

Cleeve Prior Neighbourhood
Development Plan 2016 – 2031

Statement of Consultation

Cleeve Prior Parish Council

April 2017

1. Introduction

1.1 This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of Section 15(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain, as follows:

- (a) details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- (b) an explanation on how they were consulted;
- (c) a summary of the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted, and;
- (d) a description of how these issues and concerns has been considered and, where relevant, they have been addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

1.2 The statement sets out the principles applied to the consultation process (Section 2) and the background to the neighbourhood plan (Section 3). A list of the persons and bodies who were consulted is provided (Section 4), with a description of the stages of consultation (Section 5). Finally, a summary is provided of the main issues and concerns which were raised at the various stages of consultation, and how these were addressed in the plan (Section 6). More details are set out in the appendices to this document.

2. Aims of Consultation

2.1 The principles of the consultation process were agreed by the Cleeve Prior Neighbourhood Plan Working Party, as follows:

A. Inclusiveness

- Consultation will encourage the participation of people affected by or interested in the NDP
- Everyone will be given equal opportunity to participate in consultation
- Consultation will be sensitive to the needs of particular Working Parties to maximise ability to contribute
- We will actively seek out people for consultation.

B. Focus

- Consultation must have a clear purpose
- Chosen consultation methods will be appropriate for the task
- A clear statement on what the consultation is to achieve will be provided
- A clear statement on the role of NDP Working Party and the role of other participants will be made

C. Responsiveness

- We will consider and respond to contributions from all participants
- Consultation will be transparent. All people involved will have a clear understanding about how their feedback and comments are to be used
- Maintain transparency. We will take new ideas on board and alter the course of actions if required
- Ensure respect for the wide range of interests that may be represented during consultation
- Make reasonable attempts to resolve conflicts, if they arise, and reach a suitable solution.

D. Providing Information

- Information relating to the consultation will be readily available to allow participants to make informed and timely contributions
- All involved can easily access information relating to the consultation before key decisions are made
- Relevant information will be presented in an easily understood format
- There may be circumstances where commercially sensitive information or information of a personal nature may not be able to be fully disclosed to the public.

E. Implementation and Evaluation

- All consultation processes will be evaluated after the decision-making is completed
- Participants will receive feedback about ideas received and how the final decision was reached
- If a difference occurs between the ideas and the final decision, the reasons will be documented.

2.2 An explanation of how these principles were applied is set out in Sections 5 and 6 below.

2.3 The Group adopted a Communications Strategy, with the following elements:

- the Parish Newsletter - to be used for updates, feedback, and announcement of events;
- the web-site Cleevepriorparishcouncil.co.uk;
- leaflet drops. Key events will be advertised and updates provided by way of house-to-house leaflet drops;
- notice boards. Boards in the village green and the pub can be used to provide information and updates to the village.

3. Background

3.1 For many years, the Parish Council has been actively involved in planning issues affecting Cleeve Prior. In 2006, it completed a Parish Plan, which was adopted by Wychavon District Council as a Supplementary Planning Document. This was followed in 2011 by the publication of a Village Design Statement. In the same year, a Parish Action Plan was produced by the Parish Council, which was informed by a Parish Plan questionnaire. The Cleeve Prior Residents' Association also produced a questionnaire on planning issues which was circulated to all households in the area. Together, these events and the publication of the various documents demonstrated a strong commitment to planning by the Parish Council and the local community.

3.2 Following the introduction of legislation in the Localism Act 2011, the Government provided funding for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans. Town and Parish Councils were invited to apply for selection as "front runners" in the process. Cleeve Prior Parish Council was one of several local councils in Worcestershire who were chosen.

3.3 On 28th May 2012, Cleeve Prior Parish Council passed a motion to instigate proceedings and to establish a Neighbourhood Development Plan Working Party. At the meeting it was determined that the plan would cover the whole parish of Cleeve Prior.

