

DISLEY & NEWTOWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Response to, and analysis of, comments received from Residents, Cheshire East Council and other statutory bodies at Regulation 14 stage (July – September 2017)

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) has received comments in response to the consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan (NP). Most of the comments were from residents of Disley & Newtown and we highlight the significant points, and our responses, below. Some comments were from Cheshire East Council and other statutory bodies and organisations, many of which take the standard form routinely submitted for these purposes. Key points from these are addressed, where relevant, within this document. Comments from private developers and landowners are addressed in a separate document <http://disleyparishcouncil.org.uk/neighbourhood-plan/> Many comments from residents were on matters beyond the remit of the NP (e.g. relating to recent airport relief road mitigation measures, current maintenance of trees and hedges, cleanliness of streets and bus shelters, late night noise or provision of cultural events); where appropriate these have been referred to the attention of the parish council. However, there are wide-ranging comments from the community and issues raised on which the NPSG believes it is important to report and respond; and, in certain respects, it will modify the draft plan accordingly.

Next steps

The NPSG has amended the Neighbourhood Plan in the light of comments received, and we aim to submit the NP to Cheshire East Council on 15th December 2017. The NP will be subject to further consultation for a period of six weeks until the end of January 2018 and will then be independently examined. The examiner may suggest some modifications, and then a referendum as to whether to adopt the Neighbourhood Plan will be held. Everyone on the electoral roll in Disley and Newtown will have a vote. We anticipate that this will be in May 2018.

1. Air Quality (AQ1)

Summary of main comments received

A large number of respondents observed that the NP does not adequately address air quality, particularly as it is recognised that Disley & Newtown does have a significant air quality problem at various points along the A6. Also mentioned were the projected impact of the new airport relief road on traffic congestion and air pollution and the increased national attention given to the effect of diesel fumes on public health, which has intensified concerns about air quality.

Response and (if appropriate) Policy change proposed

Recent publication of data collected along the Air Quality Management Area (the A6 from Fountain Square to the White Lion Public House at the junction with Redhouse Lane) has demonstrated air quality significantly above legal thresholds. The NPSG is therefore proposing the addition to the NP of a policy dealing with air quality as follows:

Policy AQ1 – Air Quality

No development within the Settlement Boundary and/or within the surrounding Green Belt that would lead to an increase in traffic shall be permitted unless it has been demonstrated by robust assessment and calculation with any appropriate modelling that the proposed development will not lead to:

- (a) further deterioration of the air quality in any parts of Disley and Newtown where the air quality already does not meet the legal requirements for air quality, or
- (b) deterioration of the air quality in any part of Disley and Newtown such that the air quality of such part ceases to meet the legal requirements for air quality.

Justification

An Air Quality Management Area was declared by CEC in 2009 and continues to be in force, with air pollution levels at areas along the A6 significantly above the legal threshold. The community rightly expects the relevant authorities to take appropriate action to ensure that air quality becomes compliant. Until air quality becomes compliant it is inappropriate to allow any development that will make matters worse. By the same reasoning it would be inappropriate to allow development that will lead to further areas ceasing to meet legal requirements for air quality. Mention of Air Quality will also be made in the NP Objectives and in the Foreword, and an AQMA map inserted.

2. Housing (H1-H5)

Summary of main comments received

2.1 There were many comments about the need to protect the Green Belt and several that suggested that there may be areas of Green Belt within the settlement boundary shown on the boundary plan in the NP.

2.2 There were several comments suggesting the release of Green Belt land to facilitate development.

2.3 There were several comments on the fact that the level of response to the Housing Needs Survey was only 16% and suggesting that the NP has given disproportionate consideration to the needs of elderly residents over younger residents. There were also some positive comments about the degree of consideration given to elderly residents.

2.4 There were comments about the proposal to allocate the former garage site at Barlow Meadow as a site for older persons' housing. Concern was expressed about building in the conservation area, the absence of a requirement for social housing content and the period for which a developer must give precedence to local residents.

2.5 Comments received from Cheshire East Council (re H1): There is a concern that the settlement boundary overlaps with the Green Belt and implies that the GB boundary is being redrawn (something that a N. Plan is not able to do). Also, "the fundamental policy aim of containing new development within the settlement boundary may not be deliverable in the context of the strategic requirements of the CEC Local Plan. It is unclear, apart from the site at Barlow Moor (which has limitations), how and where future growth could be accommodated within the settlement boundary of Disley."

(re H 2 and H5): A clarification in policy H2 is needed to explain that the policy relates specifically to affordable housing (and consideration given to how this may delivered).

2.6 There were expressions of concern about the ability of the primary school to cope with the increase in the number of children likely to arise from additional residential development. The NPSG understands that the school has already seen an increase in numbers and that there is an expectation of further increases from the new families living at the recently completed developments referred to below (see response 2.3d). Similar concerns were expressed about the capacity of other local facilities such as the doctors' surgery.

