

Infrastructure Thematic Group Meeting

19th January 2011
14.00 Committee Room 2 &3, 52 Derby Street

MINUTES

Present

Ian Gill (Chair)	West Lancashire Borough Council – Planning Policy
Gillian Whitfield (Champion)	West Lancashire Borough Council – LDF Team
Neil Aindow	NHS Hospital Trust
Ian Cropper	West Lancashire Parish Council's
Steve Kent	WLBC Leisure
Gina Isherwood	WLBC Regeneration
Jane Cass	Public Health Specialist, NHS Central Lancashire
Cllr Iain Ashcroft	West Lancashire Borough Councillor
Tracey Jardine	LCC District partnership Officer
Greg Mitten	West Lancashire CVS

Apologies

David Oldham	Edge Hill University
Hugh Evans	Lancashire Chamber of Commerce

Action

1. **Apologies** – As above
2. **Welcome and introductions.**

Ian Gill welcomed all the members to the newly formed group then discussed the following;

- **Election of Chair** – IG advised that according to the LSP Constitution, it should be an elected member (or equivalent from another organisation) who chairs the thematic groups. However, a senior partner/officer may chair a group by agreement. All members agreed that Ian should continue as chair.
- **Membership** – IG advised that membership was not fixed and could change if we are successful in encouraging other stakeholders to participate.
- **Terms of Reference** – All members agreed the ToR.

IG pointed out that all of the above will be reported to the LSP Executive in February.

IG also gave an update on the progress of the Local Development Framework (LDF). He pointed out that over the past 12 months since the last consultation event, the team has been working on the evidence base to inform a “preferred option” for the Core Strategy. We are now in a position to identify 2 options for delivering development in the Borough over the period 2012-2027. Both options focus the majority of development on Skelmersdale in order to assist in the regeneration of the Town and due to the amount of available land there. In addition, both options include an area of search to the east of Edge Hill university in order to accommodate some expansion of the University for further teaching space and student accommodation.

The remaining development needs could then be met through either an allocation of housing and employment to the west of Burscough, or through smaller dispersed allocations to the north of Ormskirk, the west of Burscough and south of Banks. A third option not considered to a “preferred option” was also considered which included land to the east of Ormskirk. Whilst this is not a “preferred option”, comments will still be accepted. We are hoping to get authority to go out to consultation in May/June this year.

3. Purpose of the group.

GW gave an overview;

- As per the ToR but primarily to have an input into the infrastructure planning process.
- The LSP has a statutory duty to oversee planning and so this group can perform an important function of overseeing the latest requirement of the planning system.
- Focus of the group must be on achieving the main aims of the LSP, as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy particularly relating to the following;
 - **Good quality accessible services for all** – these tie into the provision of social infrastructure such as education, health, community services, leisure.
 - **Better environment** – green infrastructure provision such as allotments, play areas and outdoor sports facilities.
 - Some **cross cutting** themes such as – “**improved health**” which links in with both green and social infrastructure and “**economy and jobs**” which focuses more on physical infrastructure such as broadband and transport links.
 - Ultimately, the delivery of a robust **Infrastructure Delivery Plan** which has been shaped by and has the support of the group will assist in achieving these aims.

- Most useful way to bring together partners to share knowledge, discuss issues and resolve actions.
- Potentially a place to discuss capital programmes and funding of infrastructure through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), discussed later at item 5.

TJ advised that it would be useful to update our contacts for LCC due to the recent restructure and she could assist with this.

GW to follow this up.

IG also advised it would be useful to get an understanding of where loss of service has occurred so we can potentially factor these into CIL.

4. Infrastructure Planning

GW gave an overview of the infrastructure planning process;

- Over the past 12 – 18 months we have been liaising with infrastructure providers and establishing a reliable contact list (enclosure 1). During the early part of 2010 we met with the majority of the providers to discuss our emerging plans for development and growth although as a Preferred Option for development dispersal in the Borough has not yet been established (subject to forthcoming consultation period in May), these discussions have been very theoretical. As the Preferred Option becomes clearer we will be meeting with providers again to put more tangible plans to them in search of better quality information.
- To date, the quality of information received has been patchy. Most stakeholders have much shorter business plan periods which focus only on the next 3 – 5 years which makes long term planning uncertain. Also, very few partners have set standards, making it difficult for us to determine whether or not existing provision is below standard and requires improvement and what would need to happen in order to support new development.
- Main issues identified so far for the Borough include;
 - Waste water capacity – Ormskirk, Burscough and some outlying areas.
 - Road traffic congestion and highways capacity.