3.4 The terms of reference of the Working Party were as follows:

- To identify, designate, promote, and endeavour to bring about the development or redevelopment of sites within the agreed Neighbourhood Area;
- For, among other things, the creation and improvement of housing, employment, recreation, green space, local services and transport, and (where appropriate) the provision of social, recreation, retail, employment, business, transport and environmental services;
- To improve the well-being of residents and businesses within the area;
- A reflection of the needs of the area that is characterised by a limited supply of local housing and affordable housing choice, poor levels of local services including public transport, low energy sustainability and limited employment opportunities;
- To undertake this process with a comprehensive consultation strategy.

3.5 On 14th November 2012, an Open Meeting was held in the village to discuss the planning issues which would need to be considered in the Neighbourhood Plan. The main “pillars” of concerns were endorsed by the Working Group at a meeting on 12th December (see paragraph 5.4 below).

3.6 An application for the designation of the Neighbourhood Area was made to Wychavon District Council on 15th January 2013 in accordance with Regulation 5 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. The Neighbourhood Area was formally designated by the District Council on 28th May 2013.

4 List of Consultees

4.1 A full list of those persons and organisations which were consulted is set out in Appendix 2 to this statement. At the outset, the main local components were as follows:

- All Cleeve Prior parishioners on the electoral roll
- Cleeve Prior First School
- Cleeve Prior Pre-School

- Cleeve Prior War Memorial Hall Management Committee
- Cleeve Prior NWR
- Cleeve Prior Women's Institute
- Cleeve Prior Residents' Association
- St. Andrew's Church PCC
- Local employers, self-employed people working from home, and businesses
- Children and retired persons
- Suppliers to local residents and businesses
- Neighbouring Parish Councils in Warwickshire and Worcestershire

4.2 Planning officers at Wychavon District Council have been actively involved in the process throughout and have been positive in giving advice and assistance to the Neighbourhood Plan group. At each stage the District Council has been formally consulted, together with the statutory consultees, and other public bodies. The list of these organisations is also contained in Appendix 2.

5 Stages of Consultation

5.1 Consultation on the emerging Neighbourhood Plan can be divided into seven basic stages, as follows:

- Stage 1: Early days (from May 2012 to January 2013)
- Stage 2: NDP Questionnaire (2013)
- Stage 3: Group Discussions (Early 2014)
- Stage 4: Discussion Document (Mid-2014)
- Stage 5: Housing Needs Survey (December 2014)
- Stage 6: Pre-Submission Consultation on draft plan (May/June 2015)
- Stage 7: Consultation and Questionnaire on changes to policy CP11 (May/June 2016)

Details of each stage are set out in the ensuing paragraphs and are referenced in Appendix 1 to this statement. A summary of the results, and the main issues and concerns which were raised, is provided in Section 6 below.

- 5.2 As shown in paragraph 3.1 above, there has been a strong interest and involvement in planning matters in Cleeve Prior, both by the Parish Council and the local community. The Open Meeting held in the autumn of 2012 cemented this interest and led directly to the decision of the Parish Council in May 2012 to proceed with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. The NDP Working Party was set up to lead the process, which was coupled to a consultation strategy.
- 5.3 **Stage 1** of the consultation process commenced in May 2012, following the setting up of the NDP Working Party. In the early weeks and months, members of the Working Party studied the range of planning documents listed in paragraph 3.1 above, together with the results of questionnaires which had been distributed in 2011 and 2012. The analysis also included a study of the emerging South Worcestershire Development Plan its supporting documents, as well as the “saved” policies of the Wychavon Local Plan Review of 2007.
- 5.4 A Public Open Meeting was held in the village on 14th November 2012 to discuss the planning issues and to explain the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. The meeting largely endorsed the four pillars of concern: Housing and Development; the First School; Infrastructure, and; Employment. Shortly afterwards, the Working Party engaged with the school governors to discuss educational issues and the future of the First School.
- 5.5 **Stage 2.** Following the public meeting, the Working Party agreed in January 2013 that a questionnaire should be prepared for distribution to all residents. Its purpose was to examine the planning issues in more detail and to establish the key objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. The questionnaire format was approved on 21st February, and it was distributed with the Cleeve Prior Newsletter in April 2013.
- 5.6 The results of the questionnaire (May 2013) helped to confirm the key issues which had been suggested by the Working Party. Some common themes were emerging, centred on the four pillars of concern, which had been endorsed by the earlier public meeting.
- 5.7 Following the results of the questionnaire, there was a loss of momentum on the Neighbourhood Plan, mainly because of a lack of funding for the exercise and changes in the composition of the Working Party. In October 2013, Wychavon District Council secured additional grant money from Locality, including funds for the appointment of a planning consultant.