Response and (if appropriate) Policy change proposed

2.1 and 2.5 The NPSG is aware that the Settlement Boundary overlaps with land designated as Green Belt. Although the housing in the Light Alders Lane/Lyme Road area falls within the Green Belt boundary, it has been included as 'settlement'. There is no implication that the NPSG wishes to re-draw the GB boundary line. Given the overlap between settlement boundary and Green Belt, it is proposed that draft policy H1 is amended to read:

Policy H1 – New residential development

A settlement boundary is defined and shown at Figure C. Within the settlement boundary of Disley and Newtown, new housing development consistent with housing numbers set by Cheshire East Council for Disley and Newtown as a Local Service Centre will be supported except for any areas of Green Belt within the settlement boundary where further residential development will not be permitted. Outside the settlement boundary, residential development will not be permitted except where this accords with national Green Belt policy. In all cases any proposed residential development will be subject to the other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan

Justification

The response from the initial residents' survey and subsequent feedback illustrates that the community attaches great value to the Green Belt in and around Disley and Newtown.

2.2 The NPSG feels that releasing GB land to facilitate development is contrary to the strongly and widely expressed desire to protect the Green Belt evidenced in the initial community survey. No change.

2.3 In considering the justification for these policies on Housing the NPSG is mindful of the following:

(a) The Housing Advice Note identifies the fact that Disley & Newtown does have an aging population.

(b) Residents were free to choose not to complete the Housing Needs Survey but where residents have completed the survey the results should be taken into account.

(c) The results of the Housing Needs Survey were consistent with many comments made by residents to members of the NPSG informally and at presentations.

(d) The two developments which have recently taken place in Disley & Newtown are the construction of 15 social housing units next to the primary school for rent by Peaks & Plains and the construction of 160 units at Redhouse Lane for sale by Persimmon. The Persimmon scheme included the provision of 25% of the housing to be sold as affordable homes to qualifying buyers at a discount on market value. Neither of these schemes includes elements specifically designed for older residents.

The NPSG is not proposing any amendment to draft policy H2 but, in response to advice received from Cheshire East Council, it is proposed that the second part of policy H3 is amended to read:

Policy H3 – Social Housing for Older People

The loss or redevelopment of existing social housing for the elderly will not be permitted unless the redevelopment includes the provision of new units designed to provide accommodation for the elderly to be available in at least the equivalent number of existing units that will be lost. The only exceptions will be when it can be robustly demonstrated through an up to date housing needs survey that the accommodation is no longer needed, or the need can be met elsewhere through the Parish's housing stock, or the accommodation will be replaced elsewhere in the Parish.

Any proposals to enhance and improve the quality or quantity of social housing units for the elderly will be supported, subject to other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan, and national Green Belt policy.

2.4 The NPSG has recently been advised that the Barlow Meadow site has been purchased by a local developer who has obtained planning permission for ten apartments. The developer has indicated to the Parish Council that although the NP has not yet been adopted he intends to market the scheme to local residents before embarking on a wider marketing campaign. The NPSG has concluded that, notwithstanding the grant of planning permission policy, H4 should be retained.

2.5 In view of comments received from Cheshire East Council, it is proposed that a second element should be added to policy H5 to read as follows:

Policy H5 - Housing Mix and Type

New residential developments of 10 or more units should include a range of property type, tenure and size to address any imbalance and needs in the local market.

Unless viability or other material considerations show a robust justification for a different mix, in order to redress the imbalance of the current housing stock and ensure an appropriate mix of housing in Disley and Newtown to meet local needs, new homes on developments of 10 or more should be limited to one-third detached properties. The remainder (both market and affordable) should reflect the most recent up to date housing needs survey, particularly favouring smaller homes, bungalows, apartments, terraced or semi-detached, and providing for the changing needs and life-styles of an ageing population - including where appropriate an element of fully compliant Lifetime Homes.

2.6 The NPSG has sought advice as to whether development can be restricted through the NP until these issues are addressed, and has been advised that the CEC Planning Department has a standard formula to assess such infrastructure needs.

3. Countryside and Green Space (C1-C4)

Summary of main comments received

3.1. Many comments were made on issue of Air Quality – see new policy above.

3.2. Many respondents commented on the importance of tree preservation and the role mature trees played in the character of Disley. Alongside these were complaints about too much tree removal and dangers from particular overgrown trees.

3.3. Several respondents commented favourably on local green space designation, while 1 thought LGS 6 (Arnold Rhodes Play area) should be available for development of community facilities.

3.4. Several respondents commented on cycling provision – lack of cycle parking provision at station and shops; need for dedicated cycling routes between Disley and neighbouring towns; better separation of cyclists and walkers; and proposal to upgrade the canal towpath as a dedicated cycling route.

