

A Neighbourhood Development Plan for our Parishes

A **real** opportunity for residents to have a say in how our area develops

Whitmore, Chapel & Hill Chorlton and Maer & Aston Parish Councils have decided to work together to create a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the three parishes.

As we all know, we have faced a variety of unwelcome and inappropriate development proposals in recent times. Worryingly, Newcastle Borough Council's Planning Officers did not support us (as opposed to the Borough Planning Committee, which very much did). The borough has not listened to the local community, who have a far deeper knowledge of the locality than the planners in town, and who are the most important stakeholders. This has made it very difficult for the neighbourhood to defend itself.

It is time for the community to take a stand! A Neighbourhood Development Plan will give us a **real opportunity** to influence future development in the area. Unlike the Parish Plans, Village Design Statements, and other exercises that have been carried out in the past, Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) have **legal standing** in the planning system. In other words, once the NDP has been adopted it becomes part of the Local Plan and it must be referred to and guide decision making on planning applications and planning appeals.

An NDP is about the use of land and the social, economic, and environmental development of the area that it covers. An important element of the NDP is to identify where housing should be built, what kind of housing, the amount, and its design. Other topics for an NDP include local shops and services, transport issues, development of local businesses and employment, local green space and playing fields, community/environmental projects such as allotments, nature reserves, etc.

An essential aspect of the NDP process is to involve the community. Community involvement must be clearly demonstrated when the NDP is submitted for examination by a planning inspector. The final stage of the process is the Local Referendum, when the local community get to vote on the NDP.

By the time you read this we hope to have a steering group in place to guide the NDP process. The first stages of the work will be to register the NDP area with the borough council and make a project plan and budget so that we can apply for grant funding. After that ... let the community involvement begin!

The success of our NDP – **your** NDP – will depend very much on participation by the local community. There is essential preparatory work to be done, but we hope consultation with the community can begin in a few months' time. Please watch the Newsletter, Whitmore Parish Council's Twitter feed @WhitmoreParishC, and noticeboards for further information as it becomes available. And if you feel that you have a contribution to make to this important project, then please make yourself known to one of your parish councillors or a member of the Neighbourhood Plan team.