- 5.8 Stimulated by the injection of funds and the support of the District Council, the Working Party proceeded to **Stage 3** of the consultation. Early in 2014, a list of village groups, societies and other stakeholders was compiled for further contact. To improve communications, a dedicated NDP web-site was established. This would be used as a key point of contact, in addition to the Parish Newsletter and leaflet drops.
- 5.9 Two stakeholder engagement events were held at the Village Memorial Hall on 11th and 17th February 2014. Using maps of the village, the first meeting canvassed views on areas where development should not be allowed. The second sought opinions on where development might be permitted. In addition, three roadshow events were convened, in order to examine some of the wider issues. These were on 7th March (at the Field Barn), the 8th March (at the First School), and 11th March (at the Memorial Village Hall). The results of these sessions were reported in the Parish Newsletter of April 2014. During this stage of consultation, the Working Party also received a number of documents from local organisations and groups, who had responded to the request for views.
- 5.10 **Stage 4** of the consultation process commenced in May 2014, with the publication of a Discussion Document by the Working Party. This set out two suggested vision statements for the parish, and a series of draft policy statements under the four pillars of concern which had been raised during earlier stages of consultation. A fifth topic area was added, which had been identified during the consultations of February – April 2014. This was the future of the Evesham Road Gypsy and Traveller Site and the attitude of the community to future residential development. The Discussion Document contained a questionnaire seeking residents' views on the vision and the draft policy statements.
- 5.11 At this stage, The Parish Council engaged the planning consultant Jed Griffiths, of Griffiths Environmental Planning, to assist the Working Party in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. The consultant was introduced to the village community at an Open Meeting on 14th May, which also provided an opportunity for further explanation and discussion of the topics and issues.
- 5.12 The response to the Discussion Document confirmed that the range of topics and issues was widely accepted and provided a basis for the formulation of policies. It was also suggested by the consultant that more evidence would be needed on the amount and type of housing that would be required for local needs during the plan period. Accordingly, it was agreed that a Housing Needs Survey would be commissioned by the Parish Council. This formed the basis of **Stage 5** of the consultation process, with the bulk of the survey work occurring in December 2014.

- 5.13 In the early part of 2015, the consultant prepared a draft plan for the consideration of the Parish Council and officers of Wychavon District Council. With the assistance of the District Council, the three statutory consultation bodies were consulted by letter. All three - the Environment Agency, English Heritage, and Natural England - responded with comments, confirming that the plan would not require a Strategic Environmental Assessment. Accordingly, the Parish Council agreed for the plan to be published as a pre-submission draft in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. At **Stage 6** an edited version of the plan, together with a questionnaire, was circulated to all households, local businesses, and other interested parties for the consultation period 15th May to 30th June 2015.
- 5.14 To the consultation, there was a 34% response rate. Generally, there was a widespread endorsement for the plan and the draft policies. The exception was the mixed reaction to the proposed policy CP11 on the gypsy and traveller site on the Evesham Road. As a consequence, further work was undertaken on the future planning of the site, resulting in the re-drafting of policy CP11.
- 5.15 **Stage 7.** The Neighbourhood Plan (Chapter 5) and other background documents describe various negotiations and policy considerations which resulted in the final version of policy CP11 in the submitted plan. In mid-2015, a scheme for the redevelopment of the Gypsy and Traveller site was informally submitted to Wychavon District Council, but was rejected (see paragraph 6.7 below). Accordingly, in September 2015, the Parish Council commissioned a report from a local firm of chartered surveyors to outline the development options for the site. Further negotiations ensued between the site owners, developers, and the District and Parish Councils.
- 5.16 In May and June 2016, to strengthen the evidence base, the Parish Council conducted a further survey of local residents and other stakeholders, specifically on the options for the redevelopment of the Evesham Road site. There was a clear majority in favour of its re-use for housing, preferably for a range of 40 – 80 dwellings.
- 5.17 The redevelopment would depend on the ability of the District Council to re-locate existing residents of the site to new pitches elsewhere in Wychavon. To address the potential human rights concerns, the Parish Council obtained a legal opinion from Number Five Chambers. It was determined that re-location of residents would not be incompatible with Human Rights legislation.

