

Delivery of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote Parish Plan Objectives

Analysis with particular reference to steps towards a robust Neighbourhood Development Plan

Report by Katie Lea – Localism Network



This report was commissioned by [GRCC](#), through the [RDPE](#) funded GRCC Rural Community Accelerator Project, following GRCC attendance at a Somerford Keynes Parish Council meeting on 1.07.13 and at the request of the parish council



Report date: 30.08.13



Delivery of Somerford Keynes and Shorncote Parish Plan Objectives

There are a number of options for achieving the objectives. Some of the actions clearly could be delivered through a NDP (eg. affordable housing site allocation) but there is a need to look more closely at these first to:

1. Explore further the issues raised by the survey to establish if a NDP is the right route.
2. Explore at other ways to achieve objectives eg. through influencing the Local Plan (Action No. 3.3), or creation / confirmation of a PROW.

Evidence Collection

Ideally the evidence collected at the neighbourhood level should benefit the Parish and the District Council. A structured and consistent approach to evidence gathering at the community level, it can build up a framework of data that can:

- inform strategic policy in a way that district-wide evidence cannot
- enable like-for-like data to be compared and also ensure consistency of interpretation and terminology used
- help interpret strategic policy, particularly in development management for a specific proposal

Identification, agreement with the District Council of most relevant evidence base – using existing evidence

Where there is the need for extra evidence, it makes sense to agree with the District Council methodologies for evidence collection.

Evidence and Neighbourhood Plans

Evidence collected by communities undertaking NDPs should be proportionate to what they want to achieve. DCLG advises that NDPs should not be overly complex.

While the evidence requirements are not as rigorous as those for a Local Planning Authority (LPA) in its plan making, the need for evidence to underpin a neighbourhood plan (and increasingly Parish Plans) is important. Neighbourhood groups should use evidence that is already in the public domain, along with evidence that they collect themselves, to prepare their plans.

Parish Plan Action Points

What follows below is an extraction of issues highlighted in the Action Plan and some initial suggestions on how to structure evidence collection.

Issue: Lack of local outdoor facilities for playing and meeting up (Action 7.2)

What needs to be demonstrated?

- That there is a need for play facilities given the expected growth in population in the future (it has already been proved through the PP

survey that existing community have identified a need for play facilities).

- That there is a lack of play / outdoor meeting facilities within accessible distances of the local community
- The type of facilities / spaces there is a demand for
- How much these proposed facilities would cost to provide and maintain.
- How these facilities would be funded (construction and maintenance).
- How and where the facilities might be delivered and who would be responsible for their maintenance.

What Evidence?

- Evidence of demand from local children / adults for particular facilities to be provided locally.
- An audit of existing facilities – location, accessibility (travel time), quantity, quality, broad level of use.
- An assessment of the amount of provision that is expected for the current population when compared to actual provision.
- An assessment of the amount of additional provision that is expected to support the projected growth in the population.
- The cost of providing new facilities and the amount of space needed if a large scale use.
- Information from nearby local communities – successful case studies

Existing evidence available and useful includes:

- NPPF (para 73. Access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and recreation can make an important contribution to the health and well-being of communities....)
- Local Plan SA/SEA background information
- Emerging Local Plan (Open space / Green Infrastructure)
- Open Spaces Sport and Recreation Study (Cotswold District Council)
- Demographic information – age breakdown of local population and population projections
- Facilities costs (through Sport England or recent experience of other local communities)
- Parish Plan survey

Issue: Creation / Confirmation of Public Rights of Way (actions 2.2 / 2.3 / 7.1)

The definitive Map for PROW in Gloucester can be accessed in digital form on the County Council website (<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/prow>). It is a legal record of the public rights of way and shows the routes of each public footpath, bridleway, restricted byway and byway open to all traffic in the county. The need and possibly an identified route could be identified through an NDP - this would be supported by PROW improvement plan for the given area. To actually designate the new PROW a process outside of the NDP process would need to be followed, there are 2 options:

- (i) With agreement of landowner – creation agreement prepared by the County Council as highways authority in collaboration with the landowner (statutory process - It is possible to change

- the definitive map by applying for a modification order or public path diversion order. These orders add or delete public rights of way or change the status.)
- (ii) If this is not possible a creation order could be enforced (this is not typically the preferred option as there is potential for appeal) and would only be followed if great need or strong demand.

What evidence and information needs to be established?

As outlined above, a NDP can identify the need and route but they need to follow a PROW specific process to actually create the new PROW. This will be much more difficult where the landowner is not amenable.

The evidence needed could be in the form of historic records or statements from members of the public who have used the route regularly for many years, or from previous landowners. Applications are investigated thoroughly. Additional documents may be searched for and interviews will be carried out with users. Landowners, path users and other interested parties are also consulted. Where sufficient evidence exists the County Council has a legal duty to make an order.

