

BURWELL MASTERPLAN WORKING PARTY MINUTES

Minutes of a Meeting held at Burwell & District Day Centre, Ash Grove, Burwell on Thursday 8th September 2011 at 7:30pm.

PRESENT

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

OTHERS

Shirley Blake – Principal Sustainability Development Officer
Sally Bonnett – Infrastructure & Projects Officer
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer

35 members of the public

12. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

A number of questions were submitted.

Mr B Garwood

“Why was the earlier meeting so poorly publicised?”

Councillor Pat Kilbey notified the Working Party that the meeting had been publicised in the Burwell Bulletin, twice.

Mr B Garwood

“How would a Plan cope with changing needs that are unforeseen?”

The Chairman accepted that everything could not be foreseen. The Plan would evolve and would be reviewed, as it was just a framework. Part of the Plan was a lengthy consultation process so everyone would get a chance to have their say. The Principal Sustainability Development Officer reminded the Working Party that the Plan was not a rigid blueprint but was a framework to assess different issues as they came up.

Mr R Donald

“Why is the relocation of the allotments not a question in the questionnaire?”

Mr Donald also stated that the questions being asked in the questionnaire were directed on asking for better facilities but there was no information about the consequences of the answers given. The questionnaire ought to have more of a warning statement regarding this.

The Chairman explained that the whole point of this exercise was to find out what the people wanted. Then the Council officers could work on a range of options based on this.

Maggie Church

“Why in the questionnaire are questions asked without informing us of what the consequences would be, e.g. ‘Yes’ to more shops means there would have to be more houses?”

This had been answered with the previous response.

Mr Coles

“In the public questionnaire (page 9 – 17.0) Burwell is referred to repeatedly as a town. This is clearly not the case and should be changed to village.”

“A bypass should be a requisite for any future development in Burwell. Nearly 70% of people living in East Cambs travel to work by car (census 2001). The impact of any significant number of new houses would increase traffic in other villages, as well as Burwell. There is already a severe restriction to the free flow of traffic through Stow-Cum-Quy, on B1102, due to traffic calming. Queues are already forming, causing additional traffic flow through the village of Bottisham. Most of the traffic flows to Cambridge and the A14 via Burwell.”

“The money that ECDC will receive from the developers of new houses in Burwell – will this be ring-fenced for the exclusive use for new amenities in Burwell?”

Councillor Hazel Williams affirmed that Councillors would try and ensure that the money would be used in Burwell. The Chairman assured the meeting that the bypass would be highlighted as an issue.

Mr Chris Stolberg

“The time to complete the consultation questionnaire needs to be longer. For those on holiday in September, a 10-11 day completion period is not long enough to give them the opportunity to complete it. I suggest extending the completion time by 7 days, i.e. to 7th October 2011.”

“What arrangements will be made to ensure that those who may have difficulty completing the form, e.g. the elderly or with learning difficulties, are offered support to help them complete the forms?”

“The ‘Wider Community Workshop’ scheduled for October 2011 with 20 invited attendees will comprise of whom, exactly? The last time this sort of exercise was arranged the output was clearly being led and proved highly contentious. What about using the focus groups that were suggested and agreed by the audience and Working Party respectively at the July meeting? Why not invite more people than 20 to participate in such a critical matter, say a number of people that represent 10% of households, e.g. 200 people in 4 group sessions of 50 per group? Ask for volunteers as one of the questions on the questionnaire and select from those who tick the box to volunteer.”

The Chairman declared that he wanted to stick with the timetable but would allow for late replies to be accepted. The bulk of replies would be received before the deadline but later responses would be taken on board. The Infrastructure & Projects Officer reminded the meeting that there would be continuous consultation throughout the process. If anyone needed help, such as large print or Braille, they could contact the Council and visits or events at the Day Centre could be used.

Mr Alan Kirk

“Traffic and employment in the village. There ought to be an aim to encourage local employment. It’s no good just building more houses. We are just a commuter village at the moment. A bypass isn’t the answer to reducing traffic. We don’t need to lose more farm and Greenfield land. If more people worked near to their homes it would reduce traffic and be more friendly for our environment.

