



Thank you to everyone who came to the November consultations Below we have listed some the questions and topics that were raised at the meetings which we hope you find useful. Any queries as ever please do email info.whitchurchplan@gmail.com

FAQs following November Consultations

Why are we developing a Neighbourhood Plan? A Neighbourhood Plan allows the village significantly control over the future locations, number and types of housing development in the parish. If we get approval, it will guide the planning authorities on future applications by developers until 2040. It will help to protect us from opportunistic developments for the lifetime of the plan.

How does the plan get approved? An independent Government Inspector has to approve the final draft Whitchurch Neighbourhood Plan to ensure compliance. It will be put to the residents on the Parish Electoral Register to vote Yes or No on a simple majority of those who vote. If YES it will be formally adopted into local planning regulations.

What happens if the majority vote NO? In the event of a No majority the protections provided by a Neighbourhood Plan will not apply and developers can continue to apply for new developments anywhere within Whitchurch. Buckinghamshire Council will decide how many and where developments in our parish will take place based on their general policies. All landowners that have offered land for development could make planning applications as could any other landowner that so far has not offered-up land for consideration in the plan.

How is the Neighbourhood Plan being developed in our parish? The process started in the spring of 2019 with public consultations and the formation of a steering group. The Steering Group conducted a large-scale questionnaire of residents that demonstrated a large majority in favour of developing a Neighbourhood Plan and also gave the group considerable insight into what it

is that residents both valued and were concerned about. The Parish Council then gave permission to the Steering Group – which became the Neighbourhood Plan Group - to move forward. Grants from Central Government for the work involved were successfully applied for and a firm of consultants experienced in supporting the development of Neighbourhood Plans in Buckinghamshire and elsewhere were appointed. Updates were communicated in the Whitchurch News and a zoom meeting was held to answer questions. Covid delayed the process considerably but in spring of 2021 all landowners were contacted to understand where land might be available adjacent to the current build environment of the village. In July of 2021 a series of meetings were held to share these sites with residents and to gather initial feedback. Site owners were then asked to provide initial ideas as to what type of homes they propose to build, these sketches and updates were shared with the village in another series of consultations in November 2021.

Who else is involved? All the sites that choose to submit outline plans will be subject to expert technical, strategic and environmental assessment. This comes from Buckinghamshire Council, Locality, Aecom, Historic England, Natural England and the Environment Agency amongst others.

What type and style of homes will be built? A housing ‘code’ will be part of the plan and we anticipate houses built in a predominantly traditional style using traditional materials. Sketch plans are not indicative of what will be built. A formal housing survey is being conducted independently but feedback tells us that Whitchurch is in need of:

- smaller homes for couples and young families
- affordable homes (a variety of plans fall under this heading including shared ownership and a discount on the sales price for the lifetime of the dwelling)
- homes suitable for retirement/downsizing

Eco and sustainable homes are likely to be encouraged and it is likely during the lifetime of the plan that central government regulations will mandate some of these practices. It is a planning requirement that new homes have sufficient parking allocated to each dwelling.

What about commercial premises? So far no evidence has been found to demonstrate clear demand for additional commercial premises in Whitchurch

although some site proposals have considered this. The Neighbourhood Plan is open to small appropriate retail and office space and many comments have been made about a coffee shop in the village. However, clearly commercial businesses need to be owned and run and this cannot be dictated by the Neighbourhood Plan.

Who decides how many houses we are expected to build? The VALP (Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan) was finally adopted by Buckinghamshire Council in the autumn of 2021 and it is anticipated that Whitchurch will have a formal new homes target set by Buckingham Council before the end of 2021.

What is a settlement boundary and why does it matter? Once the sites for inclusion in the plan have been decided a new settlement boundary will be drawn around both existing houses and all allocated new site/s. In a Neighbourhood Plan the settlement boundary will be used to protect the built environment of Whitchurch and will be much smaller than the Parish boundary.

Who decides where the houses get built? The Neighbourhood Plan process take inputs from the technical assessments as to the appropriateness and suitability of each site in the process and will also take into account the policies that all the consultations have helped to form with regard to the style, size and location of new homes within the village. The consultants who have worked with us from the start of the process will also support this final stage of decision making. The independent examiner of the draft plan will also ensure that all processes have been followed and that the necessary evidence exists to support the decisions that are made before the plan can be put to a referendum. The Neighbourhood Plan put to the village in the referendum will include all new proposed sites. A Neighbourhood Plan is always a YES/ NO for those sites rather than proposing different options.

Can we stop development on specific locations such as allotments, green spaces etc? The Neighbourhood Plan Group have undertaken work to identify those green spaces in the village that currently do not have specific protection and are deemed to be particularly important. These spaces must be limited and cannot include land submitted for development. We will then submit the areas we feel can justify protection.

How will facilities such as the school cope with the extra numbers?

Currently 4 out of 10 of pupils in Whitchurch Combined School do not live in the village. If there were more school aged children in the village over time there would be more village children in the school which would in turn add to the sense of community in Whitchurch.

Why doesn't the Neighbourhood Plan seek to improve the existing infrastructure, facilities and amenities in the village?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a specific type of plan that is concerned with the building of new homes or premises and can provide additional protection for important green spaces. Once adopted a Neighbourhood Plan actually becomes part of planning law, but as such it can only relate to issues that involve planning consent.

We know that the volume and speed of traffic through the village are important issues for residents but whilst the highways authority will require the access to a development and the thoroughfares within it to meet certain standards, it can't usually demand general improvements to the local highway network as part of an individual planning consent.

Once final sites have been identified discussions will take place with landowners/developers and where appropriate the group will seek support for such traffic management measures that might be appropriate and permitted by highways.

