

NOTES OF THE IDEAS MEETING ON THURSDAY 12TH FEBRUARY 2015

Present: Charles Jolly, Deborah Byrne, Gerard Ryan, Helen Davison, Janet Miller, Jean Ball, Jean Todd, Joe Dugdale, John Estruch, John Fairbrother, John Phillips, Linda Baldry, Maureen Law, Mike Bryant, Pat Hobby, Roddie MacLean, Richard Silson, Simon Fussell, Tim Heap, Tina Heathcote, Will Crook

Apologies: Claire Millard, Dave Carlisle, Helen Haywood, Janine Morris, Karen Beresford, Marc Haywood, Mike Monaghan, Phillip Barton, Sue Mellor, Zena Bishop

Introductions: Dick Silson chaired the meeting, which started with a round of introductions.

1. NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The notes of the meeting on 12th January were passed as true record. The meeting was reminded that information on the Market Regeneration project is confidential to Town Team members until after the HPBC procurement process is complete.

2. FOCUS ON TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

2.1 Theory and Examples

Tim Heap now works for the University of Derby, but has a background in tourism and wide experience of designing traffic management schemes and talked about examples with lessons relevant to Buxton. In the North Pennines area they recognized that they needed to know where people were coming from and did a mass of research on volumes, distance, reason, frequency, numbers per car etc before deciding on the best approach. In Keswick the aim was to extract as much money out of visitors to the town as possible and then have them leave to make space for someone else - they used parking charges to encourage that behaviour. Most people only stayed 2 hours so they made the first 2 hours parking very cheap, and staying longer very expensive. People therefore tended to spend 2 hours in the town centre, then move to another car park further out of town, meaning two areas got the benefit from their visit, and maximizing footfall to shops and businesses. A one way system ensured this was easy for them to do. In Kingsbridge they installed a one way system that meant they could allow parking immediately outside the shops, which was free for up to 20 minutes, meaning footfall to the shops increased and the businesses became viable again. People hated the idea when it was first proposed but very soon decided they loved it.

A lot of older people use the bus to come to Buxton because it's free, but they spend money when they get here. Tim is not a fan of Shared Space, he would prefer to see more areas fully pedestrianized, though there are places where it seems to work.

Noted that DCC Highways have done traffic flow surveys for Buxton and it would be useful to see these.

Buxton is growing, major developments are taking place, and there are already junctions that don't operate efficiently, and a shortage of parking space. It was agreed that this is something we need to manage better.

2.2 Exercise and Discussion

The meeting divided into 5 groups each of which marked their ideas for improvement on a map of the town, and reported as follows:

Group 1: Primary aim to improve footfall along Main Street: a new multistorey car park on Market St (existing site plus HPBC depot next door); part of the car park behind Waitrose to be multistoreyed; a one way system from the Sylvan Park roundabout down the A6 to Morrisons, up Dale Road, up High Street and down Terrace Rd and the Quadrant, as far as the Station Rd roundabout; free short term parking spaces along this route; subsidiary 1 way system serving the Market Street car park (in from Clough St, exit onto Market St); The Crescent pedestrianized (access to the hotel only); shared space over Market Place and from bottom of Terrace Rd through the Quadrant.

Group 2: Extra parking on Market St using the HPBC depot; better use of the car park under the viaduct; park & ride scheme from parking area on Fairfield Common; one way system involving Dale Rd, West Rd and Burlington Rd to get traffic off the Market Place.

Group 3: Considered (1) who - visitors, workers, shoppers, theatregoers, through traffic and (2) problem areas - Fairfield Rd, 5 Ways Junction, Station Rd, workers parking in residential areas. Suggested additional parking at top of Palace Rd (old BT depot) and behind railway station (DB Schenker site) to be multistorey; encourage more use of season tickets; allocate parking for specific target users and adjust pricing structure accordingly; improved signage including capacity, space available etc; better phasing of traffic lights and pedestrian crossing lights.

Group 4: Focus on bringing back the 'retail spine' of Main Street and look at entry and exit points from that; one way system through the Crescent up Hall Bank and down High Street; redirect pedestrians from the railway station down towards the Cavendish (rather than Station Approach); use space behind the railway station (DB Schenker site) for additional parking; double deck car park area behind Waitrose.

Group 5: Looking for quick hits with the aim of increasing parking space: make Burlington Rd, Bath Rd and Park Rd one way with echelon parking on all of them.