5.18 In early 2017, at the request of the Parish Council, Locality commissioned a report from the consultants AECOM, who provided a further view on the options for development. As a result of AECOM's advice and the earlier reports, a modified version of policy CP11 was drafted for the submission of the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.19 Following this extensive series of negotiations, policy analysis, and consultation, the Parish Council is confident that the submission version of the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the views of the majority of the community. At each of the seven stages of consultation, the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Group have been meticulous in seeking the views of local residents and other local stakeholders. The process has taken time, but it has been worth the additional effort.

6 Summary of Main Issues and Concerns

6.1 From the beginning, the main issues raised in consultation have been considered as four pillars of concern:

- Housing and Development
- Employment
- Education, and
- Infrastructure

These topics were identified at the Open Meeting held in the autumn of 2011, and were used as a basis for subsequent rounds of consultation. To the four pillars were added a fifth issue – the future of the gypsy and traveller site on the Evesham Road.

6.2 In the formulation of issues and options and possible policies, it became clear that these were not the only concerns. Reference to earlier planning documents, including the Parish Plan of 2006 and the Village Design Statement 2011, revealed a more widespread concern with the conservation and enhancement of the environment. These issues were also expressed in the Conservation Area Appraisal, published by Wychavon District Council in 2008.

6.3 This more widespread concern was clearly expressed in the Discussion Document of April 2014 in Vision Statement VS1 which stated as follows:

“The Cleeve Prior Plan should allow development only if it does not have more than minimal impact on the conservation area of the village and its surroundings. Development should be allowed at a rate consistent with historical growth and at a density similar to the existing village.”

6.4 At the heart of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is the presumption in favour of sustainable development, the core principles of which are embodied in the South Worcestershire Development Plan. Thus, it was determined that the lead policy CP1 in the Neighbourhood Plan should reflect these principles. The main thrust of the plan, in policies CP1 – CP5, is therefore concerned with the conservation and enhancement of the environment, both in the village and the surrounding parish. There was clear a mandate from the local community on this set of issues.

6.5 Views on housing and development issues were canvassed at all stages of consultation. There was a consensus that low levels of development were appropriate, in line with the historical rates of housing growth in the area. At Stage 5, the Housing Needs Survey confirmed that some housing development would be required for local needs, but at a small scale. This is reflected in policies CP6 and CP7 of the plan. The general concern about design and the protection of the village character is addressed in policy CP8. This further reinforces the aspirations of local residents which emerged from the earliest stages of consultation.

6.6 With regard to the local economy and employment, it was recognised that some development would be acceptable, but appropriate to the scale and rural character of the village environment. This is recognised in policy CP9.

6.7 Although there was considerable concern in the earlier stages of consultation about education and infrastructure, it was recognised that there was limited scope for the Neighbourhood Plan to deal with these non-land use issues. Accordingly, the aspirations of both the community and the Parish Council are set out in Annex 1 to the Plan.

