

Eccleshall Neighbourhood Plan Group

July 23rd, 2013 10am. 42, Badgers Croft – Meeting with Mr R. Keith, Planning Aid

Present were:- David Pimble Gordon Dale Peter Thompson
 Bob Osbourne Chris Heelis

Following introductions, Mr Keith gave a brief overview of his role with Planning Aid to provide specialist planning support to help the group to engage with the community and develop a Neighbourhood Plan.

David advised Mr Keith of the progress that had been made by the group to date and indicated that 150 questionnaires had been returned, which had been divided between 5 members for analysis. The group would meet again on July 24th to review the issues identified in the responses and devise a further, more detailed questionnaire for circulation in September. Information from the initial consultation would be used to identify primary concerns and the questionnaire would require an introduction to explain about the Neighbourhood Planning Process.

Mr Keith emphasised the need to engage with every sector of the community in order to ensure that the main issues and focus of the plan were the choice of the Parish with evidence gathering and research being pivotal to the policies identified. It was important to establish good relationships with the Borough Council who would be able to provide much of the data and statistics required. Mr Keith indicated that he was working with three parishes in Stafford Borough and hoped to meet with Ms Bains shortly in order to discuss the support that could be provided to the local groups.

Mr Keith stated that a **Vision and Aims Statement** was needed for the next 15 years, to coincide with the Borough Local Plan. A **Community Engagement Statement** should also be provided to inform who had been consulted, when and where together with the outcomes and a **Project Plan** to set out the structure and various stages of the process.

There followed some discussion on the format of the next questionnaire to ensure that the information submitted was relevant. Other techniques could also be used as well as questionnaires providing the data was recorded, from displays in local shopping areas and at events or by door to door visits.

Issues should be included that could realistically be addressed as opposed to concepts that were unachievable and there was no point in duplicating policies contained in the Local Plan. Once a draft Plan was prepared, a six week consultation period would follow with copies being sent to key groups and made available in accessible locations.

Mr Keith asked what the motivation was for developing a Neighbourhood Plan and what the aspirations of the group were. David stated that the Parish Council had decided to prepare a plan as a result of concerns that overdevelopment was likely following the removal of RDB's with no adopted Local Plan in place. Mr Keith indicated that a Strategic Environment Assessment would be required if sites for development were to be allocated in the Plan. It was suggested that the questionnaire could list the preferred criteria for possible sites rather than locations.

Mr Keith indicated that the referendum question would be along the lines of "Do you want Stafford Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Eccleshall to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?" The direct support agreed by Planning Aid allowed for 18 days of Mr Keith's time – see attached sheets for the breakdown of planned activities for that support.

Mr Keith asked that the group to consider the support required and how that could best be delivered and he undertook to contact Stafford Borough Council to gain an understanding of their Local Plan and how it might link to the various neighbourhood plans being prepared in the Borough.