

Eccleshall Parish Neighbourhood Plan Group

November 4th, 2014 – Eccleshall Community Centre 6pm.

Present were:- David Pimble, Gordon Dale, Sue Sanders, Keith Weston, Cheryl Hyland, Luke Serjeant, John Baldry, Bob Osbourne, John Allen, Peter Bertram, Peter, Thompson, Brian Mason and Chris Heelis.

David referred to the draft Plan, and associated documents, which had been circulated to group members in advance of the meeting. Comments from Raj Bains had been considered and incorporated where appropriate. The draft Plan had also been sent to Raj and Bob Keith with a request for any further comments to be forwarded to Christine in advance of November 14th, 2014.

The Borough Council had invited representatives of Parish Councils in the area to attend a Planning Forum on November 20th, 2014. David and Christine had been asked to give a short presentation about progress with the Plan. David referred to a letter from Mr T. Manders (Head of Planning and Regeneration) expressing concern about the number of speculative planning applications, which were being submitted and how the Borough Council was being challenged at almost every appeal on the basis that a 5 year supply of housing could not be demonstrated.

The Cabinet Member, Councillor Beatty suggested that Parish Councils may wish to lobby MPs, The Secretary of State and the LGA in order to amend the NPPF in order to create some breathing space for the development of Neighbourhood Plans. This letter would be brought to the attention of the Parish Council at a meeting of the Planning Committee on November 5th, 2014.

David proposed that the Draft Plan was printed at the end of November and delivered by Royal Mail in December. This would be followed by a public meeting and a 6 week consultation period.

Peter T commented that the necessity to create a new Settlement Boundary following the removal of the former Rural Development Boundary had impacted on the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and how the feedback from the initial consultation exercise had been used to progress the Policies.

Luke referred to a document he had circulated comparing the surveys and observations of Sites 3 and 20. Luke strongly believed that by including part of Site 3 within the Settlement Boundary the Parish Council was agreeing to development on this site, which would lead to increased traffic through the town centre. The creation of an access to the site off Castle Street would also exacerbate the situation.

There followed some discussion about potential development within the proposed boundary on sites such as the Old Gas Works and Blacksmiths Yard. It was noted that such development could not be discounted in the future should landowners wish to sell. Members referred again to the fact that the number of houses required had not been stipulated in the Plan for Stafford Borough and that Key Service Villages had been left to put forward what was considered to be an appropriate level of development.

Bob commented that the group had been required to produce a plan without a mandate and the electorate would have an opportunity to submit comments and eventually vote whether or not to accept the Plan. Bob suggested that amendments were required to the Map to identify developments that already had been granted outline planning permission.

Sue commented on the apparent disproportionate allocation of Public Open Space which seemed to favour the north of the town. Other group members indicated that this was largely due to the

aspiration to develop a Country Park along the River Sow and lack of availability of land for recreational purposes to the south of the town.

A vote was taken and members expressed support for the emerging Plan with the exception of Luke who remained strongly opposed to the proposed Boundary and inclusion of Site to the rear of the Telephone Exchange.

The following amendments were proposed:-

- Alterations to the Map to show designated open space rather than proposed open space.
- Identification of the sites which already had outline planning permission to emphasise the areas for additional development proposed.
- A slight amendment to the boundary to the north of the Library, where the boundary appeared to be incorrect.
- An addition to the Forword to indicate that any further housing in the rural areas of the Parish would be determined by the requirements of the Plan for Stafford Borough.
- Removal of the statement that the existing high kerbs were a barrier preventing some people parking close to the pavement.
- Strengthen the Housing Policy to emphasise that developments to attract additional numbers of retired people from outside the Parish would not be acceptable as Eccleshall already has a higher than average proportion of elderly residents than Stafford Borough and the wider area. It should be stressed that a broad mix of housing types is required to allow the elderly in the community to downsize and provide homes for young families and first time buyers.

Brian indicated that he had identified several changes that were required in the documentation and agreed to forward a copy showing tracked changes to Christine.

It was agreed to hold another meeting of the group on Tuesday November 25th, 2014 at 6pm to allow the above changes to be made and any other comments submitted by Raj and Bob Keith to be taken into account.

Printing of the document was proposed for December with delivery in early January and a possible Public Meeting being held in early February. It was noted that the grant would not be spent in its entirety by December 31st, 2014 and any remaining amount would have to be returned to the Community Development Foundation. Christine expressed concern that further delay may allow developers to submit applications, which there would be no protection against until the Neighbourhood Plan was in place