

Dorstone Neighbourhood Plan

Consultation and Communication Statement

Consultation and Communication

From the outset the Steering Group placed great importance in involving the community in the neighbourhood planning process as well as providing regular updates on progress of its preparation.

Regular reports have been included in the Parish Council Update, a quarterly report which is circulated by the Dorstone Front Room (DFR) via E Mail to over 120 homes in the parish. Hard copies of this Update are also available in the DFR and on Village Notice Boards. Reports are also included in Parish magazines

A Neighbourhood Forum was also established consisting of over 40 Parishioners who were willing to take a more detailed interest in the development of the Plan. Members of the forum assisted in trialling the Questionnaire. They also received copies of the fourth draft of the “core” policy sections of the Plan and were able to submit their comments.

A Neighbourhood Plan section was also established with the Dorstone Community web site. This provided open access to the notes of the Steering group, papers prepared for the Group, relevant maps and other information about the Group’s work.

Early Stage Consultation

The Group recognised the importance of effective consultation in the early stage of the preparation of the Plan (January – August 2013) in order to identify the issues which were of paramount concern to Parishioners. This information would form the basis of the Adult and Youth Questionnaires, the results of which form a significant evidential basis for the contents of the Plan itself. This process can be summarised as follows:-

To systematically collect this information a simple arrangement was devised using small cards, with attractive graphic art, prepared by a member of the group, covering the likely major topics to be covered by the Plan and a question to guide the kind of response that would be helpful:-

New Housing – “What do you think about future housing development in the area.?”

Farming and Small Business – “What can we do to support our farmers?” / “How can we encourage small business?”

Infrastructure – “What improvements do we need?” – mobile phones/broadband/transport/flooding/sewage

Landscape and Heritage – “How can we protect the landscape, conservation/wildlife?”

Renewable Energy – solar- wind – water

Tourism – “What leisure facilities do we want?” / Do we want to encourage tourists? If so how?

These cards were used in a variety of situations, for example:-

On the annual Plant Day (equivalent of a Spring Fair) on May 19th 2013 the Group had a stall to talk of Parishioners and invite them to write down their thoughts on the cards. There was a leaflet drop to all households before Plant Day to tell

parishioners that this opportunity to give their views would be present. 55 contributions were received from this event alone.

Members of the Group visited all Village organisations, (Village Hall Committee, Playing Fields Committee, the Church, Youth Club and Toddlers group and the local WI. Again the cards were used to record members views, Cards were left in the Dorstone Front room and visitors were encouraged to fill in the cards.

Given the importance of the farming community and small business owners a specific meeting was held to discuss their views on the future development of the parish.

The Annual Parish Meeting held on May 22nd 2013 concentrated on the Neighbourhood Plan, explaining its nature and purpose and asking for views, recorded on the comment cards referred to above.

By the end of June the Group felt they had sufficient feedback to commence work on the design of the Parish wide questionnaire.

Questionnaire Preparation, Distribution and Analysis

The importance of having an effective Questionnaire was seen as critical by the Steering Group and therefore the period of June – December was devoted to its preparation, distribution and analysis. It was agreed that there would be an individual adult questionnaire and a shorter Youth Version for 10-15 year olds.

The main stages were as follows:-

Preparation – the Consultation Sub Group was responsible for drafting the Questionnaire. The objective was to keep it as simple and short as possible. The Parish Plan Questionnaire was used as a starting point and some questions were simply repeated without modification. Others were changed slightly to reflect experience gained in preparing the Parish Plan. The Herefordshire Neighbourhood Planning team also produced model questions which proved a helpful. New questions devised by the Sub group were also included. A third draft Questionnaire was submitted to the Steering Group at its meeting on September 4th. An amended fourth draft was trialled with six members of the neighbourhood Forum. Data Orchard who was engaged to undertake the final analysis of the Questionnaire, also provided very useful guidance in finalising the 6th Draft. The final version was approved by the Steering group on October 2nd 2013. This version was formatted, ready for printing by a Parishioner John Platts. A copy of both Questionnaires can be viewed on the Neighbourhood Planning web site.

Distribution – Each member of the Group was allocated a list of houses to personally deliver questionnaires. A questionnaire was provided for each adult and young person in the household. They were collected personally two weeks later. As an incentive, parishioners had the option of entering a cash prize draw for each completed questionnaire.

Analysis - Data Orchard, a local Hereford research company was employed to undertake the analysis and they presented the results to the Steering Group on January 6th 2014.

Response rate – the response rate was 74% of adult residents and 63% of young persons. The age of respondents also reflected that of the 2011 Census. There was

also an even distribution in terms of length of time that respondents had lived in the parish. The Steering Group was very satisfied with this response rate and felt it is a very sound basis for assessing community views in terms of developing the policies contained in the DNP.

Feedback to the Community – an Open Parish meeting was held on January 12th 2014 to present the results of the Questionnaire. The full results were also placed on the Neighbourhood Plan section of the Dorstone Community web site. Hard copies were available in the DFR.

