

Progress Report on the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan

HOW WILL THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN BE USED?

Recent articles have talked a lot about the process that the Neighbourhood Plan is going through on its way to being formally adopted as the legal Neighbourhood Plan for the Shifnal Parish (the area covered by the Town Council). By the time you read this it is expected that Shropshire Council will have made the modifications to the Plan recommended by the Independent Examiner and it will be then ready to proceed to a referendum. This is likely to be held in the early autumn.

At the recent Annual Town Meeting, Chris Raine provided an update on where the plan had now reached in this rather lengthy `process` it is required to go through. She was then asked the question "*How would the plan actually be used?*" With all the talk about the process it is easy to lose track of what the plan is for and how it will be used.

So here`s a reminder:

A Neighbourhood Plan is about the use and development of the land in the designated area. So many of the policies are about the how the community wants to manage or control the use and development of that land. For example to ensure that:- new development (residential, commercial, retail etc) is only within the settlement boundary of the town; new housing schemes will need to comply with the design criteria and housing mix set out in the policies; open spaces and green spaces in the town are not lost to development; future development should reduce flood risk and comply with the criteria in the policy for flood risk management; existing employment sites should be maintained and conversion of buildings for appropriate new small scale employment use supported; development of high quality agricultural, which surrounds the town, should not be permitted unless it is required for the continuation of agricultural activity.

The Town Council considers all the planning applications that are made within the Shifnal Parish and has the right to support applications or raise objections that must be taken into consideration by the Shropshire Council Planning Committee in making its decision. The Town Councillors are now the custodians of the Neighbourhood Plan and will need to refer to the policies in the Plan when considering planning applications. The Steering Group have developed a `Planning Applications Checklist` to help town councillors consider whether an application is compliant with the relevant Neighbourhood Plan

policies. Any objections they make will be strengthened by using the statutory force of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Next month we will talk about the other role of how the Neighbourhood Plan is used which it to `champion` the developments required to improve the infrastructure in the town to meet the needs of existing and new residents. Because of publishing deadlines for this magazine there may be more information available by the time you read this article – please check www.shifnalplan.co.uk for the latest news.

Chris Raine (Chair) and Tim Day (member) of the Shifnal Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group