

SHIPLAKE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Q&A MATERIAL FOR DISTRIBUTORS OF QUESTIONNAIRE

Q. Why are we doing a Neighbourhood Plan?

A. The continuing swathe of speculative planning applications from speculative developers in Shiplake and surrounding areas led the parish council to discuss the desirability of residents being able to influence and shape the future development of the villages rather than developers. The government's promotion of neighbourhood plans enables us to do this. Public meetings with residents in December and January supported this initiative and a Steering Group of residents was formed to develop such a plan.

Q. What is a Neighbourhood Plan

A. It is a plan, developed by residents and sponsored by the parish council, to meet the govt. approved housebuilding requirements of South Oxfordshire District Council (SODC), as represented in SODC's Local Plan 2033. Basically, we agree a plan, which has to be approved by the government and agreed by a majority of residents, in a referendum, to build a minimum of 33 new houses, at agreed sites, in Shiplake parish boundaries by 2033. *It is SODC's intended policy of the new Local plan to determine planning decisions by reference to Neighbourhood Plans....unless other material considerations apply.*

Q. Who is on the Steering Group and how was it set up?

A. At a public meeting in January the parish council, as sponsor of the neighbourhood plan, invited volunteers to join the Steering Group to develop the plan on behalf of the whole community. The Chair and Steering Group Members are:

Peter Boros (Chair), David Pheasant, David Bartholomew, Emer Bollinghaus, James Dalzell, Mick Reid, Susan Mann, Will Stevens, Marnie McKendrick, John Walker, Gareth Edwards

Q. Who will make sure the plan represents the interests of the whole community?

A. Shiplake Parish Council is the designated authority sponsoring the plan, with a representative on the Steering Committee ensuring good governance and access to the necessary grants and funds to make the neighbourhood plan possible. The questionnaire, which we are asking all residents aged 18 or over to complete, seeks their views on many relevant facets of the villages, as it is now and how they would like to see it develop in the future, with a specific emphasis on housing requirements. The questionnaire has been reviewed by the SODC Neighbourhood Planning team. The parish council via public meetings and its website will provide updates and the opportunity to provide feedback on the developing plan. The proposed plan will be reviewed and approved by SODC and the government prior to an independent referendum, which will require a majority vote by residents for it to become an integral **and mandatory** part of the local planning process.

Q. Why are we doing a questionnaire?

A. Neighbourhood plans are the opportunity for residents to shape the future of the villages in terms of housing and related infrastructure. We need to have an informed understanding of what the concerns, issues, requirements and preferences of residents are. A questionnaire is considered the best way to capture that information, which will be a key part of the body of evidence providing the basis of the recommendations of the neighbourhood plan.

Q. Will my information be handled confidentially?

A. It is important that residents have the opportunity to express their views on an anonymous basis. **Names will not appear on the questionnaires at anytime.** The volunteers distributing and collecting the questionnaires are residents themselves and conscious of this aspect of the questionnaire process. Once collected the questionnaires, without any identification, will be forwarded to the entity processing the questionnaires.

Q. Why am I being given more than one questionnaire?

A. We want to capture the broadest possible range of opinions of those who have the knowledge of the villages now and views on what kind of villages they want to see in the future. A questionnaire should be completed by all those of 18 years age or older in a household.

Q. How many people in the household can answer the questionnaire?

A. As many people as there are aged 18 years or older as of May 2017.

Q. Can I email the completed questionnaire back to you?

A. No. It is difficult to reconcile the returns of completed questionnaires from multiple sources and email and website responses generally result in a lower level of returns; the more returns the better the plan will represent resident's interests. In this context, it is also important that the questionnaire be returned on the date agreed with your collector in the order that the questionnaires are processed in one batch.

Q. What are the next steps?

A. The questionnaires will be analysed during June and the Steering Group will update residents on the results during July, principally via the Shiplake website. If you are not currently registered on the website, we recommend you complete the form at the back of the questionnaire, separate it from the questionnaire and give it to the collector, who will ensure it is forwarded to the website team for registration on its confidential list of users. You will then begin receiving updates automatically. The Steering Group will take account of your views as it continues to formulate recommendations for the neighbourhood plan.

Q. Why are there limitations on who can vote in the referendum?

A. Neighbourhood plans are government policy and become part of its planning framework when approved and voted on by the electorate. As such it is subject to the to the governments democratic procedures in these matters i.e. in this instance, registered electors in the designated area of the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan.

Q. Why is the designated area of the Shiplake neighbourhood Plan based on the old parish boundaries?

A. Legally and logically, neighbourhood plans cannot overlap geographically. The Joint Henley & Harpsden Neighbourhood Plan (JHHNP) was based, developed and approved on the old pre-2014 parish boundaries. As with the Shiplake Villages Plan (SVP), we feel it is important to have the views of everybody who lives in what we refer to as ‘Shiplake’ and formulate our plans accordingly. In the referendum on our plan, the relatively small number of ‘Shiplake’ people who were eligible to vote in the JHHNP referendum will not be able to vote on the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan. This does not diminish in anyway the importance of having their views taken account of in our plan.

Q. When will the plan be completed and how will I/we be kept informed of progress?

A. How quickly a neighbourhood plan can be developed depends on several factors, not least the commitment and industry of a Steering Group alongside the support it gets from residents and the parish council. It also is dependent on the period of time it takes for SODC and the government to assess and approve the plan, prior to a community referendum then voting in favour of its adoption. A plan can take over two years. Given the pressures we currently face from inappropriate speculative planning applications from developers, the Steering Group’s aim is to produce the Shiplake Neighbourhood Plan before the end of this year. This is an ambitious timescale. We have the strong support of the parish council and with resident support it can be achieved. The SODC and Government approvals process may take a further 6 months but our body of evidence provided by the end of this year, we are told, will have weight in the planning process prior to its adoption.