

Neighbourhood Planning Meeting 7.1.19

Emma thanked everybody for attending and introduced the Steering Group.

Emma Kearsey – Chair, Jenny Westmacott (Parish Councillor), Charlie McKenna, Megan Griffiths, Alan Griffiths, Nic Clutterbuck, Paddy Ralph, Chris Devereaux-Little (Parish Councillor), Sue Morris (Parish Councillor), Ben Harrison, Kim Purvis, Cheryl Pope, Mike Parker

Present – Donna Bowles & approx 70 members of the public

Purpose of the Neighbourhood Plan

This has come about as WDC have put out a call for sites for housing in the Wychavon area. Emma showed slides detailing the areas being looked at for Sedgeberrow, Hinton and Aston Somerville. The majority of this is in Hinton & Aston Somerville and is owned by Laslett's Charitable Trust. Their policy has been to not ever sell any land, although this has now changed. Hinton may want to expand by increasing housing.

She showed slides of the boundaries of Sedgeberrow as a village, with photos of green fields and views which are the areas possible for development, with one brownfield site. Sedgeberrow is set between Broadway and Bredon Hill, both AONB. Any development would change the look of the village.

The reason for putting together a Neighbourhood plan is to give the village as many choices as possible. People want a cricket ground, sports fields, social areas etc. Even though there has been a lot of development in the past, during the next 10 years there will be further housing needing to be supplied. The group are aware that they need to have a say in where the developments would go. This is the driving force, to take control of things for the village moving forward with a Neighbourhood Plan.

Andrew Ford, Senior Planning Officer, Policy Team, WDC

Andrew leads on planning for Wychavon and Bredon Hill. There have been 6 Neighbourhood Plans adopted in Wychavon with 30/40 parishes currently going through the process. Neighbourhood Plans enable villages to have some say over planning in their parish and can help shape development and growth for the area and provide a vision to set policies for planning applications. The documents provide a vision of what villages can look like over the next 20 years and it can allocate land for housing, employment uses, village hall, extending schools etc. Policies may include design, protecting landscapes, green space etc. There are now 500 neighbourhood plans across the country adopted and are all individually suited to each parish/area. The idea is for Sedgeberrow to become a mini planning authority. When adopted the plan has legal status.

The Neighbourhood Plan needs evidence before the plan can be assessed for fit for purpose. Sites can be allocated for developments, open space, leisure facilities, protect local green spaces and must meet specific criteria. Can put in things to do with infrastructure – CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) – with new developments within Wychavon district, developers have to pay a levy with a proportion of money coming into the village – a village with a Neighbourhood Plan receives 25%. This can be used by the community to put in place infrastructure which might be identified in the Neighbourhood Plan. It has to:

1. have regard to national planning policy
2. be compatible with European union obligation
3. general conformity with SWDP strategic policies
4. promote sustainable development

It takes approx. 2 years to produce a plan. 18 months to produce a draft. A draft plan has to be consulted on – businesses, neighbouring districts/parishes etc. After this a final draft version is produced which is also consulted on – this is then given to an examiner who will test against the 4 points. If it satisfies them it will go to a referendum. There is a simple question to answer – should it be used to make decisions about planning in the village – yes/no. If 50% of the turnout are in support the plan is adopted. When adopted it has the same weight and status of the SWDP.

Benefits:

1. Greater influence on planning decisions
2. Allocate sites for development
3. More funding through CIL

Once in place it is usually a 10 year time span; once embarked upon it is recommended the document is reviewed 3 or 4 years into the plan. This is an opportunity to look forward in the direction of where the village wants to go. It costs approx. £13,000 to produce however there is a grant of £9,000 from government. Costs can be kept down which WDC can help with. A planning consultant can be brought on to help finalise the documents. WDC will help at every stage. When submitted for examination and referendum WDC cover the costs.

1300 sites have been offered which will be inspected by end of February to see if they meet certain criteria. These are then refined down and worked out based on new strategy of SWDP where development may go and sites allocated. The first WDC draft will be produced in Autumn 2019 which will show sites that have been allocated.

Government have stipulated that 300,000 houses per year are required and evidence is pointing towards a housing shortage nationally. WDC's plan will be put forward to 2041. WDC have worked out this will mean an 14,000 extra houses over the whole area. This will mean a further 20 houses for Sedgerrow between 2021 & 2041.

Q&A

The new Main St development was already in the SWDP hence the reason the application was approved.

It is felt that there is an area in the village which is a brownfields site, however planning is constantly refused on it, although a resident pointed out there is a problem with splays.

Andy stressed that although there is a lot of land included in the call for land each piece of land will go under a strict scrutiny – more detailed analysis of sights including flooding, habitats, highways etc.

Emma finished the meeting by stating that everything Andy has said proves there is a need for a NP.

Meeting finished at 8:55pm