Agreed the ideas will be considered in more detail and the topic brought back to the Ideas Meeting at a later date.

3 TOWN DEVELOPMENTS

3.1 Station Rd Planning Application

Dick reported that the Station Rd application has now been validated. He suspected that the missing information had been the impact assessments required by the redesignation of the area under new Local Plan, examination of which started today. The new designation (it was retail, is now housing and mixed use) is based on research finding that there is no requirement for additional supermarket floor space in Buxton. CPG could get planning permission in spite

of this if they can demonstrate no adverse impact on the vitality of the town centre (the Planning and Retail Statement) and that there is no alternative site (the Sequential Test).

Their planning & retail statement is based on the new supermarket competing primarily with Morrisons; because this is classed as an out of town supermarket this would be a 'good thing'. They present a mass of figures on 'trade diversion' concluding that the new supermarket would take £1.43 million a year from the town centre as a whole (of which £1.19 million from Waitrose), £5 million from Aldi and £13 million from Morrisons. They argue that these numbers are small compared to the totals, and that only Morrisons will suffer to any significant extent. The assumption is that supermarkets only compete with other supermarkets. It was noted that the application does not identify a particular supermarket as being interested in the site, as a profile they have used an average of Sainsburys, Tesco and Asda, which compares well with Morrisons.

Under the sequential test statement they argue that the Waitrose car park is not viable because they could not have car parking and the store at the same level, lifts or escalators apparently are unacceptable; the previous application for the site gave rise to objections from English Heritage and HPBC, so is clearly impossible; there are potential flooding issues; it would be very expensive compared to their 'box in a car park' proposal, therefore sub-optimal and financially unviable.

Both these statements need to be challenged, and the assumptions behind them checked out, but this is a major piece of work; we need to put pressure on HPBC to ensure that it is done.

Whether or not there is demand for a new supermarket is irrelevant because their proposal is based on transferring business within the existing spend. Competition in planning terms is assumed to be good.

The traffic study is also highly questionable, there are pages of calculations but their conclusion is that so long as they widen the entrance to the site there will be no problems. Again, to challenge this is a major piece of work, and it is unlikely that DCC Highways will be keen to do it. Regarding pedestrian connectivity, they have only considered this within their own site, claiming improvements there. The assumption is that the existing pedestrian crossings will be used, with no additions, let alone a bridge over Station Rd.

Quality of design is also a major issue with regard to the policies on heritage and enhancing the public realm.

If people want to object as individuals it would be useful to request that HPBC commission an independent study to assess the impact on the rest of the town centre, and that DCC commission a study on the traffic impacts, on the basis that the conclusions in the application do not seem plausible. They could refer as a major concern to the impact on independent stores, both as existing and with regard to the potential for new businesses to develop.

Responses have to be in by 26th February. Those present were unanimous in calling on the directors of the Town Team to submit a response objecting to the proposals. Noted that as well as the reservations outlined above, expanding the retail area beyond 'Main Street' is counter to the Town Team vision for the town.

Suggestions as to a more appropriate use of the site, be that leisure facilities, theme park or whatever, are irrelevant until Nestle become convinced that a supermarket development is out of the question; until then they will not be willing to consider alternatives. Noted that the council has previously tried very hard to persuade cinema operators to come to Buxton but none have been interested, the population is too small.

See Appendix for copies of the slides used.

3.2 Crescent Development

Noted that the £2 million funding from the Local Enterprise Partnership has been confirmed.

4. PROJECTS

4.1 Walking & Litter Picking Group

The original date was called off because of thick snow, the walk will take place on Sunday 15th February instead.

4.2 Buxton Spring Fair 2015

Applications are now open, members are asked to help spread the word and encourage participation.

4.3 2020 Vision: The Buxton Conference

Planning is at an advanced stage, we anticipate around 100 delegates with 20 speakers. A full report will be available after the conference, for organisations to share with their members.

4.4 Welcome to Buxton Station

Friends of Buxton Station have held their AGM and elected new officers, they have been awarded funding from the Bingham Trust, HPBC councillors' initiative and the Community Rail Partnership, and they are formally asking Northern Rail and Network Rail for their support. They have made contact with DB Schenker who are allowing us to litter pick on their site, and they have a team of students from Buxton College ready to assist with art work.

5. FUTURE I&V MEETINGS

The next meeting will be on:

Wednesday 11th March at 7:30pm in the Buckingham Hotel.

JCMM 14Feb15