We need to see the development of the remaining land at the old St. Regis cardboard factory for business and commerce, such as small business start up units and premises for more established businesses. This of course would require private initiative, but should be part of an overall plan.”

Mr B Coles

Minutes of the last Working Party –

“On page six – the Chairman’s request for any further comments – I asked a question. The last sentence I feel does not reflect my actual question. The question I asked was “When the successful Masterplans for Soham, Ely and Littleport were in the planning stage or at any time, was a traffic study carried out to see the impact of the increase traffic that would be generated by these new developments in relation to traffic travelling through Burwell?”

The Principal Sustainability Development Officer assumed that the County Council had completed a traffic assessment when the Fordham bypass had been done.

Various members of the public asked a number of questions and the following responses were given:

- The public questionnaire would be laid out properly as a 4-page pullout in the Burwell Bulletin.
- The questionnaires would be delivered to each household.
- The questionnaires would be used to flush out the issues being faced by the village and so were wide-ranging.
- The questionnaire had tried to pick up on the issues already coming forward.
- The responses would be analysed based on the percentage of answers and any related comments would be grouped together.
- There would plenty of other opportunities for people to tell the District Council what they wanted throughout the Masterplan development process.
- The District Council had no preconceived notions of what it considered was needed for Burwell and had approached the matter with an open mind.
- The questionnaires were part of the information gathering exercise.
- The Masterplan would not be based solely on the results of the questionnaires. The drop-in sessions and meetings with the focus groups would all help.

Different members of the public offered several comments, including:

- The questionnaire was vital but there was not enough time to revise the draft before it went into the Burwell Bulletin.
- The questionnaire also needed to include cross-referencing questions.
- The District Council needed to promote and protect Burwell.

13. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no apologies.

14. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

County Councillor David Brown declared a personal interest in the matters to be discussed, as he was both a County Councillor and District Councillor.

15. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the Burwell Masterplan Working Party meeting of 28 July 2011 be confirmed as a correct record, with the agreed amendments as suggested by Mr Coles, and be signed by the Chairman.

16. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that the next Masterplan Working Party meetings would be held on 3rd November and 6th December¹, both starting at 6:30pm in the new Mandeville Hall.

17. **BURWELL MASTERPLAN – DESKTOP RESEARCH RESULTS**

The Working Party considered a report, L97 previously circulated, which gave the results of the desk research that had been carried out.

The Infrastructure & Projects Officer had identified some of the key points that the Masterplan should consider. A note of caution was offered, as some of the data had come from the 2001 Census, and so was 10 years old, and some other information was still being awaited. A presentation was given and the following comments made:

- The sewage treatment works was at capacity.
- Burwell had a number of listed buildings, conservation areas, monuments and sites of special scientific interest.
- The capacity of the primary school was a concern.
- Improvements would be needed for cycling and pedestrian provision.
- A meeting had been arranged with Anglian Water to discuss water supply and quality.
- Burwell had seen the highest growth rate after Ely, Littleport and Soham.
- Its population, however, was ageing but with no overall growth in other age groups.
- Additional facilities similar to Ness Court would be needed.
- The majority of businesses in the village were small, though unemployment was comparatively low.
- Skills levels were high.
- Burwell had the potential to attract tourism.

¹ The second date had to be changed to 7th December subsequent to this meeting.

- There appeared to be no centre to the village.
- There were some areas of deprivation within the village.
- Secondary school provision was regarded as poor because it was located some distance from the village.
- The Council's Core Strategy had identified a capacity of 489 new dwellings in Burwell, 269 of which had already been built. This was being reviewed.
- From a previous consultation from 2008, 92% people were satisfied to live in Burwell although only 59.6% felt part of the community. This survey had been undertaken by the County Council and further information on the number of responses would be sought.

Members of the public asked a number of questions and the following comments were made:

- If the consultation showed that people thought there would be a need for more family housing this would be included in the Masterplan.
- Helping the growth of local business was very much the intention of the Masterplan as jobs would be needed alongside houses.