6.8 In the response to the 2014 Discussion Document, it became clear that the local community shared the concern of the Parish Council about the future of the gypsy and traveller site on the Evesham Road. As explained in the plan, the future use at that time was extremely uncertain, pending the completion of a policy document by Wychavon District Council. Accordingly the pre-submission plan of 2015 contained policy CP11, a holding policy which did not commit the site for housing. Response to the draft showed that the majority of the public wanted something to be done, although opinion was split on the precise solution. Planning consultants, acting for the owners of the site, had informally submitted an outline development scheme involving the construction of at least 150 dwellings and a care home for the elderly.

6.9 Discussions were held with officers of Wychavon District Council who pointed out that, in the draft South Worcestershire Development Plan, Cleeve Prior had been designated as a category 3 village, where no housing development had been allocated. Moreover, the Evesham Road site was located in the open countryside where there was a clear presumption against development except for rural purposes. Nevertheless, advice from the Government had indicated that Neighbourhood Plans could specify higher levels of housing development if there was clear evidence of benefits to the community.

6.10 The further processes leading to the final version of policy CP11 are described in Chapter 5 of the Neighbourhood Plan and in paragraphs 5.15 – 5.19 above. This included **Stage 7** of the consultations with local residents and other stakeholders.

6.11 In these circumstances, the submission plan (in policy CP11) now postulates that the change of use of the site for housing would have a range of benefits, including the restoration and environmental enhancement of the site and the provision of housing. In turn, the additional housing would help to secure the future of the First School and pre-school accommodation. It would also lead to improvements in infrastructure and the range of village service and facilities. At the same time the character of the village core and the Conservation Area would be protected.

6.12 To summarise, the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Group have ensured that, at each stage of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, the local community and other stakeholders have been consulted. Detailed references in support of this statement are set out below in Appendix 1. Minutes of all the meetings of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group can be accessed on the Parish Council web-site, cleevepriorparishcouncil.co.uk.

Appendix 1: References

Paragraph numbers listed below show the links to the sources which are referred to in this statement. Unless indicated, all documents can be found on the Consultation Statement appendix 1 Section of the Parish Council web-site, Cleevepriorparishcouncil.co.uk.

3.1 Cleeve Prior Parish Plan 2006 (Questionnaire and results for the Parish Plan are on the Parish Council web-site)

3.1 Cleeve Prior Village Design Statement 2011

3.3 Minutes of Parish Council special meeting on 28th May 2012

3.5 Minutes of meeting on 11th December 2012

3.6 Application for designation of Neighbourhood Plan area, January 2013

5.6 Summary of results of questionnaire, April 2013

5.9 Notes of stakeholder events, February 2014

5.9 Newsletter February 2014 update.

5.9 Notes of three Roadshow events, March 2014.

5.10 Neighbourhood Plan Discussion Document, April 2014

5.11 Notes of Village Open Meeting, 14th May 2014

5.12 Housing Needs Survey Form, December 2014

5.12 Summary of results, January 2015

5.13 Draft Plan approved for 6 week consultation

5.13 Draft plan pre-sub summary as printed

5.13 Pre-submission Questionnaire, May 2015

5.14 Summary of questionnaire results, July 2015

5.16 Survey with reply form on Gypsy and Traveller site, May 2016

5.16 CP11 Gypsy and Traveller site policy results for the newsletter.

5.16 Summary of CP11 survey results, June 2016

Appendix 2 Consultees

Consultation Action

Consultation survey April 2013

Open consultation meetings (3 in March 2014)

Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan - May / June 2015

Draft Policy for the Gypsy Traveller site – May / June 2016

Organisation

All residents of Cleeve Prior

All organisations, businesses and residents of Cleeve Prior

Mailed out to all Post office addresses for Cleeve Prior and Statutory Consultees.

Mailed out to all Post office addresses for Cleeve Prior and Statutory Consultees

Statutory consultees by E-mail

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Highways Agency

Severn Trent Water

Worcestershire County Council

Forestry Commission

Natural England

Historic England

West Mercia Police Estate Services

West Midlands Ambulance Service

Planning Inspectorate

Wychavon District Council

Ward Councillor Wychavon District Council

Western Power Distribution (Midlands)

Age UK Herefordshire & Worcestershire

British Telecom

E-ON Customer Services

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