

Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Advisory Committee

Tuesday 19th June 2018 7PM – Town Hall

SNPAC Present:

Keri Jones, Rachel Bodle, Brendan Fisher, Virginia Edwyn-Jones, Mick Hicks, Lee Hennessy, Stuart Edwards, Robin Miller, Tim Edwyn-Jones

Plus Councillor John Lewer and STC Business Manager, Brie Logan

& Steve Howard (guest speaker) and Bernard Ede (guest speaker and support to the Group).

Agenda

Apologies - none

Guest speaker on Traffic matters

Brie Logan introduced Steve Howard to the Group. Steve was until recently a Senior Traffic Engineer at Dorset County Council. Steve had some relevant facts to share with the group and this could be summarised as follows:

The A303 is the only Trunk road in Dorset and that is the responsibility of the Government Department for Transport. The remainder of the public network is the responsibility of DCC based in Dorchester. (Currently).

As an observation on the 2019 Unitary Authority, he thought that this might be more responsive and effective.

Steve was closely involved in the Town Centre Enhancement scheme which was rolled out about 9 years ago. Much of what he and others had recommended had been implemented but not all.

Building in ambiguity into the road hierarchy and priority was an important element in slowing down traffic and he observed that speed restrictions were not always the answer . The buzz words are "Home Zone" 11 policy.

Some of the signage and clutter on the streets and pavements is still there despite his recommendations. (the example of the BT exchange box outside the Listed St Peter 1 s Church a classic example).

Keri asked whether there was actually a problem to solve. Steve thought there was no substantial problem but suggested that if anyone thought there was, evidence needed to be brought to DCC and in general he thought they would engage with it and investigate.

If Public Realm improvements were suggested, these would be extremely expensive and unlikely to happen.

If there were Safety concerns, evidence would be needed. However, DCC would be looking at County-wide expenditure and schemes that had the most benefit for the most people would evidently have priority. The few potential users of a pedestrian crossing on Christy's Lane was used as an example and Brie highlighted the benchmark of data compared to say Weymouth. Dorsetfor you has Collision Data on line and probably other similar data of use. Cameras are in place along Christy's Lane collecting data for the safeguarded By-Pass proposal.

Virginia raised the question of whether a one-way system had any merit. Steve said that such a scheme had been considered during the Enhancement consultations but rejected as not a viable proposition. It created permanent changes to the character of the streets along the route and could fundamentally affect businesses along the routes. Traffic speed would also tend to increase leading to safety concerns. The traffic has to go somewhere and where does it go?

1Robin raised the point about illegal parking in the Narrows and Virginia suggested a traffic warden blitz and zero tolerance.

Concerns about the Narrows and safety should be directed to DCC and they may still investigate. Evidence building is of paramount importance.

Steve mentioned the cost of Traffic Regulation Orders for stopping up roads or temporary road closures. This took a minimum of 8 weeks, usually 9-11 weeks and cost around £2,000 for the order excluding the cost of the signs and the labour to put up/take down the signs.

Mick raised a query about the effect of the traffic generated by the major new housing schemes in Gillingham. Was this a problem? Yes was the answer and there is no immediate solution. (Although maintaining and increasing the parking amenities would be important in that respect).

Brendan asked how monies or liabilities arising under Section 106 could be ring fenced to deal with the traffic generated. The answer here was to build evidence for use in the Planning system and ensure that Traffic Consultants and Planning Consultants had a very high bar to clear when presenting their impact assessments and the data they were based on.

Steve was thanked for his time in answering the questions and delivering his thoughts on how Shaftesbury's traffic could be improved. We all wished him well on his cycle ride across the USA.

Landscape and other matters- Bernard Ede

1Bernard was on the previous Plan Group and had an a great deal of mapping data and evidence that can be used for the Plan.

The Town occupies a strategic position at the junction of the A30/A350 and several historic pathways surrounded by the Cranborne Chase and the AONB to the North and East.

It evolved from its core on the West side and is now growing off centre along the flatlands to the East.

There are strategic views that should be respected and it is a feature of the Town that there are "fingers" of green spaces and Coombes cutting right into the centre of the Town.

Reference made to the Fields In Trust Standards and the standards for accessible green space per 1,000 head of population (6 acres being the standard).

Not clear whether Counties can get together to agree that cross-county space counts in this standard.

Bernard mentioned that he was aware of some activity on the North East quadrant where landowners and agents were looking at the possibilities of development along the proposed by pass route (much of which would be in Wiltshire).

General questions....

Keri asked how we can influence matters in adjoining Counties (see Statement of Common Ground on Dorsetforyou).

Robin asked whether the 5 year housing provision rule trumps the sustainability of all this development and its effect on the Town and...How do you gather evidence that the Town cannot take further large scale housing without long term damage to its sustainability?

At the end of Bernard's session, all agreed that clear mapping was essential and it had to be capable of being reproduced clearly at A4. **All the group invited to contact Bernard to discuss their particular thoughts on mapping to see what was there already.**

Brie Logan and the importance of evidence

Brie attended a NP event at Reading University and shared with the group the key NP themes and key issues plus summary of research and the need to provide qualitative and quantitative primary evidence – note community surveys are classified as secondary evidence.

Although a very challenging read, we were all encouraged to read as much as possible of the draft book (only 112 pages so not too long....) about to be published on the science of Neighbourhood Plans (Brie was reporting to Full Council shortly on this and other subjects).

Importance of building in provision for 3-5 year reviews to keep up with changes with central planning legislation

Next month's meeting: Thursday 19th July at 7PM at the Town Hall – this will be dedicated to each group sharing their progress with the wider group

In advance of the next meeting please think about the following:

- What questions do we still want to ask the community and how do we engage further with hard to reach parts of the community?
- Make contact with Bernard and review his 'bank of evidence' and gather his vision as a subject matter expert.
- In the context of widening the feedback from the community, Steve Howard had mentioned DCC and the Mosaic data programme. (Brie will make contact with DCC)
- Engaging with Housing Associations to understand the Affordable Housing problem.
- Keri will set up a Google Doc account for us all to post relevant links and material.
- Agreed that we will all continue to work in the existing groups and Brie would fill in for Sue who had officially stepped back.