

BURWELL MASTERPLAN WORKING PARTY MINUTES

Minutes of a Meeting held at Mandeville Hall, Tan House Lane, Burwell on Thursday 2 February 2012 at 6:30pm.

PRESENT

District Councillor Peter Moakes (Chairman)
County Councillor David Brown
Parish Councillor Pat Kilbey
District Councillor Hazel Williams MBE

OTHERS

District Councillor Michael Allan
Shirley Blake – Principal Sustainable Development Officer
Sally Bonnett – Infrastructure and Projects Officer
Michael Huntington – Huntingdonshire District Council
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Chris Soans – National Trust
Jane Thompson - Infrastructure Programme Manager

38 members of the public

38. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

The following written question was received from Jane Parker:

In the knowledge that there is a world food shortage and we only grow 40% of our food, what justification is there for building on hundreds of prime arable land in Burwell?

The Chairman replied that the needs of a growing population had to be balanced against the point made. Building on arable land was an option but no decision had yet been made. This point would be flagged up as part of the consultation.

A member of the public asked about the role of Burwell Parish Council in the current exercise and how would the Parish Council implement the ideas?

In response the Chairman stated that the Parish Council was the voice of the people of Burwell, whereas the District Council was the planning authority. In years gone by planning had been driven from the centre but that was changing. The District Council did not want to inflict any ideas on Burwell that were not wanted. There were problems associated with traffic, schools and houses but no solutions would be imposed on the village. The Parish Council would have an integral role in finding out what was wanted and the District Council wished to maintain close links with it.

Another member of the public asked whether the community would be stuck with the adopted 20-year Masterplan and would in fact be 'signing a blank cheque'. When would the Section 106 money be received, after the Masterplan or in tranches?

The Chairman explained that the Masterplan was for a 20-year period but it had to have the capacity to be reviewed, as circumstances changed. The Section 106 money system was changing and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was a refinement of that. This would be a fixed levy paid by the developers. The District Council would insist that developers laid down a bond so money was set aside if the developers went bust.

Another member of the public asked whether Section 106 money was ring-fenced?

In reply the Chairman advised that Section 106 money was but CIL funds would not be.

39. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Lavinia Edwards.

40. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

As declared at previous Burwell Masterplan meetings, County Councillor David Brown declared a personal interest in the matters to be discussed, as he was both a County Councillor and District Councillor.

41. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the Burwell Masterplan Working Party meeting of 7 December 2011 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

42. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made no announcements.

43. **PRESENTATION BY THE NATIONAL TRUST**

The Burwell Masterplan Working Party received a presentation on the Wicken Fen Vision from Chris Soans. The following comments were made:

- The Wicken Fen Vision was a 100 year project and aimed to protect the old fen, create new habitats for old species and to create green space.
- Over the last 12 months a zoning strategy had been used to make management decisions over land uses.
- The centre of the area had been earmarked for biodiversity, wildlife and as a potential nature reserve.
- The surrounding area would be used as a country park.
- Around the outside the land would be used by the community with some agriculture.
- A new wind pump had been completed which would help preserve the old fen. It pumped better quality water out of the lode system to help dilute rainwater.
- Burwell Fen Project – attempts were being made to restore the wetland habitat. The area was enclosed by a clay bund so water could be put on

the land without it draining onto surrounding areas. This would make it fantastic for birds.

- Access Project – The Lodes Way had been created as a new cycle/horse/pedestrian access. The Burwell bridge would be built this year as part of that.
- Other projects included a cycle hire facility at Wicken Fen, paddle boarding, a walkabout scheme for schools and scout groups, attendance at community events to talk to the public, an environmental events programme, working with schools, archaeology, a community woodland in Lode, '24 Acres' project in Reach and Wild Camp sleeping shelters between Anglesey and Wicken.

In response to questions from the public and the Working Party, Mr Soans made the following replies:

- The National Trust was very supportive of angling and was trying to get anglers involved.
- Some of the projects would help develop links to Burwell.
- The debate about using land for food production was complex. The need to produce food had to be balanced against the need for biodiversity and there were ways of securing both.
- All routes through the nature reserve would be protected.
- Building tourism into the Vision might be an aspiration, as the lode was fantastic for transport or boat trips. If the project developed then this could help develop tourism.

The Chairman thanked Mr Soans for his presentation.

44. **BURWELL MASTERPLAN OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT**

The Burwell Masterplan Working Party considered a report, L268 previously circulated, about the Options Development.

