

Transport: What are the issues?

On 30th JULY 2014 over 60 Kington residents met to discuss transport issues and how these might be reflected in Neighbourhood Plan Policies.

A note of the meeting is below.

NDP Policy Highlights

The Need to Sustain Planning Conditions

There are clear policies in the Core Strategy relating to transport and access planning conditions for new development. It is expected that the NDP will re-emphasise the need for all development to comply with these essential conditions. Proposals will be expected to show that there is adequate and safe pedestrian provision (including disabled provision) to and from sites and other parts of the community; adequate parking provision for residential and commercial developments, an assessment of public transport needs and a comprehensive assessment of potential traffic generation.

Resource Needs: The Community Infrastructure Levy

If there are additional 200 residences and new related employment provision in Kington this will have impact across the community and not just immediate to the development site.

Kington faces a range of existing transport and traffic problems which could/will be exacerbated by additional development and we will need to consider if and how the NDP can address these issues.

A central issue is one of resources. The Community Infrastructure Levy is a charge on new housing development (Set at £100 per sq. metre in Zone 3 where the Kington Area is located) to provide infrastructure to maximise community benefit. It can be used for a range of facilities including transport and can be used for existing problems if these are likely "to be made more severe by new development". 25% of this charge will come to the partner councils the remainder will be disbursed by Hereford Council but also be expended in the Kington area.

In relation to the Spending by both Authorities it would be prudent for the NDP to contain policies about appropriate spending strategies for the levy.

Making the High Street safer for pedestrians.

The need to create greater pedestrian security in the High Street has been a significant concern over many years. In 1999, a detailed proposal for redesign of the road surface to give pedestrians primacy was prepared and bids for funding made. The issue was raised in the KLAP survey and a large majority of residents supported proposals which would increase safety and make use of our retail centre a more positive experience. Hereford's Core Strategy also provide in principle support. "The principle of shared spaces will be encouraged on Kington High Street in accordance with Policy MT1"

In these circumstances the Plan Steering committee intends to consult further on detailed proposals that will inform a clear policy commitment to deal with the problem as early as possible during the plan period. This in itself will not guarantee funding but would provide a clear framework to stimulate implementation.

Should we highlight other transport problems and opportunities?

As the meeting note shows, many other issues were discussed including the need to reduce traffic speeds within the town and on the by-pass, making better disabled provision, the need for footpaths on both the by-pass and Hergest Road towards Arrow view, declining public transport provision and parking provision.

These and other issues are of considerable importance and the Plan Steering Committee is considering how they might be included in the plan to stimulate resolution.

We need Your Views on these and any other transport and access issues.

NOTES FROM TRANSPORT CONSULTATION MEETING

Bob Widdowson outlined some of the issues that had been highlighted in the Kington Local Area Plan (KLAP). These issues included:

- Contested space in the town centre and options that had previously been explored (maps were available showing the various options)
- Parking
- Disability access including dropped curbs and ramps
- Speeds both within the town and on the by-pass
- Pavements and pedestrian paths (poor state of, and where needed, including on Hergest Road and the by-pass)
- Bus services

1. Town Centre Options

All of the options put forward during the KLAP process received some support, but it was clear that the option of shared surfaces/space was not fully understood. It was noted that shared space had the advantage of slowing traffic right down – however, to undertake this approach fully would require substantial capital investment which is unlikely to be forthcoming. It was noted that Kington had twice before applied for funds to undertake this work and had been unsuccessful on both occasions (Single Regeneration Budget and Market Towns Initiative).

It was suggested that perceptions need to be changed – at present it is the cars that “own” the space and this need to change to be space that is shared with pedestrians.

The means of raising funds to undertake a shared space approach were discussed, including whether the new Community Infrastructure Levy could be used. It was pointed out that only a relatively small percentage of this would come to Kington (25% if there is an approved Neighbourhood Plan) with the bulk of the money going to fund roads around Hereford. It was also noted that the roads in Kington belong to Herefordshire Council and therefore Kington has no rights over the roads.

