

Newsletter No. 2: Sherfield-on-Loddon Neighbourhood Plan January 2015

The Planning Sub-Committee has decided not to hold a Neighbourhood Plan Forum in January, but here is our second newsletter.

Planning Sub-Committee

The Planning Sub-Committee for the Neighbourhood Plan has continued with its work, but given our collective commitments, progress has been slower than we had hoped.

However, as part of the drive to increase the evidence base for the Plan we have taken the following actions:

- Committee members have begun a programme of visiting and talking to Village Hall User Groups.
- In March there will be a flyer in the Loddon Valley Link asking Parish Residents for their contact details for future surveys and for being kept up to date with NP news. A sign-up form is already available at www.sherfieldonloddon-pc.gov.uk/Council/Neighbourhood_Plan.aspx
- The flyer is aimed particularly at those aged 20-49 since we need to demonstrate that we have tried to contact the whole cross-section of residents - but we would like everyone to respond to this.

We have recruited two more members to share the workload, Diana Effiong and Pamela Darker. Venetia Rowland also attends our meetings and will be helping with communications and publicity.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council (BDBC) Local Plan

The Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan held an initial public meeting with the Inspector in early December.

Crucially, the Inspector was very clear that the proposed annual build figure of 748 was inadequate and that a minimum figure of 850 should be used. It was very clear that the Inspector would fail the Plan unless a higher figure is used.

The Inspector's view is clearly driven by Government policy to build as many houses as possible: (a) to meet demand (nationally and locally) and (b) to generate employment by providing the housing for imported employees, reflecting the improved state of the economy.

There may also be a need to provide housing for London, which BDBC will have to look into. The only question mark over this higher figure is that BDBC has to demonstrate that there would be no consequential environmental damage especially to the Loddon and Test rivers.

Additionally, BDBC will need to decide where this extra housing will go.

The Inspector was concerned about the proposed balance of new housing between the East and West of Basingstoke. Country Watch believes that the need to build more houses is a 'major blow' to the protection of East of Basingstoke and that this will most likely bring the Lodge Farm, Poors Farm and West of Cufaude Lane into focus for development.

The Inspector also suggested that one way to ensure additional housing would be to set guidance figures for parishes including those preparing Neighbourhood Plans but leave the Parishes the choice as to where the houses should be sited. Should BDBC adopt this policy, we can expect the importance of our Neighbourhood Plan to be increased.

The revised timetable for the Local Plan is as follows.

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| March 2015 | Reports on updated housing strategy and other major changes to be submitted to Council. |
| May 2015 | UK Election. |

May-June 2015 6 week period of focused public consultation.
June/July 2015 Collation of results.
July 2015 Pre-hearing meeting.
Sept.2015 Examination.

The Local Plan process will therefore be delayed by about a year; however the impact of proposed changes will be more than likely to affect Sherfield, both directly and indirectly.

Building in Bramley

In terms of indirect impact, we all see the result of recent house building in Bramley on traffic flows through Sherfield.

A proposed development of 200 houses in Minchens Lane in Bramley has been agreed by BDBC, and there are plans in preparation for up to 200 houses at Strawberry Fields in Bramley (possibly leading off the new roundabout on the Bramley Road). Any development on Cufaude Lane will inevitably add to the impact of these in terms of pressure on local roads.

Sentinel Housing Association

You will remember that it has been reported in recent Forum meetings that Sentinel Housing had shown interest in developing the ‘triangle’ site past the White Hart and adjacent to the A33. For some reason this interest had not turned into a firm proposal. Recent press announcements from Sentinel show that they have received substantial funding for the development of new housing in the Basingstoke area, so we might reasonably expect to hear further news.

Vision and Objectives

Please find below a revised Draft Vision and Objectives paper.

We will be asking you for your views on this and other issues in the near future.

DRAFT Vision and Objectives for a Neighbourhood Plan for SoL

Introduction

The Parish of Sherfield-on-Loddon is situated astride the A33 some 5 miles north of Basingstoke towards Reading.

The Parish had two significant existing areas of housing; the older established village at the north end and a recent mixed style development at the south end called Taylor’s Farm. Both of these consist of about 1100 units. In between is the hamlet of Church End which is adjacent to the village church.

The Taylor’s Farm housing development is currently the subject of a Governance Review conducted by Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council, which is likely to recommend the creation of a new Parish starting in April 2016. The original village will become the core of the re-designated parish of Sherfield-on-Loddon which will encompass the remaining land outside the boundary of the Taylor’s Farm development and therefore will form the designated area for this Neighbourhood Plan.

Features of note in the Parish include a village green of some 15 hectares and a large conservation area; a military training area adjacent to the western boundary; a large and expanding independent school based round a Victorian Manor House; and a golf course complex to the east of the A33.

The village is well provided for in terms of facilities, with 3 pubs, a village shop, a post office with cafe, a large village hall, a garage and an estate agent. There is a children's play area on the village green and football and cricket pitches. The independent school (Sherfield School) which is situated just to the east of the village has a planning application pending to raise its numbers from 600 to 1400 pupils with associated facilities. The remaining land use is for arable farming mixed woodland and water meadow.

There is also an area, Redlands Farm, adjacent to and within the southern boundary of the Parish which will possibly be listed as a development area in the forthcoming BDBC Local Plan. Such proposed development has raised significant concerns about roads and traffic congestion. The A33 is a major communication route between Basingstoke and Reading and becomes very congested at peak hours with delays always following in the event of any interruption to traffic flow. The proposed and actual housing developments in the neighbouring village of Bramley will increase traffic movements and congestion in the village. Such congestion is having a significant impact on the local adjacent rural roads.

The existing housing areas have clearly defined settlement boundaries. These may well need further assessment and reaffirming or redefinition. Any proposal for development would need to have regard to these boundaries and the mixed nature of current housing as well as the environmental impact and the impact on the still largely rural character of the Parish.

The Neighbourhood Plan - Vision

Our aim is to produce a Plan which is based on the views of, and therefore led and supported by, the community. It will help us prepare for managing change over the next 15 years and will provide evidence for the development of any additional homes, amenities and facilities. The Plan will provide an ability to influence proposed development, in order to safeguard the distinctive nature and attributes of the Parish and will enable the Parish to grow and change in tune with the shared vision of the residents.

Proposed Plan Objectives

The Plan, which will be policy led, will use evidence gleaned from the local community and will develop policies to assist future decision making based on the following objectives:

- 1) Ensure that any proposed development protects both the valuable natural environment of the Parish and respects its rural character with particular reference to the Village Green, Sites of Scientific Interest (SSIs), the Conservation Area and agricultural land.
- 2) Ensure the retention and, where possible, the enhancement of open space, green space and recreational facilities within the parish.
- 3) Support the retention and, where possible, the provision of shops, services, amenities and community facilities throughout the parish.
- 4) Deliver a range of housing within the parish, which meets the requirements of the Local Plan and the needs of all sectors of the community, whilst respecting the wishes of the residents of the parish.
- 5) Ensure that any future housing can be incorporated into the existing village infrastructure without straining the existing provision and the local environment.

- 6) Ensure that any future housing incorporates high standards of design and energy efficiency whilst remaining in keeping with the character of the existing housing in the parish.
- 7) Support development which promotes safe and sustainable transport together with a safe and efficient local road network and also preserves and enhances the local network of footpaths and promotes cycle ways.
- 8) Support developments which meet the needs of the local economy and local business.

John Darker
Chairman
Neighbourhood Plan Forum

January 2015