

EXTRAORDINARY PARISH MEETING

Thursday 23 November 2017, 7PM

Little Ness Village Hall

MINUTES

Present: Chairman – Cllr. Mike Arthur, Shropshire Councillor Ed Potter, Mathew Mead (Community Enablement Officer)

Public: 20 members of the public

Clerk: Rebecca Turner

Welcome and Opening Comments – Cllr Arthur welcomed all present to the meeting and explained that this meeting has been called to provide information on the Local Plan Review consultation and community-led planning (reviewing the Parish Plan). The Chairman then handed over to Mathew Mead to give a presentation on the Local Plan Review and Community-Led planning.

1. Apologies for absence

None.

2. Presentation on Local Plan Review and community-led planning (Parish Plan review)

Mathew Mead explained that Shropshire Council is currently consulting on a review of the Local Plan. This stage of the review focuses on the scale and distribution of development and the consultation period is open until 22 December. Key points to note:

- **Shropshire Council has to review the Local Plan regularly and is aiming to adopt the revised Plan by the end of 2019.** The new Plan will cover the period 2016-2036. The next steps are this consultation, followed by a consultation on the detailed aspects of community hub/cluster allocations in Spring 2018, a final consultation in October 2018, Submission for Examination in December 2018, Examination of the Plan during 2019 and adoption of the plan by end of 2019.
- **Housing Growth** – overall housing aspiration of circa 28,000 homes over the Plan period.
- **Economic Growth Strategy**– aiming to balance economic growth and housing growth as Shropshire needs more people of working age and better quality/paid jobs. Adult social care costs are rising due to an ageing population so an increased working population would help ease costs such as this.
- **Development to be focused on the market towns** with about 27.5% in the rural area (current strategy is 30 to 35% rural).
- **The net housing requirement for the rural area**, defined as gross requirement of 7,875, less sites built in 2016/17 and commitments (allocated or with planning permission as at 31st March 2017) is 2,560 dwellings.
- **Rural housing will be focused in community hubs and clusters.** Forty hubs have been identified by points scoring settlements based on facilities to identify the most sustainable settlements. Settlements cannot opt in or out of being a hub (although this can be challenged via the consultation). Mathew encouraged consultation responses to focus on if the hubs have been scored accurately (e.g. is there is a regular peak bus service) rather than focusing on the methodology as the methodology was consulted on previously. Clusters can opt in or out and will be limited to infill development.
- **Nesscliffe is proposed as a community hub.**
- **Community cluster – the smaller settlements (Felton Butler, Great Ness, Hopton, Little Ness, Valeswood, Wilcott) which currently form part of the community cluster are proposed to revert to open countryside.** These areas would only be required to remain as a community cluster if the parish council requested this on behalf of the community.
- **Hubs will have development boundaries and a housing guideline number and possibly allocations** – to be consulted on in Spring 2018. It was noted that currently Nesscliffe does not have a development boundary.

- **Place Plans** – these set out what infrastructure is needed to support development and this infrastructure (e.g. roads, drainage) and delivery of the Place Plan is part-funded through Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), which is chargeable at £80 per sq. metre on open market (not self-build or affordable) residential development in rural areas. Parishes get 15% of CIL to spend locally. Of the remainder, 5% is spent on admin and of the balance 90% is for CIL (Local) projects and 10% is for CIL (Strategic) projects. The strategic and local elements of CIL are administered by Shropshire Council. Place Plans can be an important negotiating tool and evidence base. Parishes are being asked to review their Place Plan and identify infrastructure needs as Critical (e.g. sewerage), Priority (needed to happen to make development possible such as play areas) or Key (nice to have)
- **Community-Led Planning** – this includes Neighbourhood Plans, Parish Plans and Community Led Plans and is a key way that parishes can add local detail. Neighbourhood Plans hold more weight as they are a statutory part of the Local Plan. Community-Led Plans and Parish Plans can be adopted as material considerations for planning purposes by Shropshire Council. After 5 years, plans start to go out of date. Nesscliffe has a Parish Plan and Housing Needs Study although both these documents are almost 5 years old and would therefore benefit from being reviewed.

