

Rural Services Network  
**Localism & Planning Seminar**  
Group Discussion Notes

16 July 2013

Shropshire Council

# Group Discussion Notes – AM

The morning presentations considered:

- How communities can ‘do more for themselves’ and understand their capacity and needs not ‘wants’ or ‘likes’; and
- If/how Neighbourhood Planning is being used to bring communities together and take control over the look and feel of new developments in their area.

# Ivan's Group

## Y \* Engagement techniques

Importance of the role of the member. Important to go to the places where people are. Talking to "people in the street."

\* Attitudinal shift drives some of the most effective approaches - effects is rhetoric?

\* Right to the heart of people - Community organisers as an example.

\* Herefordshire Council strong w/ plan "Top down" think.

\* RCC (Cheshire) Neighborhood  
Planning may have emasculated other  
previous good things (Parish Plans)  
Governance important and sometimes  
neglected. Unitary authority agendas  
- Council led in some areas.

\* Community led plan — helps avoid  
a monochrome view by communities  
→ consultation needs to encourage an open  
based conversation

\* Community led Local Development  
important

\* Sustainability of effort linked  
to locality planning

\* Parish Plans vs N Plans

↓  
Voluntary

↓  
Statutory  
Referendum  
Inspector

\* Community led - Parish Plans can  
positively influence policy

\* Engagement driven by  
active community engagement

# Jane's Group

## LPA Supporting Role

AM

- Approach Skill top down in some cases
- Perceived as 'off loading' cost to local people
- Need to be aware of resources of local people i.e. time, often volunteers.
- Support need to be 'enabling' not threatening i.e. if you don't do something, service will be withdrawn.
- Can't be left to parish clerk / councils
- Need to understand capacity
- Parish Council have a perceived knowledge, but actually may not have 'real' knowledge
- Is the voice heard, the loudest or numerical  
- 'those that shout loudest get heard'
- The process of NP allows you to identify needs, that may not have known about previously

## Bringing Communities together

- use expertise to help communities make decision rather than expertise making decision
- allows communities to decide housing 'type' - e.g. need for bungalows
- Viability argument from developers can limit the amount of 'say' on what is needed on sites  
→ difficult to understand viability issues, Land values etc.
- Issue of understanding 'Long term vision' for areas
- form Project boards → good communication, involves all stakeholders
- NP can be too personal - can be hard to get 'Pro development' outlook at this scale
- Need to engage with members of community who are pro development, as well as those 'NIMBY's'

# Jessica's Group

- ## Neighbourhood Planning
- the N.P. needs to be flexible + not set in stone  
e.g. Ellesmere example - capacity
  - the N.P. will depend to a great extent on the Core Strategy of the local authority in that area, e.g. could be old (concurred with)
  - Parish Council point - SAMDev not signed off, causes issues when trying to make decisions
  - sometimes the process itself is more useful than the N.P.: AND to convert it into a N.P. would be expensive
  - sometimes parish plan sufficient - horses for courses. Sometimes a N.P. would be needed.
  - (Neen Savage) - SAMDev change - created a shopping list for developers  
e.g. industrial estate  
e.g. 19 chalets. Feels like good work of community + of Parish Council ends up nowhere because things go to committee anyway.



(12)

- Baschurch - objection by Parish Council about affordable housing - ended up looking like idiots when the Planning Committee voted instead for something else.

- the public don't understand about how this all works.

- sometimes conflict between:

- a) members and officers

- b) national planning policies and local as one large block might not be in place

- Wyre Forest: 2 N.P.s; got an adopted Core Strategy; worked with local parish on definition of local need - focuses on evidence. Be need flexibility.

- duty to co-operate implications.

- Wfordshire - try to engage ALL aspects of the community eg. one part of community wouldn't want affordable housing and one wouldn't.

- (Wiltshire)
  - derelict garages - intent to build two affordable houses - but some of the garages still nicely kept - so found the solution of different piece of land
- (Near Savage) - planning officers have been 'fantastic' - a point of clarity - concurred with by Ford + Gt Hanwood.
- (Hampshire) - point about timescales for review as a 20yr plan would need to be revised. Could be new costs and new efforts for everyone and the community having to go through it all again.
- without localism wouldnt even have been able to proceed this far in N.P. process.

