools. Sustainability of buses, trains.
 - Bus stops – employment. Bus from Wantage – Grove Business Park. Build on existing.
 - Explore use of ‘Jiffy’ buses as already suggested. Potential role as the needs of Wantage. Wantage is historic which cannot cope with traffic anyway, how will it cope with more ?

Conserving our heritage and nature

- Open space requirements. Connection between open spaces. Public use of green space – for all age groups. Use of these for different events at different times of the year. Need to plan trees/shrubs in cycles with planting of a successor in-between. Build age diversity/species diversity for wildlife. This should be taken on by volunteers and council/highways/town council. Neighbourhood basis. Councillors responsible for green plan. Community spirit. Proud of ‘green town’. Seen as policy and carried through as a project. Management plan.
- Community Infrastructure Levy – create an endowment fund for maintaining open space to sustain. Commercial sponsorship ? Public donations ? Funding needs to be in place for open spaces.
- Reduce impact of Crabhill – improve the view. Neighbourhood Plan needs to look at character, key issues. Character types, character of the town. Keep A and B landscape special. Start at Crabhill – need walkways, cycleways, open spaces for children to play etc. (Grove and Charlton Heights have areas). No high density housing. Feel of openness. Green strategy for the whole of Neighbourhood Plan area. Ralph Cobham offered his services. Need conservation core of volunteers in Wantage – to take on certain tasks to be included as a policy (include also schools).
- Character area – conservation area. Neighbourhood Plan asks for conservation survey. Assessment of area around. Conserve, nurture, leisure routes e.g. by Mill etc. Brook works as a spine. Excellent museum – relates to the Ridgeway etc. Cycleways out of town onto Ridgeway.
- More direct routes required. Local farmers/landowners – could any of those be contacted ? Crabhill conserves footpath. Connectivity. Route established. Links in with the Downs.
- Councillor Jenny Hannaby raised the issue of the wall in Wallingford and suggested that it should have been included in the conservation area to protect it. It was suggested that the conservation area should be expanded to Charlton Village to encompass the Church Hall.
