

Walford Parish Council Neighbourhood Development Plan

Questions raised at NDP Launch Meetings

Held 10:00am 23rd November 2019 at Bishopswood Village Hall 23 parishioners attended with 5 members of the NDP Steering Group and 2 volunteer helpers.

Held 3:00pm 30th November 2019 at Walford Village Hall 26 parishioners attended with 6 from NDP Steering Group and 2 volunteer helpers.

Q.

How do the house building requirement numbers for Walford Parish compare with the National average?

This is a bit of a difficult one to answer, without going through each of the individual council areas requirements. Addition to response: This paper provides an insight into the complexity of housing requirements nationally <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7671/CBP-7671.pdf>

Q.

Is 14% requirement a national number?

No, it is part of Herefordshire Council's Core Strategy to meet their overall target of providing at least 16,500 new homes between 2011 and 2031. Each Housing Market Area (the area around each of the 5 market towns) has been given a different target. Ross, Ledbury and Leominster are all 14%, Hereford is 18%, Bromyard is 15% and Kington & The Golden Valley are both 12%. The 14% is for the rural area around Ross. Ross Town has its own specific minimum figure of at least 900 new homes.

Q.

Does the number required of the plan refer to "physically built" or just "planning approved"?

Neither. As part of our plan we must demonstrate the potential to reach the numbers required. Whether developers wish to build or not is outside the control of the plan.

Q.

Will the National Framework and Core Strategy alter with changes in government and how does that affect our plan?

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Quite likely, and of course there will be a knock-on effect into our plan that will require adjustment. We can, however, construct our plan in a manner that provides flexibility and avoids constraints, to minimise the impact of any imposed changes.

Q.

What is the role of consultants?

Their role is multi-purpose. First, they bring expertise in planning, data analysis and understanding the construction of NDPs having expertise in all these areas. They also provide a degree of independence.

Q.

Will Hereford Planning Authority refer to our plan at all before it is adopted? Is there a stage that it becomes more relevant to planning decisions?

The plan gains weight as it progresses. So, once we have a draft plan in place, Herefordshire Planning Authority will reference it to some extent during planning decision making. It will not become fully part of the process until it is adopted.

Q.

What has happened to all the work undertaken by previous steering groups?

All that has been achieved in the past is being taken forward by the new Steering Group. It will of course need to be understood and verified as still relevant, particularly as some of the information is quite old. All of the previous work predated the final adopted version of The Core Strategy and that has required us to revisit and re-evaluate all of the information that was collected. There were some very significant changes to the rural housing policy in the last draft of the Core Strategy and these changes must be taken into account when drafting our NDP

Q.

Are the sites offered going to meet our required quota?

At this stage there appears to be enough sites that may be suitable to meet the number for the current plan's requirements. We need to bear in mind that this is a rolling process. The current plan extends to 2031, this will be followed by a subsequent plan, potentially with a different number of houses required.

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Q.

I attended a very similar, and equally enthusiastic meeting in 2017. What is different now?

We have a new council and a new steering team and a renewed energy. We have also engaged consultants to help us with the progressing of the plan, something not done previously. Will that get us to the finish line? It's impossible to say!

Q.

Where are our settlement boundaries and what is the impact of drawing them?

Our settlement boundaries are a bit of an unknown, we may set them as part of our plan. However, there are implications arising from setting a boundary. Firstly, where are Walford (Coughton), Bishopswood and Howle Hill, our local understanding needs to be defined. Secondly where might it be best to draw a boundary where development might be more favourable inside than outside; whose land is inside and whose is outside. We must do this in a consultative way to make sure it will stand up to scrutiny.

Q.

Can Herefordshire override the Parish Plan?

Herefordshire planners must take our plan into account when making decisions. However, as with most documents they are open to interpretation. Some things that we may have defined in one way may be taken to be something else by others. Skilful development of our plan will help negate this.

Q.

Drainage in many areas is becoming a greater problem as water table levels increase. Will new development be required to have mains drainage systems?

Infrastructure is outside the direct remit of the plan, as it is not a planning issue. We have the opportunity of adding our concerns as a note within the plan, but it will have no direct planning decision influence. However, there are planning policies within The Core Strategy that require any new development to meet standards for adequate drainage and the Planning Department are required to consult with their own internal experts, currently Balfour Beatty, on flood risks and drainage before approving any application. Our NDP may be able to add more local detail to the existing Core Strategy drainage policies

Q.

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Are we expecting a flurry of planning applications just before the planned adoption of the plan, to try and get around its constraints?

Not particularly, the planning process will remain the same and once we have submitted a draft plan it will have some influence on decisions. All applications are still assessed against the Core Strategy and residents can always provide comments on any application.

Q.

Will residents still be able to input to individual planning applications as they do now?

Yes, we are not altering any planning processes, merely adding a level of detail to the decision making. Parishioners will continue to be able to comment and lodge objections to planning applications as now.

Q.

If a site is deemed unsuitable at this stage is that the end of it?

Not necessarily, we are about to re-evaluate the current site assessment using new criteria set by parishioners. It is possible that part of a current site may be deemed suitable, where the whole site is not considered so.

Q.

Electricity in Walford keeps going off. Will this get worse with more development?

This is much the same as the drainage issues raised in an earlier question. There is not a direct planning requirement for stability of electrical supply. However, we can note our concerns as an appendix to the plan.

Q. Two individuals have asked to submit sites for development, is this possible?

As the call for sites exercise was undertaken some time ago, we will be accepting additional sites and reviewing them alongside the existing 16 that have been put forward. Site submission forms will be added to the parish website soon.