3.5. Comments made by CEC: The policies set out here are positive and considered to comply with the strategic approach of the Borough Council. Consideration should be given to whether an amended form of words for Policy C1 would benefit the Village in achieving its objectives.

3.6. CEC commented that Strategic policy SE3 Biodiversity and Geodiversity seeks to protect designated wildlife corridors – part 4 of the policy could be successfully applied here and the policy is helpful to add to a locally specific policy. A clear distinction should be drawn between Local Wildlife Sites as already identified in the development plan and those documented via the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.7. The Canal and River Trust was generally supportive of policies C1, C3, relating to promotion of the canal towpath for links between communities and walking & cycling; and canal as wildlife corridor.

Response and (if appropriate) Policy change proposed

3.1 Covered under new policy (1) above.

3.2 No policy change required. Tree preservation already covered under current Policy

3.3 No policy change required.

3.4 No policy change required, although we will include cycle storage as a recommendation under Transport: Parking

3.5 The NPSG agreed that an amended form of words for this policy would help strengthen the goals of the Plan. New wording for Policy C1:

Policy C1 – Footpaths, Bridleways and Cycleways

- Access to the countryside will be promoted through protection and maintenance of the existing Public Right of Way (PROW) network (see map of existing PROW), its enhancement where possible, and the safety of users of rural roads and lanes.
- Any development that leads to the loss or degradation of any PROW, or any cycleway, will not be permitted in other than very special circumstances, and then only if a suitable alternative can be provided. Proposals to divert PROWs or cycleways should provide clear and demonstrable benefits for the wider community.
- Any new development must provide easy, accessible traffic-free routes for non-motorised users (to include pedestrians, disabled people, people with prams or baby-buggies, cyclists and where appropriate equestrians) to shops, parks and open spaces, and nearby countryside. The provision of any such additional routes will be supported.
- The needs of non-motorised users (as described in para 2 above) must be taken into account in all traffic planning, but especially in relation to rural lanes and roads. Hazards arising from an increase in vehicle numbers where agricultural buildings are converted to residential or commercial use will need to be taken into consideration. Measures to be taken to ensure this may include, for example, separation of pedestrians/cyclists from vehicular traffic where possible, improvements to signage, or means of speed reduction.

3.6 The NPSG will include, under 'Justification', reference to the CEC strategic policy SE3: part 4, on wildlife corridors. Following further consultation with Cheshire Wildlife Trust, the NPSG will also clarify the status of those local wildlife sites identified in the NP but not officially designated in the CEC Macclesfield Local Plan.

3.7 No policy change.

4. Built environment (BE1-BE3)

Summary of main comments received

4.1 Several respondents made requests for an improved village centre: shop fronts, signage to conform to regulations for Conservation Area with landlords being encouraged to improve existing premises wherever possible and include the improvement of flats/offices etc. above the shops; also that building plans should be better publicised close to the site in question.

4.2 Several respondents made requests that any new housing developments be of good design using materials sympathetic to nearby housing areas, and one proposed that the old Nat West Bank building might be re-developed as flats (although car parking would be a problem).

- 4.3 Some respondents were keen that the village encourage new businesses.
- 4.4 . The Canal and River Trust supports BE1 and would welcome the canal’s listed structures (bridges) being acknowledged at para. 9.1.

Response and (if appropriate) Policy change proposed

- 4.1 No policy change required]
- 4.2 No policy change required.
- 4.3 No policy change required.
- 4.4 Already covered at 9.1. No policy change.

5. Transport (T1-T3)

Summary of main comments received

Many respondents made varying comments relating to the problems of parking in the village and the need to both improve and increase parking provision and enforcement. A number of respondents commented on the need to improve public transport (bus and train) and provisions to encourage cycling, and some respondents commented on the need to improve footpaths to facilitate and promote walking.

Within all these responses, a number of respondents specifically suggested additions, changes or inclusions to the policies namely:

- 5.1 Policy T1: Developers should be required to provide car parking in Disley above the current requirements set for development. Developers should be required to provide off street parking in order to reduce on street parking, improve safety and encourage walking. Policy T1 should not assume use of public transport as an alternative to provide parking spaces facilities
- 5.2 There should be stronger policy to enhance bus and cycling provision. Particular reference made to support a proposed Disley – Poynton cycling route set out in the Cheshire East Cycling Strategy
- 5.3 New build should be stopped to reduce the strain on the village; New development should contribute to transport solutions
- 5.4 Several respondents referred specifically to concerns about the future impact on air quality and pollution from increases in traffic / development. Policy T2 should have a bigger focus on air quality. Any proposed development that impacts on air quality should be refused / prevented.
- 5.5 Several respondents referred to the need for a Disley by-pass/ relief road.
- 5.6 Request from The Canal and River Trust for a mechanism to require developers to contribute to towpath maintenance; the Trust supports T2 but would welcome inclusion of a direct reference to the role the canal towpath can play in terms of providing sustainable transport.

