

SOMERFORD KEYNES NDP NEWS

WE'RE ON OUR WAY

The purpose of this issue of NDP News is to update everyone on the progress we have made so far on our way to completing the Neighborhood Development Plan.

It is worth repeating that the NDP defines the way in which the area it covers may be developed in the future. The Plan, once approved, is a legal document that must be considered in any future planning proposals. It must be consistent with the National Policy Planning Framework, from Central Government and CDC's Local Plan. Therefore, it differs from the Parish Plan because outside bodies, organisations, developers and so on must acknowledge the NDP and how their proposals fit with it. They have no such obligation for the Parish Plan.

Unfortunately, that doesn't mean that we will be in a position to veto anything that goes against the NDP. It does mean that we have an additional weapon in our limited armoury to use against developments to which we are opposed.

FUNDING THE PROCESS

The Government believes the introduction of NDPs to be a very important element in its policy of giving more power to local communities. Therefore, it has made funds available to help meet the costs of the process. It is estimated that an NDP will involve up to 5,000 hours of voluntary work. However, there are some parts that will incur costs and it is these elements for which funding is available. We have had to bid for these funds and we are pleased to report that our bid has been successful. We have received the full amount for which we bid.

THE PLAN AREA

Because it will be a legal document, the procedures that must be followed are detailed at every stage. Even though the Parish Council decided that the NDP should cover precisely the area of the whole Parish as it will be from April 2015, the proposal has to be submitted to Cotswold District Council and be published to allow objections.

That process has now been completed, and the area designated on 9 July, so the first formal stage has been passed. Not exactly on the same level as a Commonwealth Games gold medal, but still an essential milestone on the way.

THE FIRST PUBLIC CONSULTATION

In Issue 1 of the News, we publicised three consultation events in the Village Hall in July. They were scheduled for different days of the week and times so that everyone would have the opportunity to get to one of them. The attendance was encouraging, but not overwhelming, with some 60 people turning up, some of them more than once.

We are very grateful for the many comments received on various aspects of the NDP proposals. Some things came through very clearly:-

- Strong support for the vision and for the key focus areas .
- Village shop not viable without a partner, eg LME, pub.
- Small-scale housing development with the focus on financially- accessible, smaller homes.
- Continuing concern with flooding-related issues.
- Encourage small-scale business development and home-working.
- New and better cycleways especially supported where they linked places to which people needed/wanted to travel.
- Some interest in bringing a gas supply into the Parish but no support for mains sewerage or street lighting.
- Bus services should be continued, especially the school bus which should continue to serve both secondary schools, an important factor in attracting incomers.
- Broadband now good but mobile phone service awful.
- Traffic speed restrictions are needed.

Overall, the comments told us that we are heading in the right direction in reflecting the concerns and priorities of the community.

DO YOU AGREE?

If you didn't make it to the first round of consultations, you may still want to tell us what you think. The presentations available at those event are now on the Parish website (www.somerfordkeynes.org.uk). Please have a look at them and, if you do have views that you would like to put forward on what is there, or maybe, what should be there, please get in touch with the NDP planning team at ndp@somerfordkeynes.org.uk, so that we can ensure that your views are recorded for future consideration.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The next stage is for the team to review all of the comments received to see what needs to be changed. Then we have to prepare policies that will reflect changes and be robust enough to withstand the detailed scrutiny that may follow if anyone wishes to challenge those policies in future planning applications. The next round of community consultations in October will look at these policies and the overall scope of the NDP.