Existing information available and useful includes:

- GCC Public Rights of Way Web Page - <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/prow>
- Public Rights of Way Online <https://gloucestershire.firmstep.com/default.aspx/RenderForm/?F.Name=B75apJt4Qgo&HideToolbar=1>
- Rights of Way and Countryside Access Rights of Way Improvement Plan 2011 - 2026
- CROW ACT 2000 <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1378>
- The Gloucestershire Local Access Forum may also have some useful advice.

Issue: lack of safe non vehicular routes / pathways between and within villages (Action Point 2.2)

See also the point above for the creation of Public Rights of Way (separate processes etc)

What needs to be demonstrated?

- That there is a issue of safety on existing routes between or within the villages
- What type of routes are needed
- How much the routes would cost to provide and maintain.
- How the new routes would be funded (construction and maintenance).
- Where the new routes might be located
- Landowner agreement

What Evidence?

- Accident information to prove the lack of safe routes indicated in the PP survey
- An audit of existing routes – width / status / current usage
- Viability of proposed routes
- Current use and demand

Existing evidence available and useful includes:

- NPPF
- Local Plan SA/SEA background information
- Emerging Local Plan (Green Infrastructure)
- Examples from other areas?

Specific Issues: (1) - Housing Needs (2) – Site Allocation for the Affordable Housing (Action 3.1)

This action point can be divided into two. Firstly, establishing the need for affordable or other specific types of housing. Secondly, establishing areas, or sites where 'low key' (meaning?) developments would be 'acceptable'. The Action Plan correctly suggests that a housing needs survey would be a key step to establishing needs.

The emerging Local Plan concentrates on directing development towards the 17 most sustainable settlements (Somerford Keynes is not identified as one of these). It outlines that rural housing needs will be met in a number of ways through existing legislation and guidance, as well as through the emerging local plan. These include:

- Provision of affordable and open market housing through rural exception sites (NPPF paragraph 54);
- Rural workers dwellings (NPPF paragraph 55);
- Community Right to Build Order;
- Neighbourhood plans;
- Continued identification of rural exception sites in the Strategic Housing Land Allocations Assessment (SHLAA);

The Local Plan, which will reflect national guidance and provide clear policy guidance on meeting rural housing needs in a sustainable manner.

What needs to be demonstrated?

The local Plan sets out that rural settlements may put themselves forward for small scale housing growth provided there is local support. In paragraph 6.149 the May 2013 consultation document sets out what the communities would need to demonstrate:

- "There is a local need for such housing;
- It would represent sustainable development;
- The local community would benefit from such a development; and
- It is of an appropriate scale."

The plan also goes on to set out how the communities should go about the process of the local authority designating the settlement for development:

“6.150 Identifying the benefit of such development proposals will be community-led as far as possible, within the framework of the formal planning system. Development proposals that do not make a sufficient contribution towards improving the sustainability of communities will be refused as unsustainable development.

6.151 Local support for development would need to be demonstrated. Working in conjunction with communities, parish councils will need to formally apply to the District Council for the settlement to be designated for development. Only when a new designation has been formally adopted, having demonstrated that it is necessary and sustainable, would an application for development be considered.”

What Evidence?

- Affordable Housing:
- Affordable Housing Needs Assessment
- House prices (asking and sold prices) and rents
- Potentially available sites and willingness of landowner/developer to bring forward a proportion of dwellings of a particular type – from the SHLAA.

Sites Allocations:

To allocate sites (or to identify areas within the Parish where development would be acceptable) things the community would need to demonstrate include:

- That there is a transparent, objective and robust methodology for assessing sites and that this is done on a consistent basis
- That the sites are deliverable and viable
- That the community and other stakeholders are signed up to the process of evaluation
- That the sites reflect the most sustainable location and align with strategic local plan policy
- That strategic infrastructure providers are capable of servicing the needs created by each potential allocation.
- How the site could be accessed by non-car modes
- How the site relates to the existing settlement

Existing evidence available and useful includes:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)
- Emerging Local Plan
- Population projections

Additionally for sites allocations:

- Strategic Housing Land Allocation Assessment (SHLAA)
- Landscape Character Assessment / Village Design Statement
- Parish Plan
- Historic Environment Records

Specific Issue: Retention of Local Plan Policy UT2: Settlement Protection Boundaries (Action Point 3.2)

Policy UT2: Settlement Protection Boundaries: *“Within the Settlement Protection Boundaries indicated on the relevant Proposals Map Insets, amelioration measures, such as tree planting and bunding, which protect residential amenities and enhance the landscape setting of settlements, will normally be permitted. Proposals for sport, recreation and tourism, allowed in principle in parts of the Water Park by [Policy 19](#) and [Policy 26](#), will not be permitted within Settlement Protection Boundaries if they would damage residential amenities and the setting of a settlement.”*

This Action is linked to the CDC Emerging Local Plan (preferred strategy consultation took place in May 2013). Policies of an NDP would need to be considered as whole together with the strategic policies of the CDC Local Plan.