Councillor David Brown thought the questionnaire ought to define what the Council meant by 'affordable housing'. The Masterplan was intended to look some distance into the future so it would have to account for an ageing population.

18. **BURWELL MASTERPLAN – ISSUE STAGE PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROPOSALS**

The Committee considered a report, L98 previously circulated, which made proposals for the Burwell Masterplan issues stage consultation.

The Infrastructure & Projects Officer advised the Working Party that the public questionnaire would be published in the Burwell Bulletin on 17th September. The questionnaires could be returned either through collection boxes, using local 'champions' to collect them or could be filled in online. There would also be a 'drop in' session to allow people to discuss issues with Members and Council officers informally. Unmanned displays would also be arranged which would include posters with questionnaires and collection boxes. Council officers would meet various organisations, such as the County Council, Anglian Water and the National Trust, to get their views and plans for Burwell. Officers also wanted to engage with the young people at the College.

A number of comments from the public were received:

- Suffolk County Council should also be consulted.
- There should be scope to have one event in the Gardiner Memorial Hall plus one elsewhere, possibly the school or the Reading Room.
- There appeared to be a lot of urgency in the process but the Masterplan would be over a 20 year period. The deadlines set had to be achievable and only 10 days to return questionnaires was short.

The meeting then went through the draft questionnaire and the following comments and suggestions were made:

- The Masterplan would not necessarily be based on housing growth.
- The Council anticipated around 200 questionnaires to be sent back but it was hoped that more could be returned as a lot more were being distributed.

- The return rate would be helped if people spread the word.
- The returned questionnaires would be analysed to highlight the issues.
- If questions were put in the questionnaire then it should state how the options would be funded.
- The questionnaire was long so there should be a sentence to explain that not all the questions had to be answered.
- The questionnaire's general introduction should point out the implications of the various options and note that extra copies should be available.
- Question 1 – there was some duplication that would be corrected.
- Question 1 – the question about the village's entrances would be omitted.
- Question 1 – traffic congestion was caused by all vehicles not just lorries.
- Question 1 – perhaps traffic 'volumes' could be used instead of 'congestion'.
- A proper traffic survey should be undertaken.
- Question 1 – remove the question about Burwell becoming a town.
- Question 8 – the options listed should be taken out and people invited to list 3 ways to improve the village.
- Question 9 – would be removed.
- Question 13 – an explanation of what 'enhancement' meant was needed.
- Question 13 – would add 'or improvement' to clarify the question.
- Question 15 – should state which public transport provision was meant.
- Question 17 - the options listed should be taken out and people invited to list 3 ways to encourage more visitors to the village.
- Question 18 – should include a 'No' option.
- Question 19 – there were two 19s so renumbering was required.
- Question 20 - should include a 'No' option.
- Question 21 – should be removed, as it was not relevant.
- There should be a question about youth facilities.
- The questions also needed to cover families as well.
- Monitoring Information – this would be used to assess the overall profile of respondents to see whether it was representative of the village.
- People could get help at the 'drop in' session in filling out the questionnaires if needed.

The Principal Sustainability Development Officer proposed a question be included on the questionnaire for people to volunteer to take part in the focus groups. This was agreed.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the Working Party make comments on the draft Burwell Masterplan Issues Stage Community Questionnaire;
- (ii) That the draft community questionnaire be recommended for public consultation purposes, subject to the amendment as agreed;
- (iii) That the consultation approaches being proposed for the public consultation work be approved;
- (iv) That the Working Party should advise whether it should invite representatives of any of the key stakeholder organisations to a future meeting to discuss any particular issues in more depth.

8. **BURWELL MASTERPLAN WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee considered a report, L99 previously circulated, which noted the work programme for the Burwell Masterplan

The Principal Sustainable Development Officer explained to the Working Party that this would be a regular report to monitor progress with the work programme.

It was resolved:

That the work programme be noted.

The meeting concluded at 9.32pm.