

Summary of discussion on Monday 2/7/12 between Frank Brereton, Jane Colville and Jeremy Owens [CWaC] concerning the Neighbourhood Plan .

Purpose of meeting

To obtain some clarity about the view and understanding the Council have regarding Neighbourhood Planning , its status , degree of relevance and meaning and how its development timescales mesh in with that of the Council`s own plan development .

We began by referencing Dawlish and how the independent examination of their early Plan had identified a number of issues several of which could easily apply to us. As a result the Dawlish Plan has not been allowed to proceed to a referendum . We explained that to us it seemed that the main `problem areas` cited were in respect of the marrying up of the Neighbourhood Plan and its own set of objectives with that of the Councilonly the Council hadn`t got a Local Plan with Strategic Objectives so Dawlish couldn`t achieve on that front however hard they try . The other main issue seemed to be about the Dawlish Plan being about wishes and desires on the part of the local people and not the needs of that community .Again it is easy to see how that can happen and we asked Jeremy to help us consider how we ensure that need is reflected in anything we do .

Jeremy said he and colleagues were puzzled by the Dawlish experience and lessons were going to be learnt from this and would be passed on to all communities locally producing Neighbourhood Plans.

We turned to the question of the Council and timescales for them to produce a Local Plan with strategic objectives . Jeremy confirmed what Frank had already heardthat this would be ratified at the earliest in 2014 [2 years time] .However in the meantime and by end July they will have issued a `preferred options paper` which relates to this Local Plan . This paper will go out for consultation later this year and then finalised /adopted in mid 2013 after it has been subject to an `examination` . Jeremy felt that this should give us a steer re direction and priorities for the Council and this should enable us to progress work on our Neighbourhood Plan. The preferred option/s should define the area in which Ashton sits . He felt this was particularly so given that our village is in a `washed over green belt area` and that as a result we should be able relatively easily to see any implications of this for our Neighbourhood Plan and work towards something that would ultimately accord with the Core Strategy and other Council documents .

He also felt that our position and location vis a vis green belt should mean that we will not be targeted by `market led developers` .

He did acknowledge that there are conflicting agendas at playthe Localism agenda which is trying to give local communities more say and power and the drive from Government through to local councils to have built more houses . CWaC are in fact behind in respect of the targets set them by 5 years so are under great pressure to do whatever they can to close this gap and agree to developments which will hit this target .

Jeremy felt that if we produced a Neighbourhood Plan over the next 18 months and prior to 2014 when the Council`s Local Plan will be in place and can be used to `marry up with` then our plan would probably be used to guide the Council when local applications were made and when other type of local developments or initiatives were being considered . It wouldn`t however have the

`teeth` that the Neighbourhood Plan should have once it has gone through its examination and a referendum and been approved .

Tattenhall are moving on with their plan and are out to consultation currently with a Vision and Objectives paper and aim to prepare a draft plan over the Summer to go out for consultation in the Autumn .They have also produced a Sustainability Assessment tool/process and from the discussion it sounded as if we should continue to keep in touch with them and the processes they are using.

Jeremy felt we might wish to contact both our MP and the Minister for Planning [Bob Neil] ...the latter has been out to Tattenhall so knows many of the issues some of which will be ours .

Conclusion

There are clearly areas concerning Localism and Neighbourhood Planning which the Council hasn't been able to compute or clarify so predicting how things will transpire is going to be difficult . Jeremy's outline of the timescale for the Council's own Plan and Strategic Objectives to be in place is maybe manageable if we have an `early warning` later this month via the Preferred Options paper that he promised we would be sent and can be used by us as guidance .

As we continue to work on the Plan and we take on board the several additional aspects of the activity such as the production of and consultation on a Vision and Objectives paper , the development of a Sustainability assessment approach ,together with the several areas of research and work which our survey is throwing up then we are realistically talking of having a draft plan prepared in mid / late2013 . We would in doing this have been able to take account of the Council's proposed Strategic Objectives and Local Plan as that will presumably have been being consulted on during 2013 .This should mean that we are able to submit to the independent examination and hopefully followed by a referendum in 2014 and hopefully by late 2014/ 2015 have the approved formal plan in place .In the meantime though the draft plan and indeed prior to that ,the `Vision and Objectives` paper should be able to be used as guidance and to exert influence .

Jane Colville