If the Parish considers that it requires an extra level of detail to the Local Plan or that there is a need to draw up additional policies not included then a NDP may be a useful tool. Firstly it will be useful to look closely at the emerging local plan to identify what other protection measures have been put in place and to test how they apply to the areas covered by policy UT2. In order to put together an effective argument for the continuation of the policy the community will need to demonstrate in what ways the policy has been effective to date and how the loss of the protection afforded by the policy could have a detrimental impact on the area.

Specific Issue: Restriction of holiday homes (Action Point 3.3)

This is clearly a difficult subject and one that is difficult to control through planning policy. The Local Plan's evidence base will include a strategic housing market assessment, which looks at supply and demand of housing, and a strategic housing land availability assessment, which looks at available sites for new housing development (as mentioned above) which may be of use here.

See Lynton and Lynmouth NDP Policy H3 0 Primary residence policy, new housing which has to be used as the primary residence of the household living in it. This together with other policies that seek to provide affordable housing for local people make this draft plan a useful example to look at. The plan aims to deliver a balance and mixture to the local housing market and for people to live and work in the area to strengthen local community and economy.

What may need to be demonstrated?

- That there is a growing trend for holiday homes
- That the trend is having a negative impact on local facilities
- That the growing number of holiday homes is impacting on the housing needs of local people.

Evidence needed and available could include:

- Census information on 'usual' residents verses no usual residents for households.
- Housing Needs
- House Prices and Rents

Specific Issue: The improvement of broadband / mobile signal (Action Point 6.2)

This is not a normally a planning policy theme but look at the Upper Eden NDP which does include a policy (UENDP5 - Fibre to the Premises) associated with new development in the plan area. Viability and costs associated with the provision of broadband infrastructure is a key consideration as outlined in the Eden NDP.

What may need to be demonstrated?

- That existing provision in the Parish is lower than national averages
- How low BB speeds and mobile phone coverage impacts on the community and local businesses.
- That improvement of provision would improve local economy (new local businesses / working from home etc) and sustainability.
- Cost of installation – can this information be obtained from providers?

Appended Note

PAS evidence template

Sharing evidence from your local plan data base is one of the key roles that the District can play to help support neighbourhood planning. The Planning Advisory Service has produced a tool to help LPAs provide evidence for communities working on neighbourhood plans.

http://www.local.gov.uk/web/pas-test-site/neighbourhood-planning/-/journal_content/56/3280131/3614493/ARTICLE-TEMPLATE

The table below is based on the template (with content based on the housing need example) and is suggested as a way for the community in first place to outline the issue and begin populating the form before sending it to your District Council for validation, additions, comments etc.

Topic: Housing		Version number:			
Specific issue to be addressed					
A lack of affordable housing					
What does the neighbourhood group have to be able to properly demonstrate with the evidence they collect in order to ensure robustness?					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there is sufficient demand for a particular type of private market housing and this is unaffordable to local people. This may also be for a particular type of local person, e.g. young people. • To identify the particular type of housing that is in demand, e.g. 1- or 2-bed units, and the tenure, e.g. buy or rent. • That the current lack of provision is forcing local people to move out of the area in order to buy or rent property. • That certain proportions of provision of this type of housing (five per cent, 10 per cent, 20 per cent, etc) on developments over a certain size will not unduly compromise the viability of development. 					
What types of evidence are relevant in order to demonstrate the issue and develop policy?		Is this useful? Is it in a useable format?			
		Yes	No	Maybe	Comment / link to information source
Rural Exception sites – adopted policy					
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)					
Local Housing Needs Register /Choice-Based Lettings Register					
Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)					
Expected growth in population over the plan period (from population projections).					
Local completions of properties within the last five years – by size and type of dwelling					
Local developments under construction/for sale –					
Potentially available sites and willingness of landowner/developer to bring forward a proportion of					

dwellings of a particular type – from the SHLAA.				
Core Strategy/Local Plan SA/SEA background information five-year supply of sites	x			
Vacant property data	x			
What consultation questions should be asked (through surveys or focus groups) to gather effective evidence?				
<p>Local residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is your current residential status, i.e. owner occupier, rent, live at home with parents? • What is your household income? (See advice provided in the 'Caveat' at the start of this section) • How many people live in your household? What are their ages and in particular, what are the ages of those that provide the household income? • Do you currently rent or own your property? If you rent, then would you wish to own your property? If you own your property, then do you have a mortgage? • Why are you unable to purchase a property locally? What type of property are you seeking? <p>Those not currently living in the area (if they can be identified)</p> <p>Would you like to live in this area? If yes, then does the cost of housing prevent you from doing so? Would you look to rent or to buy a property? What size of property would this be?</p> <p>Estate agents</p> <p>Would this type of housing be attractive in this location to those from outside the area? Do you have evidence of demand from people for these types of properties?</p> <p>Private rented landlords</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What type of housing is most popular for renters? What is the profile of these people? • What are the typical rents for the area? <p>Developers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you be willing to provide a certain proportion of housing of a particular type in your developments? If not, then why not? If yes, then what total number of dwellings would need to be permitted to enable you to deliver, say, 10 properties of the type we want? 				