

## **Eccleshall Neighbourhood Plan Group**

**April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 – Eccleshall Community Centre 6pm.**

**Present were:-** David Pimble, Gordon Dale, Keith Weston, John Baldry, Brian Mason, John Allen Peter Thompson, Peter Bertram, Barry Apps, , Bob Osbourne, Cheryl Hyland and Chris Heelis.

**Apologies were received from:-** Sue Sanders, Luke Serjeant, Paul Snape and Mac McCoig.

David referred to the public consultation held by Richborough Estates on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014 and indicated that the Company had recently appealed against the refusal of an application to build 250 homes at Haslington near Crewe. Several objections had been received to the development, many local residents had expressed concern about the proposed access from Badgers Croft. The Company had been invited to present their amended proposals and feedback to the Parish Council at a meeting at Broughton Parish Rooms on April 16<sup>th</sup>, 2014 at 7pm. Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Group were welcome to attend.

The adoption of the Stafford Borough Local Plan was anticipated in the next 2 months. The Local Plan would then become primary policy and the Neighbourhood Plan would be instrumental to define settlement boundaries and identify community aspirations.

David had circulated notes on 'A Vision for Eccleshall' prior to the meeting to stimulate discussion, together with a plan to indicate sites with planning approval, land where developers have already approached the Parish Council and additional proposals that it was understood were yet to be presented. The plan identified a possible link road between Stafford and Stone Road as the start of a bypass for Eccleshall, which would also reduce the size of the site off the Stafford Road for development.

The plan also showed:-

- Roundabouts to provide traffic calming.
- A car park on Town Meadow accessed from Newcastle Road with pedestrian access from the High Street
- A link between Newport Road and Stafford Road
- A possible country park on land west of Castle Street.

There followed considerable discussion about the merits / disadvantages of a bypass and it was considered that this would only be achievable through developer contributions. Members commented that the public consultation had shown that residents preferred smaller developments of 20 houses or less, but such developments would not be of interest to developers or help to meet local aspirations.

David suggested that the Plan could include a policy to indicate that link roads, which would form the access to the developments, should be provided as part of the design. Policies could be interlinked, for example Housing Policies could indicate that any development should have regard to local transport and require a transport assessment.

It was reiterated that a Neighbourhood Plan could not restrict the numbers of houses to be built as part of any development, however, policies could be worded to show that development would be encouraged and what requirements should be in place to achieve this – ie the protection of green space, preserving the village atmosphere, sustainable and least impacting development.

The Local Plan stated that every Key Village would have a Settlement Boundary, which would replace the RDB's and that this would create a new line around the town that could theoretically be filled in with development. David agreed to redraw the map showing a tighter line around the town to allow less development opportunities. Bob Keith could then be asked to comment about this and other matters at the meeting on April 15<sup>th</sup>.

The group also discussed car parking issues and whether the aspiration for a car park should be included as a Policy, requiring developers to pay money into a fund or provide a certain amount of car parking spaces.

David reported that a further grant of £5,602 had been awarded from the Community Development Fund, giving a total amount of funding of £7,000, the maximum amount that could be claimed.

Chris agreed to contact Raj to ascertain whether Bus Network Providers, Highways and other designated officers had been contacted with a view to attending meetings with the group to discuss policies.

The meeting closed at 7.15pm