Reflections from  
this morning!

Jessica  
Group.

- when can locality commissioning as per Church Streeten be rolled out to smaller communities.
- whole of Shropshire County needs to be aware of these projects (Mike H. - next wave includes Oswestry and Wem)
- request for newsletters please.
- engaging ward councillors is key (Mike Hyatt) (response to a query from East Riding)
- (Beauchamp) If you don't like it, get involved!
- (Nolan Savage) Got 81% of community involved.

# Group Discussion Notes – PM

The afternoon presentations covered:

- 1) Examples of partnership working between public, private and voluntary sectors in mobilising communities – including what works well and less well.
- 2) Where next for localism and planning? Some emerging issues over the next 3-5 years.

# Ivan's Group

Ivan PM ①

Green belt — positive aspects  
of regional planning. Development  
"battle zone"

Out of date infrastructure —  
needs concentration and planning  
gain?

Local one size doesn't fit all solutions  
work in smaller communities

Green belt very limited coverage ex  
England

National Park + AONB impact on sustainable  
communities

2  
Impact of large development on  
Modest places. Unpleasant  
"identikit" housing blights some  
places

Scope for design in N Plans —  
this is being encouraged in some places.

Land bank issues important in terms  
of regulation of developers.

Growth trumps Localism?

Scale in rural areas leads to challenging  
community concepts in some places  
Urban areas are also diverse

3

Perhaps we focus too much on  
Planning

New towns no longer in "Vague"  
- Gaydon. MoD sites

# Jane's Group

- ✓ Community Transport → LA & Parish Council provided bus service to Hospital - existing route didn't go there, by Albrighton Flyer
- Meds on Wheels → N Scrap, made in school kitchen - helps to keep kitchen in school as well as providing service for elderly
- Library → Parish Council took over & hold parish meetings there as well
  - done well, by training members of community to run library → needed the support from LA
- Youth Services provision → support & training in children safeguarding is required
- Can share resources across parishes / communities
- Corporate responsibility → lead to companies giving work experience opportunities, expertise / skills & materials
- Housing Associations - good at bringing partnerships together
- Issue with private / corporate partnerships → Communities / PC may feel obligated to support future applications for site → need to make it clear that there is no obligation & private sector is invited as they are part of community



- 2/- how CIL works, as potential funding scheme
- affordable housing provision - lack of funding / grants
  - more cross-subsidy models need to be developed
  - requirement to diversify housing stock - provide smaller properties.

# Jessica's Group

## Partnership Working Examples

- affordable warmth  
BUT depends a lot on the officer involved (East Riding)  
AND creativity and leadership
- Local Playground at  
Baschurch - raised 70k in a  
year - SITA Funding. Very  
difficult for small projects - finding  
the way in, and finding the right  
~~projects~~<sup>sponsor</sup>, and using your local Member  
and putting a team together.
- Community Interest Company - eg of  
Ellesmere Market Hall - and of  
quality officers @ eg of Ellesmere Rangers.  
!! team <sup>Tom and</sup> ~~write~~ the lease to get £ from the A.A.

## Partnership Working (cont.)

(2)

- Community Action Team officers e.g. Corrie Davies Baschurch including as signposts to funding.
- Herefordshire Project Development Team - help or e.g. funds - 2 ~~members~~ officers + a link with voluntary sector
- Role of the local elected members e.g. help with getting allotments land and of the parish council as the legal entity. Now get 60 plots. And role of community activist residents.
- Need a good team

## Emerging issues in

### planning over next 3 years

- When the planning committee goes on a site visit, it would be constructive and helpful if a parish councillor can be there to speak as well as observe.

\* A worry. Parish Councils. Not

getting enough people to stand

for election. People get put off by

- work involved and responsibilities
- a worry: Merging of parish councils.

\* common  
agreement

Councillors should attend seminars i.e. training should be a compulsory element. Can't afford for a cllr to just sit in corner.

- (Hampshire) Parish councillors are unpaid volunteers and you have to build things around this fact.

- Need a decent precept and a decent quality clerk - will give you all confidence. Clerk is the permanent person

- People can behave irresponsibly because they do not feel accountable for their decisions.