Drafting the Plan

The three Sub Groups were charged with going through the Questionnaire results and to report back their conclusions to the Steering Group with a suggested first draft of the Plan itself. These were discussed and refined at the February and March meetings of the Steering Group. A consolidated version was then considered at the meeting held on April 30th, and considering these drafts occupied most of meetings held during the early summer. A third draft was agreed at the meeting held on July 16th and a fourth draft was then circulated to Neighbourhood Plan Forum members, with comments invited by the end of August. A hard copy of the 4th draft was also available in the DFR.

A critical factor in the development of the DNP was the re-introduction of a Settlement Boundary for the main village area. Given its importance the opportunity was taken for further direct consultation with the community. Again a stall was organised on the Annual Plant Day on May 19th 2014 which concentrated on explaining to visitors to the stall the rationale for having a settlement boundary and the proposed boundary itself. The stall attracted a stream of over 40 visitors the vast majority of whom supported the proposals as contained in the draft Plan. The Annual Parish Meeting held on May 21st also concentrated on this issue as well as explaining the proposed approach on the range of key issues contained in the DNP. Lastly another meeting was held on July 1st 2014 with Farmers and Small business owners to discuss the settlement boundary and related issues.

In the final stages of drafting the Plan the Steering group decided it was necessary to carry out a further Questionnaire in order to determine the community's views of three topics which had emerged as important during the final drafting of the Plan. These were:-

The development of intensive livestock installations. This question was prompted by a Planning Application for two Broiler Units in the Parish and the Steering Group felt there was a need to consult the community to determine their general attitude to this type of operation.

The possible future development of commercial scale Polytunnels

The development of new houses on existing dwelling sites outside the Settlement Boundary area, in order to meet the need to provide inter-generational housing for elderly grandparents or young adult children or to support the development of a small business on the existing premises. Again the Steering Group felt that the views of the community were needed to help determine future local policy in the area of building new homes in open countryside.

The Group decided to carry out the questionnaire in the same manner as the original questionnaire, distributing it personally to all households and collecting the completed questionnaire. All adults 16 and over were eligible to complete the questionnaire. Replies were anonymous..

The questionnaire was distributed and collected during July 2015, analysed in August and the results discussed at the Steering Group meeting on September 2nd 2015. Given that only 4 questions were asked members of the Group carried out the analysis and published the results on the Dorstone Front Room e mailing service. A 70% response rate was achieved.

During this drafting process the Group continued to benefit from the advice from Samantha Banks of the Herefordshire Neighbourhood Planning team and our Consultant Claire Rawlings. Advice was also sought from Hayley Crane of Herefordshire Housing Department on the importance subject of affordable housing.

Regulation 14 consultation took place between November 25th 2015 and 31st January 2016.

Regulation 14 Consultation

The Regulation 14 consultation took place over a ten week timescale, recognising that the Christmas/New Year fell within the period. It involved consultation with the community and with Statutory Bodies.

Community Consultation

The Draft Plan, including all associated documentation, (the Basic condition statement, the Consultation Statement, SEA & HRA statements) were placed on the Dorstone Community web site, under Neighbourhood Planning.

The Dorstone Front Room [DFR] e mailing service which reaches 150 homes in the Parish was used to let Parishioners know that the consultation period had begun and where they could access the Plan and associated documents. Details were given as to how comments could be submitted, either via a dedicated feedback e mail address, accessed from the web site or in writing to the Chairman of the Steering Group.

In order to ensure that Parishioners not on the DFR emailing list were made aware of the information, an audit was conducted, using the electoral register. Leaflets were distributed to these households giving background information on the Plan and where copies could be obtained. Notices were also posted around the Village. Ten copies were left at the Dorstone Front Room which could be borrowed by Parishioners; six Parishioners took advantage of this offer.

Printed copies of the Plan were sent to all Parish organisations, such as the Village Hall Committee, WI, Young Farmers, Playing Fields Committee, Church etc and comments invited. Printed copies were also given to landowners in and around the proposed settlement area, given their importance of this aspect of the Plan.

Two informal drop in sessions were held, in the first week of January 2016, in the Dorstone Front Room inviting Parishioners to call in to discuss any aspect of the Plan with members of the Steering group. Four Parishioners came along to share their views on a variety of issues.

Statutory Consultation

Statutory organisations also received a communication from the Clerk to the Parish Council telling them about the draft Plan and where it could be seen. A list of statutory bodies consulted is attached as Appendix A.

Reviewing the Comments received

A full meeting of the Steering Group was held on March 1st 2016 to review and discuss all the comments received. The results of this review are summarised in Appendix B to this document.

Amended Plan

The amended Plan was formally submitted to the Parish Council for its approval at its meeting on March 29th 2016. The Plan was approved and it was agreed to submit the Plan to Herefordshire Council for Regulation 16 consultation.

