

A Neighbourhood Plan Roadshow near You

The Neighbourhood Development Plan Group has been holding a series of Roadshows in November and December, at the Madonna Club, Aston Village Hall, Maer Village Hall, Butterson Church and Whitmore Village Hall, to bring information about the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) to the community. By the time you read this, you may have already participated in a Roadshow.

Early in 2016, we will be inviting the entire community to participate in a survey. The NDP is a rare opportunity for all of us to contribute to shaping the development of our neighbourhood. The more we all participate and contribute, the surer we can be of creating a Plan that will take us along the right path.

Although identifying and planning for our community's future housing needs will be part of the Plan, it is about a great deal more than that. It is also about how land is to be used in our Neighbourhood Area for services, employment and jobs, transport and communications, leisure and recreation, and it is about how to create a sustainable community, economy and environment.

What is a sustainable community? How well and for how long could our community survive (that is, sustain itself) if it were cut off from the surrounding area? Your answer to that question is the measure of our community's sustainability today. We need to plan for a community that is less dependent on the outside and more self-sustaining.

Do we have enough of the right kinds of local services and businesses? Should we try to create more jobs locally? What will commuting look like in the future, and will our community be less commuter based? What developments are needed in our telecommunications network to enable local services, businesses and home workers to function successfully?

What kind of a transport system do we need and to what places should it take us? If Whitmore Station were reopened and the North Staffordshire Railway line were restored how would we use them and what opportunities would they open up?

In an increasingly hi-tech world, what will future patterns of work and leisure be and how will we spend our leisure time? What sport and recreation facilities will we need, and what leisure and

recreation facilities can our area offer to the urban population on our doorstep?

Important parts of our area's historical heritage are hidden and inaccessible. How can we protect both these and our green environment and local habitats, and at the same time make them accessible and incorporate them into the local economy? How can we assure that new generations of trees will be planted to take the place of existing trees and woodlands as they age and decay?

These are just a few of the great many questions that our community faces today. The Neighbourhood Plan Group hopes that through the widest possible participation by the local community in voicing their wants and needs, views and opinions, hopes and plans, it will be possible to identify answers that will be right for our Neighbourhood Area and our community.

Change is coming, because change is a constant and continual reality in the world. How much in our Neighbourhood Area today would be recognisable to the community that lived here 200 or 100 years ago? Our Neighbourhood Area is set to change just as much in the next 100 and 200 years, but we can all contribute to starting that change and making it one that we believe will be right for the locality and for future generations that will live and work here.