

DNF Denmead Neighbourhood Forum

A Frontrunner community group, operating as a Working Party of the Parish Council, producing a Neighbourhood Plan for Denmead

Newsletter April 2013

Frontrunner activity The Department of Communities has invited Cllr Neil Lander-Brinkley and Jenny Nell (Denmead's Liaison Officer at WCC) along with seven other Frontrunners, to attend a meeting on March 25th at Eland House to share experience and good practice. Both attended and found the meeting to be useful and informative although it raised almost as many questions as it answered! From their personal notes, some points that were made are as follows:

- Upper Eden Valley NP was passed at referendum by over 90% of those voting with a turnout of 34% (which is the same as last year's vote for the Mayor of London). This is the first Neighbourhood Plan to come into planning law.
- Two more areas, Exeter St James and Thame, have passed inspection and are going to referendum on 2nd May.
- It is interesting to note that Cuckfield PC is determining the placement of housing "to preserve views and distinctiveness of the area".
- It is important to have a landscape appraisal around the village/NP area noting points of distinctiveness.
- Question at the Thame NP Inspection: "Does this plan meet the assessed need?" (i.e. that set out in Core Strategy) asked the Inspector. The LPA said "YES" and following that the Inspector would not hear of any developer wanting to vary the proposals!
- If NP is allocating sites then evidence required in greater, for instance, a Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) is important. It seems that not every NP is doing allocations (vis Exeter St James).
- Advice - As the plan is being prepared always consider the Examiner; the Voter and the Users. (The Examiner will probably focus on the development part of the NP overall).
- Planning Applications will be considered against the existing Development Plan whoever produced them and whatever their date. This means the Neighbourhood Plan first and then the Core Strategy/Local Plan Part 1.
- Advice – the structure of Vision / Objective / Policy rationale / Is a good template. In the Plan, if you write " MUST" then you have to mean it and have evidence to back it up. If your wording is too weak then that weakness will override any stronger wording the LPAs Core Strategy.

Community Engagement WP Work has centred on completing the Analysis of the data collected from residents at the former NatWest premises. When completed (and put to the Steering Group) then the Work planned will be to arrange Focus group(s) to discuss results in specific work areas, after which the SG can determine the next actions.

Development Placement WP A briefing of the development industry was held on 25th March, with an independent Chair from AMT. This was generally well received although some developers have since told us that they thought that other ‘colleagues’ were overly aggressive and unhelpful. Six developers have asked and taken up the offer of separate discussions. These have been recorded and the notes will be the main focus of a future WP meeting

Employers and Employment WP A third Business Breakfast was held on 20th and the recorded outcomes of the previous work were discussed. A revised version will shortly be put to every business that has any contact with the DNP team since we started with a “Do you agree with these outcomes, or not? plus an opportunity for comment. This will give a quantitative edge to the outcomes which we will then look to URS/Locality to turn into policies.

Demographics and Housing WP Work has continued slowly but without any formal papers or notes. A meeting is to be arranged for 9th April. A discussion with more representatives of the Health Service and with WCC officers re current allocations and other WCC policy particularly with regard to an aging population was planned but has not yet happened. A meeting on Technical Issues (wider than just this WP) which became a clear requirement after our attendance at the DCLG meeting, is being arranged by Jenny Nell.

Infrastructure WP Work has continued with a discussion of the Village Shopping Area Study with the Employment WP members. A report, with outcomes, will be available for the next meeting of the Forum in late May .

Environment & Recreation WP This work package continues to make progress with an extended paper from the WP Team on recreational space for which we record thanks to David Griffiths and Jim Kerr. SG members should be prepared for comments to be taken at the meeting on 11th April).

Further, after a meeting with the Hampshire & IoW Wildlife Trust on 4th April the environmental assessment of current SINCs and other identified areas is clearly possible. Their Head of Conservation (Policy & Evidence), Clive Chatters, is currently assessing the cost and timing of the work they will have to do and will prepare options for us to consider. Peter Ambrose will provide more perspective at the SG meeting.

Published by the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan team – contact them at www.denmeadneighbourhoodplan.org.uk or follow them on twitter using @DenmeadPC