

**Note of a Public Meeting in the Palairt Hall, Norton St Philip, at 4 pm on Sunday 11 November 2018.**

**Clive Abbott** (Chair) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Liz Beth MRTPI (Planning Consultant) Ian Hasell (Chair, Steering Group - SG -) and George Hitchins (SG Secretary)

**Liz Beth** described Neighbourhood Plans (NP). New development would have to comply with guidelines within the completed Character Assessment, a document accompanying NPs. Issues arising from the weekend Exhibition of 10/11 November could result in tweaks to the draft NP which would then go to formal "Regulation 14" consultation. Following the six week consultation period, the draft NP would be amended as necessary and would then be submitted to Mendip DC (MDC) for further consultation. If subsequently approved at Examination, the plan would then be the subject of a referendum at which all those on the electoral roll would be entitled to vote.

- **Ian Hasell** described how the SG and its four working groups had operated. Changes in government housing targets may be imminent, thus prompting the decision to produce a plan in *two* stages. The work of the groups had been focused on housing, Local Green Spaces (LGSs) and environmental policies. The aim was to produce a second stage of the plan within 2 to 3 years by which time there may be greater clarity on housing and environmental policies.
- **Ian Hasell** described each Policy
  - Policy 1- there was no need to change the settlement Boundary as the number of new dwellings in Norton St Philip (NSP) is already more than double the minimum requirement as envisaged in MDC's Local Plan Pt 1.
  - Policy 2 - the former Roman Catholic Church and Bell Hill garage are allocated for housing development.
  - Policy 3 - there would be exception sites, but any such site would depend on a demonstrable need by people in the village or closely associated with the village. The policy was aimed to deliver on the Government's new exception site policy for entry level housing.
  - Policy 4 - this had sought to distil the Character Assessment's appraisal of what makes the parish special and characterises its area.
  - Policy 5 – the 'green corridors' that link countryside with the village are a very special feature of the village; the aim of this policy is to ensure that they are not developed
  - Policy 6 – Aimed at reducing flood risk and providing that any development should be low carbon
- **George Hitchins** explained the Exception Site Policy. This was that the cost of any home to buy or rent would be a maximum of 80% of market cost and that this

should be retained for first time buyers/renters in perpetuity for people with a strong village connection.

- **Robin Campbell** asked whether Ian Hassell could give details on areas of ongoing work i.e. the work which would continue after the first phase.
- **Ian Hassell** replied that stage 2 would come to fruition within 2 years and that scoping work on this would begin soon after the NP had been completed.
- **Nick Gould** expressed concerned that the proposed Bell Hill site went beyond the brownfield site boundary. He noted that not all of the allocated site had been previously used by the garage.
- **Ian Hassell** - part of Great Orchard has had its designation changed from protected to unprotected; this is shown on Mendip's plans. There are extinct planning permissions which cover the allocated area.
- **Ian Mills** - requested clarification on the relationship between LGSs and exception sites.
- **Liz Beth**- LGSs are not suitable for exception sites.
- **Rodney Beer**- what happens if a small house or bungalow is sold and there is potential for demolition and building three houses on the site? He thought the plan should include some guidance on this.
- **Liz Beth**- any development needs to fit guidelines for the village as a whole as well as the character and nature of the particular area. A key point of the Character Assessment is to ensure that any new development is in keeping with that area.
- **Robin Campbell**- is there likely to be something about business and facilities in the economic and social policy in phase 2?
- **Ian Hassell** - yes this would be an important area
- **Harry ?** - are the allocated sites definitely going to be developed or is it just a possibility?
- **Clive Abbott** – that would depend on the landowner. A planning application has been made for the Roman Catholic Church site in the last six months which MDC are still considering. The PC found that particular application unacceptable. The draft NP set out the guidelines which the PC considered to be appropriate.
- **Alice Tollworthy**- was there a different timetable for decisions on the proposed LGSs?
- **Clive Abbott** - LGSs would be considered as part of the NP as a whole. The plan would be subject to a referendum.
- **Liz Beth**- LGS designations can be addressed either in a NP or in the Local Plan. The 10 LGS designations as proposed by MDC are included in the draft NP. The Examiner will consider each on its merits
- **Clive Abbott** - The PC recognises that LGS designations can be sensitive and controversial. The views of affected landowners will be sought at the start of the formal 6 week 'Regulation 14' consultation stage.

- **Chris Scully**- wished to know whether the Rode NP had had a positive or a negative impact
- **Liz Beth**- Rode are using it to discuss housing for the elderly; and also for their LGS designations. One would have to ask the Rode PC whether they thought it had been helpful.
- **George Hitchins** - did not think that Rode's plan had yet been tested against a planning application.
- **Chris Scully**- thought it would be interesting to know how useful NPs have been across the country.
- **Liz Beth**- unlike Parish Plans, NPs have teeth. They will affect development. The legislation is clear and court cases have shown that they do carry weight in planning matters
- **Clive Abbott**- a NP is designed to ensure that development goes in the direction that local people want
- **Paul Shepherd**- developers have put land into 'land banks' and the NP only has a life of 10 years
- **Ian Hasell**- the 10 year plan period had been selected to run alongside MDC's Local Plan. The NP is aiming to set policies for the next 10 years. We will need to start thinking about the *next* plan at least 2 to 3 years before the expiry of this one.
- **Clive Abbott**- referred to the possibility of local government reorganisation during the plan period. The NP, once approved, would remain in force and thus withstand changes in local government structure.
- **John Dixon**- was concerned that there was no mention of the environmental impact of fracking. He wanted to know whether there was any chance of making Norton frack free
- **Liz Beth**- a NP is unable to deal with issues of waste and fracking
- **Barbi Lund**- referred to a possible central government initiative which would allow fracking as permitted development
- **Liz Beth**- suggested that the SG might be well advised to allow a week or so to consider matters arising from the meeting and the Exhibition/Display weekend before finalising the NP.
- **Clive Abbott** - asked for a show of hands to indicate whether those present were in general agreement with the aims of the plan. Those present were very substantially in favour. Two people indicated that they were against.