

Northleach with Eastington - Neighbourhood Development Plan Update

On a cold November evening well over 100 people from across the town and Eastington turned out to find out what a Neighbourhood Development Plan is and why it is so important to our community.

To put it simply, it will give us some control over what development takes place, over what period and where. And when development does take place, it will mean a greater share of any benefit to be gained for the town in cash terms from developers than would otherwise be the case. So, as well as having control over development, we will also have some additional funding to improve our infrastructure, things like the playing field, play equipment or the Market Place, for example.

With this update you will find the questions considered at our November meeting. If you were not able to be at the meeting, it is not too late to let us know what you think. You can send any comments to clerk@northleach.gov.uk or drop your observations off at either the Town Council office at the Westwoods Centre or into Lane House, on the corner of Antelope Lane, West End. Feel free to write them your comments against the questions overleaf.

The November meeting was very positive. There was general consensus that if sites around the Town are going to be made available for development, then that development should be of modest proportions. No site should develop more 20-30 dwellings at once. Sites should be spread across the town, rather than in just one area. Houses should use designs and materials that blend with the Cotswold heritage. Developments should provide for all housing needs, to ensure a balanced community.

On the subject of infrastructure, parking is recognised as a significant issue, with the need to find additional parking if possible. There is also a need to ensure the school is able to cope with any expansion. And employment prospects are also seen as important. These issues and many others will need debate as we move forward.

The Town Council has now applied to designate the Parish as the area for the Neighbourhood Development Plan and is also seeking grant funding to assist with the cost of the process. In early 2014, the Town Council will be working with consultants to develop a draft plan for consideration by all of us. If, as it develops, it gains the support of the majority, and is approved by Cotswold District Council and an independent examiner, you will then have an opportunity to vote on it.

If you vote "Yes" to the plan, we will have control over how the town develops over the next 20 years and the opportunity for a greater income for infrastructure for the town as that development takes place. Without a "Yes" vote, we will lose control to developers and the potential for additional income to other areas.

Overleaf you will find the find the topics and questions that were discussed at the public meeting in December. If there are any aspects that you wish to discuss directly, please contact one of the following.

Cat Crompton, Town Clerk on clerk@northleach.gov.uk or on 01451 861473

Cllr Vicki Hewer, Chairman of the Town Council on victoria.hewer@btinternet.com

Cllr Chris Hancock, District Councillor on christopher.hancock@cotswold.gov.uk

Cllr Graham Stock, Town Councillor on grahamstock@aol.com

Alternatively drop comments off to the Town Council office at the Westwoods Centre or Lane House, West End.

Public Meeting on 20th November 2013

The meeting began with an overview of the need for a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the process behind this. The attendees were then split into 5 groups in order to discuss their individual local areas. The following subjects were discussed.

Housing

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) suggests a number of potential housing sites around the town. None are away from the town.

- Are they in the right place?
- Are there any others not already identified?
- How many houses should each potential site take?
- Do we build lots of houses at once on one site or should development be staggered?
- What sort of housing should be built? Open market, affordable, size, density, style?
- Is the community balance of housing stock right?
- Should building be permitted if there is local demand outside the town?

Environment

- What do we want to protect? Buildings, open spaces, views?
- What do we want to improve? Market Place, traffic flow, parking, drainage?

Businesses

- Do we have the right mix? Do we want more?
- Do we want to suggest alternative sites for business or light industrial use? Consider the fire station and Ferrari garage locations.
- How do we provide jobs for local people without forcing them to travel, particularly if they have to meet that expense in a low paid occupation?
- Are our businesses easily accessible or is parking an issue?

Infrastructure

As the town expands, people will be more reliant on cars to reach the town centre and the school.

- How do we deal with parking, congestion and traffic movements with the potential for another 200 + cars in the town?
- Should we have more car parking and where should this go?
- How do we deal with our inadequate drainage system? Do we restrict development on sites which would drain into our existing system unless alternative or upgraded infrastructure is provided?
- Do we have adequate recreation facilities? Playground, sports facilities and courts, MUGA, pool.
- How should new development provide for open space?
- How should the school which is at capacity, expand to accommodate additional housing? How will lack of capacity affect population mix or housing type?
- Should there be formal pre-school provision and 8.00am -6.00pm care in the town?

We will be consulting regularly with you over the next few months so please feed any comments in to the people named overleaf.