IC asked if infrastructure providers could just refuse to support our development and growth needs. IG pointed out that many, such as United Utilities, have a statutory obligation and therefore must maintain and upgrade the sewerage system to meet development needs. However, the main issue is that they will not invest or build speculatively as they are regulated. Therefore they cannot bid for funding until development is almost certain to happen or has already happened. However, we can not allocate development in our plan unless we can prove it is deliverable so we have a difficult “chicken and egg” situation. However, we are currently in discussion with United Utilities to try and resolve this and move forward.

5. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

GW gave an overview of CIL and distributed a handout (enclosure 2)

SK was concerned that play areas and open space may lose out as these will be seen as a lower priority to other types of infrastructure. IG agreed priorities would need to be set out. Cllr Ashcroft asked when CIL will be in Place. IG advised we are starting work on it now in terms of putting plans in place but we would need an adopted Core Strategy first so not until at least late 2012.

Cllr Ashcroft asked SK about the new open space group and who they report too. SK advised they are currently discussing and co-ordinating how Section 106 monies will be spent. Cllr Ashcroft asked if this could be monitored and fed back. SK agreed to put this to the group.

Steve Kent to check with S.106 group and feedback at next meeting.

IC was concerned that large providers may avoid expenditure and rely solely on CIL. GW advised that through the setting of CIL, providers would be required to input what funding streams they expect to deliver infrastructure requirements.

SK asked when CIL is payable. GW - upon commencement of development.

GM – The process of CIL and the Localism agenda is complex and likely to have major impacts. It is a good idea to start promoting the process now to key parties and communities to key people into what is happening in their locality and the bigger picture. IG agreed and felt that the challenge for neighbourhood planning is to ensure a wider perspective is maintained and it is key that we engage with communities on this. GM felt that we should be developing people's knowledge of CIL progressively as it is important.

JC advised that huge changes were happened within the NHS in general and it would be important to have the correct people around the table when discussing infrastructure requirements. Julie Williams and Debi Coyle are still in post although Julie's role is altered (District Nurses). The PCT rather than the NHS will be best placed to provide information about health issues.

IG suggested a meeting with all the health providers only would be appropriate to ensure it is more focused.

GW to organise.

NA pointed out that there are great changes for the trusts and £80billion will be going into GP Consortia. However, the Hospital Trust's (Ormskirk and Southport) main concern is the A570 and traffic stopping residents from getting to hospitals.

GM advised that the voluntary sector is also changing and facing challenges but in these changing times, community consultation is vital. It is important to deliver the message about infrastructure in a positive way in order to show what infrastructure is required and what the priorities will be.

IG advised that we are due to consult on our Core Strategy Preferred Options in May (subject to Cabinet approval) and we would welcome CVS input.

Councillor Ashcroft confirmed that decisions about certain priorities within the Council have already been made as we are looking at savings without jeopardising front line and statutory services. We believe the way forward is to work closely with other councils and particularly Lancashire County Council on a shared services basis. Restructuring will take place in order to create a fit for purpose business.

TJ concurred with the joint working at LCC who are looking at locality working. Meetings have taken place including infrastructure so feedback will be available. Also Community Asset Transfer could be relevant to this agenda.

TJ to feedback to the group.

IC questioned the potential level of CIL. GW advised she would review other levels in authorities proposing CIL and feedback.

GW to feedback to group.

IG advised a discussion has taken place with Merseyside regarding the potential of joint working on a possible shared methodology. This is ongoing.

SK was keen to see how CIL will impact contributions to Open Space as we are currently reliant on S.106.

6. Action Plan – Infrastructure Delivery Plan – Gill Whitfield

It is our intention that rather than produce actions for the sake of actions, the main out put of this group will be the delivery of the IDP so it has been well informed and guided by the LSP.

7. Exchange of information

No further updates

8. AOB

No further updates

9. Date and time of next meeting

To be circulated following the meeting.

GW