



Neighbourhood Development Plan

Vision and Aims presented at Roadshows

A second series of Roadshows, marking the mid-point of work on the Neighbourhood Development Plan, were held at Aston, Maer and Whitmore village halls in March. Thank you to all who participated. At each Roadshow handouts with the Vision, Aims and Policy Themes and discussion points were placed on the chairs for participants to pick up and read as they arrived, and to take home after the event. There was also a display of charts showing the Questionnaire results, maps of the three parishes and the Neighbourhood Map.

All parts of the Neighbourhood Area were represented, with participants from Aston, Weymouth, Blackbrook, Maer, Chapel Chorlton, Hill Chorlton, Chorlton Moss, Woodside, Sandy Lane, Madeley Park Wood, Baldwins Gate, Whitmore, Acton and Butterton.

Each Roadshow opened with a presentation on progress to date. This was followed by lively discussions and time to view and talk about the displays. At the Whitmore Roadshow participants expressed their support for the Vision for the Plan with a warm commendation of the Steering Group for its work and a job 'well done', and a heart-warming round of applause.

Building the foundations

Much of the work to date has focused gathering evidence that will form a foundation for the Plan. This includes Rural Place Profiles for the three parishes, a Housing Needs Assessment, a Heritage and Character Assessment (both done by consultants as government-funded technical support), a residents' survey (the Questionnaire), and wildlife habitat surveys with support from Staffordshire Wildlife Trust. The Vision, Aims and Policy Themes that were presented at the Roadshows were drawn up on the basis of this evidence.

In other work the Steering Group has also responded to two consultations by the Borough on the Joint Local Plan, the first one on Joint Local Plan issues and the second on open space and green infrastructure.

The bulk of our evidence collecting is now complete. We are now receiving technical assistance to create new village design statements for the Neighbourhood Area. There is also some further work to do on heritage, wildlife habitats, assessment of local green space, and services.

Although the primary purpose of the evidence base is to support the Plan, the Steering Group was able to use it recently to support some very robust comments on the Bellway Homes planning application.

The Plan will now enter a new stage: policy drafting. Because it is important for the policies to be watertight we have engaged a consultant who is highly experienced in Neighbourhood Planning to help with this work.

Developing the Neighbourhood

The Roadshow discussions produced some new ideas for development of the Neighbourhood that were very well received. First was a suggestion to use the village halls

during working hours as local enterprise centres with hotdesking facilities. Both Aston and Maer village halls are attractive places where a pleasant working environment could be created. This could be ideal for home-workers who would prefer to work away from their home and to have some contact with others who are also running small businesses.

Does this interest **you**? Please contact us, we need to hear from you.

We'd also like to hear from you if you would be interested in a permanent local enterprise centre with facilities for small businesses, and from anyone who has a suitable site or a building that could be converted for such a use.

Discussion of our area's need for smaller dwellings produced a second idea: perhaps the time has come to divide some of the larger houses into smaller units. This would create housing attractive to younger people and where they could afford to live. It could help people who have grown up here to stay and find work or set up business locally, and it could help others who work here to live locally rather than commuting in as they do at present.

Protecting green space

At Maer participants talked about local green space and the wide verges along the A51 and the semi-circle of grass in front of The Croft at Blackbrook. The verges are important for several reasons, not least because they offer safety to pedestrians on the A51, which links many important lanes and footpaths – not just in Maer parish, but all the way to Stableford.

If you know a green space that you think needs protection, whether for community use, wildlife or to preserve local character, please let us know.

Read about it. Tell us about it.

Read more about the Roadshows by visiting the website and clicking on the 'Latest News' tab. To learn more about the Plan, visit the website generally. If you have an idea or know of a need or issue that the Plan should consider, please contact the Steering Group.

Are there ideas or issues that you would like to discuss?
Please contact the Steering Group!

Visit the website: www.cmaw-neighbourhoodplan.org.uk

Email us: cmaw-neighbourhoodplan@hotmail.com

**Are you on the Neighbourhood Plan email list?
To join the list, send us an email!**