Response and (if appropriate) Policy change proposed

- 5.1 The first part of Policy T1 has been adjusted to include “ off street” parking.

Policy T1 - Parking

Proposals which would exacerbate existing parking problems in the parish, or lead to the loss of existing parking provision will not be permitted, unless the lost parking places are adequately replaced in a nearby and appropriate alternative off street location, or an agreed alternative transport facility be provided or contributed towards to mitigate the loss.’

5.2 and 5.3 Policy T2 has been adjusted to add more reference to cycling as an alternative means of transport. The NPSG considers that this policy, together with the new policy covering air quality, addresses all the comments raised in respect of protecting the environment and facilitating both alternative and sustainable means of transport. The policy has been reworded as:

Policy T2 – Sustainable Transport

‘In order to improve transport and safety and to facilitate cycling and walking, where appropriate, applicants for new development must demonstrate:

- safe walking and cycling routes in the immediate area of the proposed site, with consideration of access to services and facilities.
- the provision of safe cycle storage facilities in any commercial, community, apartments or retail development.
- how the proposals link to public transport.
- how any adverse impacts of traffic from the proposed development will be mitigated.
- that the most up to date parking standards required by Cheshire East Council will be met.
- that the proposed site is located in an acceptable location in relation to the existing highway network, especially from a safety and aggregate congestion viewpoint.
- that the proposed site is located with good accessibility by a range of sustainable forms of transport, minimising the distance that people need to travel to employment, shops, services and leisure opportunities.
- that the needs of those with disabilities and the elderly have been positively considered and appropriate facilities within the transport infrastructure have been provided to assist them.’

Proposals which promote better integration between modes of transport, including links to the local railway station, and serve to improve bus routes, services and passenger facilities will be supported, subject to meeting the criteria of other policies within the Neighbourhood Plan.

5.4 The NPSG has considered these suggestions and has added air quality into the Vision Statement and underlying objectives, and incorporated a new stand-alone Air Quality policy. See above.

5.5 No policy change (beyond the remit of the NP).

5.6 No policy change. But mention will be made of the canal and towpath as part of the sustainable transport mix – under Policy T2 (Sustainable Transport) and within the justification, adding “The Peak Forest Canal and its towpath also provide important alternative modes of travel, for walkers, cyclists and boaters, linking Disley with neighbouring towns and villages, and must be considered part of the sustainable transport mix.”

6. Economy and village centre (E1-E4)

Summary of main comments received

6.1 Parking was one of the main issues raised. A number of respondents felt that there was enough A2 (financial and professional services), A3 (restaurants and cafes) and A4 (drinking establishments) and that priority should be given to A1 (shops) in the commercial centre in policy E2.

6.2 A number of respondents felt that provision for tourism is inadequate, mentioning yet again parking and that there is no accommodation or public toilets; better public transport is needed and better promotion of walking routes and signage were also needed – policy E4.

Response and (if appropriate) Policy change proposed

6.1 and 6.2 See Policy T1 for parking policy. It was not considered appropriate to give priority to A1 (shops) within the remit of this Plan.

6.2 - See T2 re sustainable transport.

7. Community facilities & infrastructure (CF1-CF5)

Summary of main comments received

7.1 Many responses concerned the inadequacy of Mobile phone signal and the need to increase availability of WiFi .

7.2 Several argued that Allotments should not be touched, while one argued that provision should follow national legislation; and improvements needed to be made to hedges and fences to improve security.

7.3 Several said that Development/106 monies should stay within Disley, spent on local community needs and not be lost in the coffers of Cheshire East Council, and should be better publicised

7.4 Several said Play areas/leisure facilities should be improved with all weather facilities for teenagers including a skate park

7.5 Individual comments were made about the need to expand Community Centre; to better maintain some of the footpaths around the village; and to redraw the Greenbelt to permit more in-fill development in areas that the public have no access to or view of.

7.6 Several argued that Disley Golf Course was a highly valued outdoor sports facility used by many local residents and needed strong protection from development and therefore should be included in the table of play, recreation and open spaces.

7.7 CRT supported CF1 and CF4 but would welcome a mechanism to ensure new developments near canal contribute to increased cost of towpath and canal maintenance. Also to recognise the increased funding needed for towpath upgrading in order to facilitate improved and sustainable transport links.

Response and (if appropriate) Policy change proposed

7.1 – 7.5 Matters are either not within the remit of the Plan or are already covered in the Plan. No policy change needed.

7.6 Disley Golf Club will be added as a recreation and outdoor sports facility in Disley and Newtown.

7.7 Already covered – see C1.