

Allensmore Neighbourhood Development Plan

Report for Parish Council 22nd March 2018

Steering Group and meetings

Since the last Parish Council meeting we have had two meetings of the Steering Group, on 22nd February and 19th March. Steph Kitto (Herefordshire Council Neighbourhood Planning Officer) attended our February meeting. No changes to the Steering Group.

Finance

We have come to the end of the 6 month period for our grant and have very little budget available to us until our next grant is approved.

We spent a total of £4,630.85 of our £5,250 grant meaning that we will be returning £619.15.

This includes £4,350 of the £4,850 budgeted for Kirkwell's work. The remaining £500 unspent will be applied for with the next application and will fund the completion of the preferred options plan.

It also includes £280.85 of the £400 budgeted for printing costs and room hire.

We will shortly apply for a grant to cover the work over the next 6 months and apply for site assessment work from Aecom.

Issues and Options Document

On Sunday 28th January 2018, a public consultation event for the Issues and Options consultation was held at the village hall. 45 residents came to either drop their questionnaire off, use the hardcopies of the document to fill out their questionnaire, ask questions or seek further information. A number of residents were concerned over a recent planning application but our NDP document is currently not far enough along in the process to have any effect on this. The main NDP issue was the provisional settlement boundaries.

89 forms were returned before 12th February. Based on an estimate of 474 people aged 16 and over resident in the designated area (derived from 2011 census figures), the returned forms represent 21% of those aged 16 and over.

Tony Cramp has done a magnificent job of analysing the results, all of which were made public on the Allensmore website. It is probably worth re-iterating a summary of the results here:

42% of respondents were from Allensmore, 35% from Cobhall / Cobhall Common and 16% from Winal / Winal Common and 2 (2%) each from the Mawfield, Hungerstone and Webtree areas.

Just 10% of the respondents were under 50 years old, while 24% were in their fifties, 28% in their sixties and 37% were older. 80% of the respondents had no children usually living in their household.

Approaching half (46%) of respondents have lived in this parish for over 25 years, while 12% have lived here for less than 5 years.

36% of respondents are not in work or full time education and 31% work from home.

Vision and objectives

A large majority (83%) of respondents felt the document provided a good summary of the local context, compared with 5% who did not.

There was also strong support for the draft vision and objectives with 77% of respondents in agreement and 11% who disagreed.

Landscape and wildlife

A very high proportion of respondents (88% in favour, 6% not) felt that the NDP should include a planning policy similar to the one suggested to protect the local landscape character. A number of suggestions were made for further features and views which should be protected by planning policies.

Similarly, a very high proportion (82%) of respondents felt that the NDP should include a policy to protect wildlife.

Settlement boundaries

When asked if the NDP should include settlement boundaries, around two-thirds (68%) of respondents felt they should, while a fifth (20%) did not think so.

The majority (60%) of respondents thought the suggested settlement boundary for Allensmore was about right, with similar results for Cobhall Common (56%) and Winnal (63%).

Housing

The majority of respondents agreed that each of the suggested criteria (Brownfield, Infill, Scale/size of development, Access and Parking) should be used as a guide for speculative new housing. A number of people also commented that drainage should also be a factor.

A majority (63%) of respondents felt we should plan for the minimum number of 12 new houses required by the Core Strategy, while 25% felt 13 – 20 houses was a more appropriate number and 11% felt the number should be in the range of 21 to 30.

Most respondents (63%) considered that the new homes should be spread about evenly across the three settlements.

Most respondents believe the new developments should be either single houses (67%) or small scale developments of 2-3 houses (71%).

The most popular types to be included in the new homes built were family homes (3 bedrooms) (75% of respondents would like to see these), starter homes of 1-2 bedrooms (60%) and conversion of existing non-residential buildings (60%). Of the types listed, there was least support for executive homes (4 or more bedrooms) which 17% would like to see included.

A large majority support the new homes to be privately owned (88% of respondents) with the next most popular being affordable housing for sale (41%).

There was strong support (75% of respondents) for the NDP to include a policy supporting the conversion of former agricultural buildings to promote economic development.

Roads, traffic and infrastructure

More respondents were in favour of a cycleway from the village hall to Locks garage (58%) than were against (31%) while the views were about balanced for and against for a cycleway from the village hall to Belmont. We've since realised that we omitted to ask a similar question about walkways where we think there might be more support.

Most respondents (61%) feel there is no need for additional directional signage, and there was little or no overall demand for “slow down” signs or for pursuing a lower speed limit on the A465.

Nearly half (46%) of respondents find illegal dumping of waste to be a problem, while over a quarter (28%) do not, and a large majority (71%) would support or take part in an annual litter pick.

Most respondents (60%) like the idea of a lower speed limit in the centre of their community while 31% disagree. Support was particularly strong amongst residents of Cobhall Common where 67% support the idea. However, a large majority (83%) of respondents do not support the installation of speed bumps or other traffic calming measures.

An overwhelming majority of respondents want the NDP to include a policy to protect the village hall as a local community facility and encourage investment in new or improved facilities.

Most respondents (59%) felt a policy should be included in the NDP to encourage improvements to the Church in order to enable a wider use of the building.

Call for Sites

The Steering Group decided to carry out a “Call for Sites” which is now underway. We have put a notice in the Hereford Times (16th March) and emailed everyone on the local email list as well as putting up notices at various points around the parish. There is also a notice going in April’s Tracking the News. The standard Herefordshire Council response form has been used, and further information and forms are on the Allensmore website. Applications close on April 8th.

Next tasks

Application for the second tranche of funding to cover the next six months.

Applications from the “call for sites” will be analysed and subject to assessment as to their suitability. Results from this exercise will be considered as we produce the next draft document – the “preferred options” document which will be published for the next public consultation later this year.

Nick Chapman, 22nd March 2018