Appendix A

Statutory Bodies consulted under Regulation 14 requirements

Highways England
Wye Valley NHS Trust
AMEC Environmental and Infrastructure UK Ltd
RWE N Power Renewables Ltd
CPRE
Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce
Woodland Trust
Herefordshire Nature Trust
Homes and Community Agency
Natural England
Natural Resources Wales
Historic England
English Heritage
National Trust
Environment Agency
Dwr Cymru
Herefordshire Council

Appendix B - Summary of Comments received during Regulation 14 Consultations

Responder's Name	Policy	Summary of Comments	Steering Group Comments	Changes to Plan
Herefordshire Council Neighbourhood Planning	E1 & RE 1	Additional policy criteria referring to the avoidance of adverse impacts on the River Wye SAC catchment would strengthen the policy in accordance with the HRA findings	Accepted	Additional Clauses to be inserted in relevant policies.
Herefordshire Council – Planning Policy	H2	Is there any evidence to suggest that there are deliverable sites to accommodate the remaining sites within the settlement boundary	This has been the subject of careful examination by the Group, including devoting a meeting to touring the settlement boundary looking at possible sites. The Group remains satisfied that there are sufficient sites, that meet the criteria set out in the Plan, to cater for the number of new houses proposed.	No change
Herefordshire Council – Planning Policy	F1	Policy should have regard to NPPF on flood risk and the Herefordshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment 2009	Plan takes due account of flood risk by having no development in Zones 2 & 3.	No change
Herefordshire Council – Planning Policy	CF1	Any development proposal that affect or results in the loss of a community facility should be able to demonstrate that an alternative facility can be provided of equal size, quality or accessibility or that the facility is no longer required, fit for purpose or viable	Accepted	Additional clause to be inserted in CF1.
Herefordshire Council- Environmental Health England	H2	Item 2 to specify that not only shall the housing site proposals not adversely affect the amenity of adjoining properties but also that the amenity of proposed new residential premises not be adversely affect by existing development	Not considered to be a major issue but willing to amend to cover this eventuality	Additional clause to added to Item 2

Responder's Name	Policy	Summary of Comments	Steering Group Comments	Changes to Plan
Herefordshire Council - Other Departments		Either no comment or supportive, particularly the section on Economic Development	Noted	No change required
Dwr Cymru – Welsh Water	F1/H1	Welcomes provisions of F1 = Flooding and see no issues in accommodating the level of development proposed.	Noted	No changes required
Natural England		Lack of any reference to the River Wye SAC and Moccas Park SSSI which are on the edge of the Parish	Agreed to make reference to both in introduction and under Section 4f .	Specific reference to both in the Conservation, Heritage & Landscape and Biodiversity objective
Natural England		Suggested inclusion of proposals for improved green infrastructure.	Discussed this possibility but on balance decided to include any specific reference as the topic had not been raised during the community consultations. There are clear references to “green issues” in Env Policy E1 and Flooding Polcy F1. The issues are well covered by the Herefordshire’s Local Plan	No change
Environment Agency		Emphasised importance of robust confirmation that development is not impacted by flooding and there is sufficient waste water infrastructure in place to accommodate growth for the duration of the period	Proposed housing development is outside higher risk areas Zone 2 & 3. Dwr Cymru/Welsh Water has no sewage treatment plants for the village area and any development will have to provide their own treatment facilities	No Change
Historic		Considers the Plan to be well considered, concise and fit for purpose taking a suitably proportionate	Noted	Correction to be made

Responder's Name	Policy	Summary of Comments	Steering Group Comments	Changes to Plan
		approach to the historic environment of the Parish. Reference in Policy H3 to Appendix D should be Appendix C		
Woodland Trust	ENV1	Suggests reference in point 3 to protection of Ancient Woodlands should include a planted buffer strip of 50 metres to protect the core of the woodland. Also suggests a map for Ancient woodland and notable trees should be contained in the Plan	As there are no designated ancient woodlands adjacent to the settlement area there is no need to make additional provision. Ancient Woodland Map is included in the resources section of the NP Web site.	No change
General comments from the Parish and neighbouring Parish Councils		11 comments were received from Parishioners/Parish Organisations/local Parish Councils. All offered support or no specific comments, with the exceptions shown below.	Noted	No Change
Parishioner Comments either in writing/ email or at drop in sessions	H3	Queried the restriction on 4 bedroom houses, suggesting that the design of the house was more important	The emphasis on 3 bedroom houses or less reflected the strong views of the community as set out in the detailed questionnaire. It is also reflected the desire for more affordable housing and the existence of a number of 4 bedroom plus houses already in the Parish.	No Change
Parishioner Comment		Concern that Planning approvals were not properly followed and asked that the Parish Council should closely monitor new builds.	Parish Council recognises that there have been deviations in the past and many have been brought to the attention of Enforcement Officers with mixed results.	Not a matter for inclusion in the NP but ongoing monitoring and liaison with Enforcement Officers of Herefordshire Council
Parishioner Comment	H2, ENV1 and F1	Suggested that use of the word "should" be replaced by "will" to strengthen the policies.	Agreed	Amendment to be made

Responder's Name	Policy	Summary of Comments	Steering Group Comments	Changes to Plan
Parishioner Comment	T1	Importance of bridleways should be recognised	Agreed	Bridleways to be added in point 4 of Policy T1
Parish Organisation comment	Section 4h	No reference to the Toddlers Group "Dormice"	Agreed to rectify	Appropriate reference to be included within Policy justification and community action.