3. Open forum

The chairman opened meeting to the floor for questions and comments. The following points were raised:

- **Difference between a community hub a cluster and open countryside.** The clerk explained that community hubs will have a target development guideline, a development boundary and possibly allocations. The type of development in a hub can vary and may be smaller or larger sites. By comparison, a community cluster will have primarily infill development of no more than 3 dwellings per site. In open countryside, open market housing development will be very restricted and therefore development will be very limited. The clerk referred to a CPRE document which cross-referenced Shropshire’s latest Housing Land Supply Statement to SAMDEV targets; it showed that the community hub of Nesscliffe and the community cluster of smaller settlements have both significantly exceeded the amount of housing originally allocated in SAMDEV. The clerk highlighted that looking at the percentage of development in excess of the SAMDEV guideline, both the hub and the cluster in the parish rank in the top 5 in the county, in terms of level of overdevelopment relative to SAMDEV guideline. A member of the public highlighted that the NPPF states that the cumulative impact of development is a key consideration and that new communities should be allowed to bed in before further development occurring. It was noted that this may be relevant in considering if Nesscliffe could be a community cluster rather than a hub as the cumulative impact of development to date is a policy consideration. Therefore, limiting development to infill by having a cluster designation may be more appropriate than a hub which could involve larger scale development. Members of the public asked if it was possible to opt out of being a hub. The clerk explained that the consultation document gives the option of opting in or out of being a cluster but not a hub. However, she said that people could still request that a proposed hub is not designated as such.
- **Quantum of development** – a member of the public asked what the requirement of 28,000 homes is based on. Mathew explained that this is a national methodology and Shropshire Council has opted for a high growth option because it is expecting the number of planning applications to decline and it must maintain the housing land supply. Also, if a high amount of housing is delivered, overall this will mean there is also additional affordable housing. Lastly, a high level of housing will help to deliver the aspiration for high economic growth in the county. The point was made that housing in other areas also has a significant impact on the parish. For example, development in Baschurch will impact on the roads in the parish. Whilst the Shrewsbury North West Relief Road is welcomed, it was noted that this proposal has been being looked at for circa 20 years and therefore may take a long time to come forward.
- **Type of housing** - concern was expressed that whilst the parish have been willing to accept some development, the type of development which has been delivered is not in line with the requirements of the parish and the Housing Needs Study and Parish Plan. In particular, development has been focused on larger sites and four and five bedroomed houses whereas the need in the parish is for smaller properties. Mathew Mead said that having an up-to-date Housing Needs Study is important in establishing housing need and influencing types of property. Data is available from sources such as Homepoint and Shropshire Council can offer assistance to the community to update the Housing Needs Study. The point was also made that some local people may require four bedroomed houses, for example labourers working locally with several children.
- Members of the public commented that they were **pleased to see that the smaller settlements would no longer be a community cluster.**
- Members of the public also **agreed with the urban focus approach of the document.**

- **Pace of development** - it was highlighted that the pace of development to date has been very fast with 16,000 homes having been built or commissioned by 2017. The view was expressed that there is a need to slow down the pace of development.
- **Community infrastructure needs** - it was agreed that development has a significant impact on services, for example putting pressure on roads and doctors' surgeries. Concern over the impact on the local road network was a particular issue. The point was made that linear development removes the potential to widen roads. It is important for the community to highlight the key infrastructure issues in the Place Plan. Mathew stated that CIL is a way of funding some of the community infrastructure requirements. The point was made that community infrastructure needs to be provided first, not after development.
- **Design of development** - it was considered that the design of development needs to be improved. Mathew said that the community could have a Village Design Statement or design guidelines could be incorporated into a Community-Led plan.
- **Community led planning** - a member of the public asked if the Parish Plan was reviewed if it would have any effect on planning applications. Mathew explained that a Neighbourhood Plan is a statutory part of the planning system and sits alongside the Local Plan and this will therefore have the most influence. It was highlighted that such a Plan involves a lot of work (including a need for specialised input) and a Public Examination and it may cost in the region of £15,000 to £20,000 to prepare, although some grant funding is available towards this. A Community-Led plan is an enhanced version of a Parish Plan and to be effective needs to have clear policies relating to planning and a Housing Needs Study. A Community-Led plan will cost in the region of £3000 to prepare. The planning aspects of it can be adopted as a material consideration by Shropshire Council. A steering group of approximately 10 to 20 volunteers will be needed to review the Parish Plan. Cllr. Arthur asked members of the public who may wish to help with reviewing the Parish Plan to indicate this on the attendance sheet which been circulated. It was noted that a meeting could be arranged in the New Year to discuss the review of the Parish Plan.
- **Planning applications** - problems with the online commenting system timing out and the short period of time to comment on applications were highlighted as being issues.
- **Employment** - it was highlighted that jobs should be near to housing where possible and therefore what are the plans for employment in rural areas? Support was expressed for live/work units. Mathew said there is scope for some employment development in rural areas and that Shropshire Council has also highlighted strategic employment locations around the county including start-up incubator sites. It was also emphasised that good broadband provision is essential for business to grow. Councillor Potter highlighted Secure Web Services (SWS) as an alternative broadband provider for areas which cannot get fibre broadband. Councillor Potter also highlighted the need to encourage younger people to live and work in the county, in particular in light of adult social care costs rising by £8 million per year.
- **Agricultural land** - a member of the public highlighted the importance of retaining land for food production.

The chairman, Councillor Arthur thanked the speakers and members of the public for attending and declared the meeting closed.