

Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan

Bi-monthly Progress Note to Abbots Langley Parish Council –

Report Fifteen – 1st September 2018

The Neighbourhood Planning Group last met on Thursday 26th April 2018. The meeting scheduled for 26th July was postponed. The next meeting is planned for Thursday 27th September 2018 at 7pm.

Work is continuing on:

Phase 5 ‘Building the Evidence Base’

Phase 6 ‘Identify the key Themes, Aims, Vision, Options.’

Phase 7 ‘Write the Neighbourhood Plan – Policies’

1. Preparation of the Draft Planning Policies for the Neighbourhood Plan

We are continuing to write the Draft Policies for the Neighbourhood Plan with the intention of circulating a Draft for discussion at our next meeting. We continue to make on-going enquiries about selected sites in the Parish that may be of interest to us.

2. Significant Changes in Planning Policies at National and Local levels.

The main reason for delaying the progress of our work in the last six months is the uncertainty over key policies that the Parish has no control over – Housing Policies, Metropolitan Green Belt and improvement of local Education and Health Facilities. These policies are decided mainly at a National, County and District level and will have significant consequences for the shaping of the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular:

a) New National Guidelines for Planning Policies in England.

This Government Report was published 24th July 2018. These are the new planning policies that we will have to take account of in our Neighbourhood Plan.

See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/governments-new-planning-rulebook-to-deliver-more-quality-well-designed-homes>

b) The Local Housing Strategy for the five Local District Councils and their joined-up policies.

Officers were being appointed this Summer to do this work. We do not expect to see any output from their work for at least another year.

c) Future New Housing Estimates in the Abbots Langley Parish

Three Rivers District Council are preparing estimates for the number of new housing units that are required to be built across the District within the next 15 years. These will take account of the new National Planning Guidelines. Forecasts for Abbots Langley have been requested from Claire May, the Principal Planning Officer for Three Rivers Council, as soon as they become publicly available, possibly October 2018. With this information we will be able to:

- predict what land is required for the new housing in the Neighbourhood Plan,
- compare the figures with the conclusions from our own Housing Need Study
- determine which areas of the Parish may be able to accommodate it, possibly at the expense of Green Belt land.
- Take further steps to examine the practicality of Community-Led Housing Projects with local land owners to meet the need for low cost housing.

d) Review of the use of the Metropolitan Green Belt Land in the Three Rivers District

The Green Belt Review in the Three Rivers Area, commissioned over a year ago, was due for publication this Autumn. With the publication in July 2018 of the new National Guidelines for

Planning Policies in England, the local review of the Green Belt Land in the District has to be updated. We do not expect this review to be published for another year.

- e) **New Sites for possible development in the Parish of Abbots Langley** - as submitted to the District Council for consideration in the new District Local Plan. A public consultation with statutory bodies will take place in October 2018. This is when we will know which sites are included in this review and compare them possible sites we have considered.

3. Neighbourhood Planning must be led by local aspirations and public consent.

Most undeveloped land in the Parish is classified as Metropolitan Green Belt or designated open spaces. We have no evidence that local communities want such land to be developed, even though improved access to local Education and Health Facilities would be welcomed. Only the District Council can change Green Belt policies. Therefore, the Neighbourhood Plan must await guidance on this policy rather than initiate the change. We have attempted to determine which areas of Green Belt land are more valued than others, if external pressures force changes to be made. But any public debate must await explanations from the Planning Authorities why such land must be sacrificed to meet clearly understood local needs. It would be helpful to confirm that Parish Council members are in full agreement with this approach.

4. Government Grant application and Web Site Development.

We have been awarded our remaining Government Grant money of £4450. Part of this grant can be used for developing pages for the Neighbourhood Plan web site which is to be incorporated into the Abbots Langley Parish website. We will be using the services of Peter Fleming, the designer of the Abbots Langley Web Site. Work on the web pages will be started in September 2018. This will be coordinated with the future public participation programme and linked with our Commonplace web site for the Neighbourhood Plan.

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