

Bradford on Avon Area Board, 19 June 2013

Neighbourhood Plans update

BRADFORD ON AVON TOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Since 1992 the Town Council has taken an active interest in the future of the town and in particular in relation to proposals for development and economic activity. Recently (2010) a public consultation exercise on the future of the town was undertaken under the heading of *Bradford on Avon 2026*. It was therefore a logical development that the Town Council resolved to embark on a Neighbourhood Plan exercise, taking advantage of the opportunities created by the Localism Act 2011.

A Scoping Report was produced towards the end of 2012, as advised by Wiltshire Council, and subsequently a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formed. This includes representatives from the Town Council and from groups and organisations in the town. The first step, taking into account the work already undertaken under the *Bradford on Avon 2026* initiative, was the production of a Vision for the town which was the subject of a public consultation exercise carried out in February/March 2013.

To take the Plan forward seven Topic Groups have been formed under the overall auspices of the Steering Group on the following subjects:

- Conservation and Design
- Economy and Enterprise
- Community wellbeing
- Housing for all
- Transport and Movement
- Green spaces
- Climate Change

The role of the Topic Groups is to investigate, record and prepare detailed contributions for incorporation into the Plan. Topic Groups will report back to the Steering Group on a regular basis to ensure compatibility with the overall plan process and groups are asked to ensure that they adopt a positive a creative approach to the formulation of a future Plan.

In April / May the Town Council has had the benefit of a work placement with a planning student from the West of England and he has primarily been working on the summary and conclusions of the public consultation.

Development pressure on the town has been identified in relation to the representations made by developers to the Wiltshire Council Draft Core Strategy and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is aware of the need to make good

progress. Recent changes in planning policy on permitted development are also a cause for concern. Accordingly it is anticipated that the Topic Groups will produce initial findings within the next two/three months with a view to a first draft of the Plan in the autumn.

Officers from Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning Team are providing valuable advice.

The Steering Group is taking looking at the progress of other Neighbourhood Plans, particularly where it is possible to learn from the experience of Plans that have been declared sound or have successfully passed the referendum stage.

It is recognised that the neighbourhood planning needs to be an open and inclusive exercise and every effort is being made to ensure that this will be achieved. There is a dedicated neighbourhood planning section on the Town Council website and use is being made other form of electronic communication.

- A team of pupils from St Laurence School has agreed to work on a young persons Neighbourhood Planning project and its input is awaited with interest.

Colin Johns

HOLT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Holt had been working on a Parish Plan for some time when the Localism Act introduced the concept of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A Steering Group was set up under the auspices of the Parish Council to build on the work already done towards the Parish Plan, made up of two councillors and several volunteers from interested people in the village, chaired by one of the volunteers. Geoff Winslow is our contact from Wiltshire Council.

The first step towards a Plan had been a “Likes and Dislikes” questionnaire circulated to all the 600odd households in the village, the school and other local groups. It asked respondents to list three things they liked about living in the village, three things they disliked, and three things they would like to see happen.

From the results, a preliminary plan was produced, which was presented and discussed at a public meeting, and then by locality-based groups within the village.

The result of all this was a “scoping study” for a neighbourhood plan, which was submitted for formal consultation through Wiltshire Council with our neighbouring towns and parishes. We have recently heard that no objections were raised, so we shall now proceed to a formal Plan, the next meeting of the Steering Group being on 11th June.

Many suggestions have been made for items to appear in a Plan, but the two largest are firstly, to ensure that the proposed development of the Tannery site for housing and business and commercial premises is acceptable to the village; and secondly, to ameliorate the overwhelming impact of the heavy through traffic, and the parking problems caused by the local major National Trust attraction.

To this end, a traffic planning group has been set up, with some common membership with the Steering Group, to tackle these traffic-related problems.

We are aware that the final Plan will need to take account of the county Core Strategy, which is still under development.

Andrew Pearce

LIMPLEY STOKE AND FRESHFORD NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

We started the Freshford and Limpley Stoke NP process in Jan 2012 with a series of community meetings and workshops. This resulted in the formation of a structure consisting of a Strategy group (including planning policy officers from Wilts and Banes), a management group (with three representatives from the two Parish Councils and an NP clerk) and five working groups (comprising around 60 volunteers from the community).

The next nine months was taken up with the working groups generating ideas and considerable community consultation on these ideas with a series of village surgeries and wheelbarrow discussions in both communities.

In February 2013 we pulled together the best ideas into a community questionnaire which was distributed to every household and completed by almost 60% of residents, well in excess of our expectations. The responses and hundreds of comments from residents were invaluable in understanding the community's aspirations and fears. The vast majority of residents are supportive of improvements to the community with concerns raised about ensuring these developments don't undermine the rural nature of the neighbourhood.

With the help of some consultants, we used these responses to start drafting our NP. We are currently on our third draft which has incorporated the comments from Wilts and Banes. We plan to publish our final draft and send it out to widespread consultation in July. With a fair wind behind us our goal is for our NP to go to the Inspector in the late summer and to hold the community referendum before the end of 2013.

We were visited by Anton Draper from the Dept of Communities and Local Affairs a couple of weeks ago and he was very supportive of our NP progress.

Simon Coombe

WINSLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Winsley Parish Council announced their intention to embark on the Neighbourhood Planning process at their annual parish meeting in April, with presentations by the parish council and by a representative from Wiltshire Council. A steering committee comprising parish councillors and volunteers from the community has been set up to manage the development of the plan. We have begun the process of engaging the community and have sent leaflets out to all members of the Parish with background information and a response slip to submit their views. A public meeting is scheduled for July 9th at 7.30 pm in the Village Hall where we will feedback the responses from this process. Our next stage will be to apply for Winsley Parish to be designated as a Neighbourhood Planning Area and with the help of direct support from Locality, we will be working with a consultant to assist with scheduling and budgeting for subsequent stages in the development of the plan.

Helen Harrison