

Amesbury: Housing, Economic Development, Planning & Tourism Panel

Meeting Date: Wednesday 22nd January 2014

Venue: Amesbury Community Resource Centre

Present: Cllr Fred Westmoreland, Carole Slater, Ken Lovelock (Shrewton PC), Patrick Curry (Shrewton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group), Richard Allan (Amesbury resident), Paddy Allan, Roger Fisher (Amesbury Town Council), Fiona Cramer, Chris Hammer (Idmiston Parish Council), Richard Coward (Steeple Langford Parish Council), Virginia Neal (Community Coordinator)

The meeting was arranged to discuss Localism, explore some of the options and to offer some practical suggestions about how Parish Councils can meet their community's needs and aspirations. With particular emphasis on Neighbourhood Plans and simpler alternatives for smaller communities and Parishes.

The Localism Bill offers a substantial shift in power away from central government and towards local people. It sets out new rights and powers for communities and individuals, reforms to make planning and housing decisions more democratic and more effective.

Wiltshire Council is working to make these alternatives available

At the present time advice and the Toolkit for the production of Neighbourhood Plans is lacking.

Neighbourhood Plans are seen as expensive, time consuming and not relevant to smaller communities.

On 23/12/13 the Inspector looking at the Wiltshire Council Core Strategy commented that the housing allocation numbers were insufficient until 2026. As a result there will need to be a 14% increase in this allocation, which equals approximately 5,000 additional homes. There is an opportunity here for communities to revisit housing allocations and community boundaries, including the 'Development red line' and parish boundaries. Most villages have a red line that predates 2003, housing allocations have changed since then. The red line currently prevents some villages from growing. Many villages would like the opportunity to develop to increase affordable housing stock, support local shops and businesses etc. Jane Scott indicated that Wiltshire Council will be consulting with communities about meeting the extra housing capacity and where they would like their red line to go.

Large villages have been grouped and targeted for additional housing within red lines. Currently the system works from the top down, Localism offers the opportunity for a more 'bottom up' approach to development of community aspirations. There are no details as yet about how the additional housing allocation is to be spread throughout the county.

Steeple Langford – this small community cannot afford to do a Neighbourhood Plan. The community would like to develop but has limited opportunity for development. Need to draw up a simple statement outlining what they would like to do and why. Movement of the red line might suffice.

Shrewton – A neighbourhood plan steering group has been set up and planning is at quite an advanced stage compared to other communities. Shrewton would like to develop but there is no scope within existing red line to do so. It needs to develop to create movement

within the housing market. No one can upsize or downsize at present due to the lack of 1 bed affordable homes. The PC would like to change the boundary and be given a freehand to suggest via local consultation. Parish boundary changes are up for change, there is a possibility of an opportunity for Orcheston to join forces with Shrewton, which could be of benefit to both.

Amesbury – The proposed campus development is the way forward for Amesbury. New schools built as part of the project would free up land elsewhere. It is possible that Amesbury could take all the additional housing allocation.

Idmiston – Holding a meeting on 25/01/14 to decide whether to go ahead or not with a Neighbourhood Plan. They already have a Parish Plan. A housing needs survey will be carried out by WC. It was pointed out that local need is different from local demand.

Things are beginning to change to a more community led approach in response to localism and market pressure. The process of neighbourhood planning needs to be simplified. Coordination is necessary. Parishes have been asked to produce too many plans already that have had no clout within the planning system. **Neighbourhood Planning needs to be re launched with a simple toolkit** to explain to communities what is available to them in terms of support and what level is appropriate for their community. Neighbourhood Plans may be appropriate for larger communities but smaller ones may just need to redefine location of the red line.

There is a huge opportunity for communities to share information on neighbourhood planning and to work together. This will develop momentum for a more bottom up approach. Parishes need to identify where they would like to be in 2026 in terms of a develop or die approach. Communities need to identify land which will be suitable for building. Army rebasing a key issue in this debate. Parishes are encouraged to ask Defence Infrastructure Organisation about what MoD land is to be sold off in their area. A map need to be made available to affected parishes.

Figures don't exist for current sewage capacity, water usage etc. Accurate figures will be necessary for planning for housing expansion.

Actions:

- Set up second HEDP&T meeting to continue the dialogue and information sharing. Cllr Westmoreland to invite appropriate WC Officer to attend. Date to be confirmed.
- Set up a Local Planning Group to share information amongst parishes and communities. Area Board could help with this.
- Set up a Neighbourhood Planning Trailblazer group to identify common need. Shrewton working with Bonallack & Bishop on legal aspects to produce a template which can then be sold.
- Collaboration Tool must be produced by WC within the next 2 months. If not then information must be pooled and communities will go it alone.