The Infrastructure and Projects Officer advised the Working Party that additional work had been done following feedback from the last meeting. Updates had been received on highways and education matters.

The traffic count figures from 2003 and 2011 were found to be very similar, at roughly 5000 vehicles a day. This meant that there was more scope for additional traffic without adversely affecting road capacities. There were no local solutions to the volume of traffic, as only improvements to the A10 and A14/A142 junctions would help. A package of measures would be needed to mitigate the traffic issues. This could include new flashing speed limit signs, ensuring planting was 5 metres away from the highway and gateway features at entrances to the village.

Some of the identified infill sites might not be delivered because of highway concerns. Any new junctions needed would have to be funded by the developers. Consideration could be given to a new roundabout at the Isaacson Road/Newmarket Road junction. Walking and cycling links would have to be considered if a new school was built. A number of pedestrian crossings could be considered in the High Street, Newmarket Road, Ness Road and near the school. A joint project with Suffolk County Council to solve the issue with Exning bridge would be needed.

There were two options available for the school in Burwell. If 400 or more houses were built this would justify consideration of a new school. Up to 400 and only extending the existing site could be considered.

Michael Huntington gave a presentation and made the following comments:

- A set of display boards, outlining the options, had been set up around the room.
- There was some concern whether the target of 128 infill plots was likely to happen.
- There were two options for greenfield development, in Toyse Lane and Newmarket Road.
- Through the Masterplan process more open space should be ensured.
- Options 1 and 2 highlighted a potential marina.
- Option 3 included for 200 new dwellings plus 50 infill plots.
- Option 4 included a potential site for a new school, 350 new houses and 50 infill plots.
- A key issue was to establish a clear design criteria, as a clear design rationale was needed. 40% social housing or a mix of dwellings could be included.

A member of the public was concerned that only large houses would be built. Another was worried about employment if 400 new houses were built. One noted that only Option 4 would allow a new school to be built. Another questioned how 'social housing' was defined. Someone thought that there was a need to plan for the effect on the roads due to the increased traffic associated with the new developments. One was concerned about the cuts in public transport. Somebody else thought that none of the Options addressed the problems and suggested that a senior school and local employment would address the traffic problems. One member of the public noted that none of the options would generate employment. Another stated that the proposed site for the new school was on the busiest roads, Ness Road and Newmarket Road. Someone queried why the existing commercial site was not being used for employment.

In response to these comments and questions, the Chairman stated that the design criteria would be part of the detailed discussions with developers, and the layouts and house types would be part of the negotiations. Employment issues would be part of the Masterplan document, by identifying employment land. More such land could be allocated, if this was what was wanted. Social housing was defined as anything that was not a 'market' house. The CIL would come out of the house building budget and would not put up house prices. The Masterplan would show whether to allow for small developments by allocating land for this. Car use was dropping, due to fuel prices going up.

Councillor Hazel Williams advised the Working Party that the Parish Council was not in favour of lots of houses, although big developments made it easier to negotiate agreement of house types. The money generated from the developers could be used to expand the existing school. There was no suggestion yet where employment land could be.

At the conclusion of the presentation the Chairman called for an adjournment, to allow the Working Party and members of the public to view the display boards. Therefore the meeting adjourned at 7:56pm and reconvened at 8:17pm.

Councillor Hazel Williams suggested the school should be taken out of the options, otherwise people would concentrate on that. If a new school were to be built, what would happen to the existing site?

Councillor Pat Kilbey reminded the Working Party that the County Council would only consider a new school if more than 400 new dwellings were built. The highest option of 350 dwellings plus a possible 50 infill would not be enough to get a new school. Any capital money for a new school would not go towards running it.

Councillor David Brown proposed that another option should be considered. This should be at the development level of Option 3 but split like Option 4.

It was proposed to accept Options 1, 2 and 3 as presented, plus Option 4 but without the school, plus a further option with the growth level as Option 3 but split like Option 4. These were agreed by the Working Party.

It was resolved:

That the following be approved as a basis for the public consultation in February/March 2012 –

- (i) Options 1, 2 and 3;
- (ii) Option 4 without the new school;
- (iii) A further option, as Option 3 but with the greenfield development split like Option 4.

45. **BURWELL MASTERPLAN WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Burwell Masterplan Working Party received a report, L269 previously circulated, detailing the work programme for the development of the Burwell Masterplan.

The Principal Sustainable Development Officer advised the Working Party that the next stage would be consultation on the options just agreed. The results of this would be brought back to the Working Party at its meeting on 2nd April.

It was resolved:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting concluded at 8.30pm.