It was suggested that other indicators could be used, in the absence of funds for a complete scheme, which would include removing pavements and redoing the road surface. These other indicators could include using colour at various points, marking the surface differently at the points where the old back lanes meet the High Street etc. Pinch points to slow traffic down (such as are created by parked cars in the High Street currently) were also noted. Other options such as making Duke Street one-way with Market Hall Street were also suggested.

It was noted that speed bumps would be inappropriate, due to the noise generated by them and that they are disliked by emergency vehicles such as ambulances.

It was suggested that the as the plan will have a life of 15 years or more, we should be aspirational – however this should be tempered with realism or there is a major risk that the plan will be rejected by the Inspector.

One key point was that no further housing should be considered which will lead to more traffic needing to access on to the High Street or Duke Street from the developments.

Pedestrianisation was noted as a possible answer, which would also meet the needs of people living with disabilities. The issue of delivery vehicles was noted – possibility of bollarded (rising bollards) access to the High Street (but question of who would control the access for deliveries – emergency services only would have the keys). Buses could have access. There do not appear to be problems of large vehicles (e.g. the Co-op lorry) negotiating the turn at the bottom of Church Street.

It was pointed out that any changes of this kind would require a traffic control order and these can be difficult to obtain.

To deal with large vehicles, a depot at Hatton Gardens was suggested where goods could be off-loaded onto smaller vans. The issue of who would pay for this was raised.

Pavements: it was noted that the pavement on the south side of the High Street is in a poor state of repair and was not re-laid properly. it was noted that if the pavements need to be re-laid, they could be removed – though most likely removal of pavements would require the road surface to be raised to remove them. Question of cellars under the High Street, noted.

The maps of the possible options will be displayed in the Market Hall for further comments.

2. Speed limits

As part of the High Street considerations, the speed limits on other roads in the town should be lowered. In particular, speeding in Victoria Road was noted and the possibility of pinch points there to slow traffic down was mentioned. There was a consensus that '20 is plenty' would be good for the town, with 10 mph in the High Street. 20 mph as a speed limit should apply from all access points to the town. Notices and signs to make Kington a 'slow town' should be considered. Speed also generates noise. "Whisper" surfaces should also be considered for all of the town's roads and the by-pass.

Speed limits lower than the current level should also be set for the by-pass from before the Doctor's surgery up to beyond Floodgates.

3. New Developments

All new developments outside of the town centre should have parking spaces included. New houses should include storage space for bikes. The issue of parking areas being designated as children's play areas, as has occurred before with a new development in the town was noted and this should be unacceptable. Space should be allocated for both uses separately.

4. Buses

At the time of the meeting confirmation about changes to bus services was awaited. There was extreme concern about the loss of services and how important these are for young people, older people, to get to work, to get to leisure activities. The loss of evening services to and from Kington to Hereford was particularly noted. It was noted that Kington Rural, Lower Harpton and Huntington do not have access to public transport.

Design of bus shelters was noted – to try to ensure a good passenger experience and to make travelling by public transport a better option.

5. Car Parks

Need more cycle racks to encourage bike usage. Bike racks could also be associated with bus shelters. There is a real need to ensure sufficient car parking space, for residents of the town centre who use the car parks, for tourists and for shoppers.

6. Cycle Tracks

Safe cycle tracks are needed. These tracks should be separate and not just painted lines on the roads. A cycle track is needed between the two roundabouts.

7. Disability Access

Dropped kerbs are important. More feedback is needed on what the current problems are and where they are needed. It was noted that older people are often frightened of walking into town, due to the state and narrowness of the pavements..

8. Other issues

The possibility of a **car club** was noted and this was also linked to the fact that Kington now has an electric car charging point. Specific parking could be reserved for car club/car sharing schemes.

Widening of roads – it was suggested that the road between Kington and Huntington should be widened or more passing places provided. A participants from Huntington did however note that Huntington residents might not welcome increased access to the village.

There is also no footpath on this road from Arrow View into the town.

Use of Section 106 monies – could this be used to deal with some of the issues in the High Street? Unlikely as this money is allocated for improvements that are directly needed as a result of the developments to which the S 106 funds are attached.