

As discussed at our last WG meeting on 7th January, please find below a summary/update on some key points regarding the Neighbourhood Plan and our journey so far for OSM Parish.

Why prepare the Neighbourhood Plan and what can it include?

As you all know, preparing a Neighbourhood Plan gives the community the power to identify specific planning policies for their Parish which will address the issues which they feel are most important. When adopted the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the statutory Development Plan which means planning decisions must be made in accordance with it unless there is a very compelling extraordinary reason not to.

The requirements of a Neighbourhood Plan to keep in mind are:

1. The plan must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development which meets the needs of community, economy and environment.
2. The plan must have regard to national planning policies and advice and must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area (EDDC Local Plan).
3. The planning policies of the NP must relate to land use development and be enforceable. Other matters can be included as projects to identify support and intent for community action. The Plan should include on a limited number of priority projects to focus efforts.

The EDDC Local Plan Situation

The Inspector's Final Report on the Examination of the East Devon Local Plan (dated 15th January 2016) was published by the Council last week. The main points of note for Ottery are:

- Subject to modifications the Plan is sound for adoption.
- The objectively assessed housing requirement for East Devon is 17,100.
- On adoption of the Local Plan the Council can demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply.
- There are no changes to the approach identified for the Parish i.e. no further housing allocations at OSM. West Hill is the only village with a Built Up Area Boundary.

The adoption of the Local Plan (subject to a Council meeting on 28th January) is a positive step for the NP process. Firstly it means that the Council can now defend much more robustly against applications for residential development outside of settlement boundaries. Great news for the community! Secondly it helps in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan as we can be clear about the policy framework it will fit within.

Update on current housing applications in the Parish

Slade Farm Ottery St Mary - This application has been refused but an appeal has been submitted. (The chances of this proposal succeeding are much less now there is a 5 year housing land supply verified by the inspector).

Land East of Sidmouth Road, Ottery St Mary – Still undetermined but again the case is now significantly weakened as the application is contrary to the adopted Development Plan.

Land at Barton Orchard, Tipton St John – Application in for ‘Variation of condition 2 (amended design of proposed dwellings) and removal of condition 3 (previously securing development to code level 5) of permission 14/1745/VAR (development of 15 no. houses’ (Application reference: 15/2753/VAR. Validated: Thu 03 Dec 2015)

Consultation to Date

It is vital that the Neighbourhood Plan is informed by the community and we are making great efforts to engage with those who live, work and study in the Parish.

Working Group – A committed group of elected councillors and interested community members from across the Parish. The Working Group aim to reflect the views of the wider community and to guide the plan with their essential local knowledge and experience.

Community Engagement Autumn 2015 – As a starting point it was important to seek the views from the wider community on issues and aspirations for the Neighbourhood Plan and to get as many people as possible aware and engaged in the process from the early stages. Workshops were held at Ottery St Mary, Taleford, West Hill, Tipton St John and Wiggaton and with a group of students from Kings (mixed age group). For those who did attend feedback forms were available on the town council website and were specifically handed out at a number of locations including school gates in OSM and West Hill.

The headlines from this consultation will be on an exhibition board and a more detailed report of the feedback will be available at the exhibition event for the public to review if interested.

As part of the evidence base research we are seeking to engage with local businesses predominantly through engagement with the OSM Chamber of Commerce. We are seeking to encourage business owners to attend consultation events too. We hope to get more direct feedback from business and employees owners on wants/needs to inform the developing NP.

Evidence Base

There is a need for evidence to underpin all NP policies to demonstrate that there is a sound justification for what is proposed and it is based on an evidenced understanding of the issues. LDA Design are compiling an evidence base report based on research which we have carried out and, importantly on the work and research undertaken by the working group and others. This is an ongoing process.

We will bring along some of the research currently compiled. This includes demographic information, habitat and biodiversity information, landscape character assessment, open space requirements and housing need/commitments.

The Exhibition 30th January 2016

The purpose of this event is:

- To further advertise the Neighbourhood Plan Process and hopefully to engage with a wider group of the community including families, younger people and businesses.
- To feedback comments from the first round of consultations.
- To help the community to understand more about the matters which the NP will cover and what it can achieve.
- To seek verification from the wider community that the approach we are taking does represent their interests and that they will support the sorts of policies suggested.
- To get further ideas and suggestions for the plan.

As you will know from reading the exhibition boards they present the draft Vision for the parish, the identified objectives and suggested policy themes. In the interest of legibility and accessibility the boards have been kept as concise as possible. We have tried to build in all the working group comments received but please rest assured all of your comments have been noted and will be duly addressed in the more detailed drafting of the Plan.

We will have four members of the LDA Design team on hand on at the event to talk members of the community through the boards and to answer questions. Feedback forms will be available at the event for written feedback to be recorded. Following the event the boards and form will be made available on the website for those who could not attend.

Next Steps Following the Exhibition

Feb/March – Process feedback from exhibition event, further evidence base compilation, refine policy theme thoughts.

March/June – Agree approach with WG and prepare full first Draft of the Neighbourhood Plan document.

June/September – Refine document in discussion with WG and EDDC

Autumn 2016 – Formal 6 week consultation on the Proposed Neighbourhood Plan then amendments as necessary before submission to EDDC before the end of the year.

Winter 2016/17 – EDDC will carry out a further 6 week consultation. Following comments unless the Council have any serious concerns they will arrange for an inspector to assess the NP for conformity with the legal and procedural requirements.

Spring 2017 – Referendum – If the Inspector agrees the plan is acceptable the Council will organise a referendum on the NP. It will be open to voting by all parish residents. To be approved the plan must achieve at least 50% of the voters in favour.

This timeline assumes no delays or complications to the process (i.e. unexpected suggestions or opportunities which require further investigation or delays caused by EDDC). By typical NP standards this would be a speedy programme. We will do our best to keep on this track.

FL 27/01/2016