



## Neighbourhood Development Plan Nearly there!

*Reprinted from Whitmore Parish Council newsletter, Autumn 2018*

The Neighbourhood Development Plan has now entered the final stages that will lead up to the Local Referendum.

There was an excellent level of participation in the Local Consultation that ended on 31 July and the policies of the Draft Plan received a very high level of support. Taken together, these policies will deliver the overall aim of the Plan, which is to protect the rural character of the Neighbourhood Area while allowing for appropriate development. "Development", in this context, means new development, extensions to existing buildings, replacement dwellings, and adaptation of old or disused buildings to new uses.

A theme that emerged strongly from comments received was the need for bungalows and other house types suitable for the needs of older members of our local community. This simply reinforces a need that was expressed 2 years ago in the Residents' Survey and that was also identified in the Housing Need Assessment.

### **Positive comment**

Comments were also received from a number of statutory and other consultees, including the Borough Council, the County Council, and Historic England. We are pleased that the Plan has received very positive and supportive comment from these bodies. The Borough Council noted that "a great deal of community engagement and consultation has taken place and this has in turn shaped the vision for the community".

The Borough Council also commented that the Plan "is forward-looking and open to changes as community needs develop yet it seeks to retain many of the rural characteristics and heritage that are valued by established long-time and new residents. ... It demonstrates a desire to increase and improve the range of current community infrastructure and social facilities, particularly for leisure and recreation to promote active lifestyles and healthy communities across all ages. ... This Plan forges a vision from and for the community that preserves its rural heritage yet offers opportunities for future change."

The County Council commented that "an excellent evidence base" has been used on the ecology of the area and that "the objectives for key habitats, including peatland, woodland and meadows are welcomed". The County Council also made some helpful suggestions for assuring appropriate design when converting historic farmstead buildings to new uses and for assuring the protection of landscape character.

Historic England's comments include: "The emphasis on the conservation of local distinctiveness through good design and the protection of heritage assets, local green space and important views, along with landscape character is to be applauded." Their comments conclude: "We consider that an exemplary approach is taken to the historic environment of the Parishes and that the Plan constitutes a very good example of community led planning."

### **Guided by local input**

The Neighbourhood Plan has been guided throughout by input from the community which told us a number of important things:

- (1) how the community relates to the Neighbourhood Area and what it values about the character of the area;
- (2) what the community values about existing facilities and what improvements or additions are needed;

- (3) the community's perceptions about housing needs and appropriate sizes for housing developments;
- (4) what can stay the same and what needs to change for the better;
- (5) how the community would like the Neighbourhood Area to develop generally during the coming years.

As a community we can all take pride and satisfaction from the positive comment that the Plan has received so far.

### **Getting to grips with the Plan**

The Plan may seem a little complicated, and to a large extent this cannot be avoided. The Plan will be used for decision making on all new development in the Neighbourhood Area and will have legal status in the planning system. The vision and aims of the Plan will be achieved through the application of policies, and the policies need to be supported by evidence. The chart in the consultation booklet distributed to all households in June shows how each policy will contribute to achieving the aims of the Plan.

Working on the Neighbourhood Plan has been an interesting and challenging process for the Steering Group members. We have learned things about the Neighbourhood Area that we did not know before and have come to look at it in a new way.

The text of the Draft Plan remains accessible on the website and in due course the updated Plan will become available. If you have not read it or dipped into it yet, we encourage you to do so.

### **Next steps**

August has been spent updating and revising the Plan on the basis of the consultation responses. In view of the updates and revisions it is necessary to repeat the Local Consultation. After the consultation on the revised Draft Neighbourhood Plan, the Plan will be submitted to the three Parish Councils, who will then submit it to the Borough Council. The Borough Council will then take the Plan through the remaining legal processes. These will consist of:

- (1) a further 6-week period of consultation;
- (2) examination by an Independent Examiner; and
- (3) the Local Referendum.

If 50% or more of those who vote in the referendum vote "yes", the Plan will be "made". It will then have legal weight and will become part of the Borough Council's official policy to guide planning decisions in our three parishes.

**It's your neighbourhood – please support the Plan!**  
**Please turn out to vote in the Local Referendum**  
**Visit the website: [www.cmaw-neighbourhoodplan.org.uk](http://www.cmaw-neighbourhoodplan.org.uk)**  
**Email us: [cmaw-neighbourhoodplan@hotmail.com](mailto:cmaw-neighbourhoodplan@hotmail.com)**  
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