

**LOCALISM/NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN
STEERING GROUP MEETING
28 June, 2012**

Minutes pages 1 – 6

Present:

Victoria Allcock	Roger Matthew
Catherine Andrews	Charlie Michaelis
Philip Applin	David Morgan
Neil Basnett	Harry Nichols
Charles Bates	Lucy Parker (Clerk)
Tom Baxter	Neil Pearce (Planning Consultant)
David Bowie	Kate Rolfe
Elizabeth Dixon	Tim Sanders
Andrew Dow	David Savage
Peter Emmerson	Donna Savage
Jenny Fradgley	Jonathon Smith
Mark Haselden	Clive Thomas
Trevor Honychurch	Moira Tsolakis
David Langman	

Observers:

There were no observers present.

Apologies:

Apologies were received from Helen Crook, Ann Hicks, Alan Marks MBE, Jenny Murray and Sarah Summers.

1) Minutes

The Minutes of the Steering Group held on 31 May 2012 were approved as a correct record.

2) Scrutiny of individual themes on the 'Vision' matrix

The Chairman of the Consultation and Communications group, Charlie Michaelis, gave an overview of how the evening would proceed, with members invited to gather on to one of four tables with each table discussing a different aspect of the 'Vision' – the town centre, roads/transport, employment/education and

wellbeing. In discussing the issue allocated to their table, members were invited to consider protection/enhancement, improvement, Stratford's wellbeing, the implications for development and how the ideas and schemes might be funded.

Each table would then be given a few minutes to present their discussions to the whole meeting and after the four brief presentations, there would be a general discussion by the meeting of issues raised by the round tables.

Members were encouraged to seat themselves in approximately even numbers on the tables and advised to ensure that no one table had an over-representation of working party members.

(a)WELL BEING

In considering this heading, members discussed quality of life (including education, employment, open spaces), heritage (including public buildings, the Conservation area, the Shakespeare effect, the river, better maintenance of footpaths), tourism (including, again, the Shakespeare effect, the theatre, improvements to the coach park and access to Warwick and the Cotswolds), Planning (including protection of heritage, regeneration to improve and pedestrianisation of the town centre) and mobility (including better access to transport, improved cycling facilities, IT access for silver surfers, better signage and improved access to the town centre.

(b)EMPLOYMENT/EDUCATION

The visitor experience needs to be positive so that people are encouraged to stay in the town. Encouragement needs to be given to other aspects of the Arts such as fringe festivals to bring in more work.

Safety was considered as this would encourage people to want to work and live in Stratford.

The inherent problem of the rates of pay in Stratford in the service industries mean that many of these workers cannot afford to live in Stratford and that the population is 50% of retired people. Better and appropriate places to live are needed to encourage working people to live here. Low cost housing in the centre would also enable people to walk to work and thus

not contribute to the traffic congestion of people coming into to the town to work.

A Distribution Park could be established on the green land north of Birmingham Road which would take the heavy traffic out of town and, alongside this, builders merchants with large deliveries could also be relocated to such an area.

Ideas of industry that could be encouraged to the town included the automotive industry, the global reputation for the Arts and conferencing centres.

(c) TRANSPORT

Safety needs to be secured by design and has probably not been dealt with early enough in the past. Very early consultation is required in the future.

Traffic and congestion needs to be tackled with the idea of pedestrianising the town centre being raised. Issues were discussed regarding the shared space of cars, people and cyclists. In the need to reduce the chaos the group felt that the focus should be turned to cycling and a clear strategy was needed to facilitate this and reduce dependency on cars.

In terms of infrastructure, a resurrection needs to be made of talks on the bus station and there should be more integration between buses, trains and various types of public transport. This will, however, require major funding.

Finally, a strategy is needed to keep down traffic in the centre from out of town. The 'Park and Ride' was discussed with the idea raised of having one south of the river. Improved signage was also deemed important as a lack of this can add to chaos and congestion.

(d) TOWN CENTRE

Ideas discussed included crowded pavements, lowering the speed limit to 20mph and parking issues.

Any future plans must consider character, taste and consistency with the town to protect its uniqueness and protect the height and scale of the town. The addition of more green spaces and more trees also being suggested.

In terms of infrastructure, management of work needs to be considered – for example, rocky pavements, and the fact that much work is done ‘piecemeal’ without an eye to the bigger picture. Consideration should also be given to a bus station and taxi ranks.

There is a need to encourage residents to the town and developments must include residential areas. One possibility raised was to consider a change of use of empty office space to residential. Also small independent shops need to be encouraged into the town.

3) Determining the ‘Vision’

The meeting considered a wide variety of issues that had been raised by the four round tables.

In considering how best to reduce congestion in the town centre, it was suggested that large vehicles be prohibited from delivering to the town centre during the day which causes chaos and bad air quality whilst the engines are left running. Pedestrianisation was raised by a number of people as an idea to help decrease the chaos but if this were to happen, a ban on tourist coaches would be likely and this could have a potential damaging effect on tourism as happened in a similar case in Edinburgh. Better management at least is needed as tourists like to see around the town and need to go out to places like Shottery for Anne Hathaway’s Cottage. Furthermore, drop offs need to be made at hotels like the Falcon within the town. Consultation would be needed with local hotels.

In terms of development, ownership of land would first be needed to be established, much of which belongs to either the Town Trust or Stratford District Council. Other issues raised in terms of development included concern that development north of the A46 this could lead to the town being stretched out, a need to consider sustainability and consider energy prices and a need to maintain a nice High Street as there is a threat to the town caused by out of town developments and internet shopping.

There are few manufacturing jobs in the town – it is mainly low paid tourism and catering and these people cannot afford to live in Stratford and this could be encouraged. Building an industrial area with low rents to encourage industry and start-up businesses could

be a possibility but also considered was the idea to focus on the strengths of the town and the strong links with the Arts and its central locality for business. Stratford is known for the theatre but not especially for other Arts and this could be an opportunity to develop creative industries and make it a usp for the town.

There is no additional level of education in the town and there is also an issue with High School places. This needs to be resolved before development with the possibility being a further High School. This however would involve a huge cost. Another idea would be to reduce the catchment area for Stratford School. This could make the School insular. Both of the Grammar Schools are expanding but this is not necessarily for local children. The catchment area could be made smaller but an increase in housing will still put the schooling under stress.

Other issues discussed included encouraging the use of electric cars (which can be plugged in at Bishopton Park), making Bridge Street one way and increasing allotments.

The Chairman summed up by the meeting by stating it would appear that there are a number of problems to be addressed and a need for further research in areas such as quality of employment, expansion of the town, congestion, the threat to the High Street, buses and energy prices. The next stage is to list the problems that need addressing which will take approximately two months. This will then be circulated to the Group and research will be undertaken if necessary to establish how serious various issues truly are. Public opinion needs to be checked.

When the problems have been identified, it will then be necessary to look at solutions. There is a possibility that unintended consequences will arise (for example, a business park on the A46 may help congestion but would expand the town). This will all be systematically worked through.

At the next meeting, there will be an update from the working parties and debate will include extension of the Honeybourne rail line.

7) Public Participation

There was none.

8) To consider any other business

There was none.

9) Next Meeting

26 July 2012.

The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 8.35pm