



Ashby Town Council Neighbourhood
Planning Steering Committee
Newsletter—Spring 2014

Help Shape the Future of Ashby !

JOIN A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOCUS GROUP

We are looking for 30–40 local people who are prepared to work within one of 5 Focus Groups which will each make a material contribution towards the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Ashby De La Zouch.

The main qualification for joining one of these groups is that you are prepared to give up a little of your time to help ensure Ashby remains the vibrant and interesting place that it is now.

We are keen to involve old and young, professional and blue collar alike, as long as they live or work in Ashby.

Being part of one of these groups will involve attending several meetings over the next few months. Meetings will start at the beginning of June with the aim of completing the output by end October. Each of the groups will have 5–10 members.

In addition to the 5 Focus Groups we also want to recruit members of a reference group which will give reference opinions on the ideas and proposed policies produced by the focus groups.

WHAT IS A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

Since April 2012 local communities have been able to produce Neighbourhood Plans for their local area, putting in place planning policies for the future development and growth of the Neighbourhood.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community led framework for guiding the future development and growth of an area. It contains visions, aims, planning policies, improvement proposals, and may identify key sites for specific development.

The statutory status of this Plan gives it far more weight than many other planning documents or policies, making it difficult for developers to overturn.

To acquire this statutory status the plan must have been prepared in the right way, for example there must have been adequate community involvement, it must have been subject to examination and referendum. To qualify it also cannot conflict with the Local Planning Authority's development plan.

“Many local authorities have already completed the process of developing Neighbourhood Plans for their area.....”



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MAKE YOUR VIEWS COUNT!

- Get involved in looking after your town!
- Help ensure we pass on a vibrant and healthy town to the next generation!



THE STORY SO FAR

Ashby de la Zouch Town Council began work on the neighbourhood development plan back in April 2013.

The work was launched with four drop in sessions, and subsequent meetings with Explorer Scouts and primary schools. Visitors and participants were asked for their views on:

- What they liked about Ashby
- What they didn't like about Ashby
- What things they would like to see which the Town doesn't have.

The conclusion of this survey was that opinion was overwhelmingly in support of the development of a Neighbourhood Plan .

The steering group then applied for "Designated Status". This obliges NWLDC planning department to support the Council in various ways with the development of the plan.

Ashby Town Council was granted designated status on 5th March 2014, and it is now ready to go ahead with the next stage in the process, - Community Engagement through Focus Groups.

"Localism is ...a ground-breaking shift in power to councils and communities overturning decades of central government control"

WHY IS THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN IMPORTANT

Its all about empowerment of community to influence or even control how local development takes place.

Take the issue of improving the Town's infrastructure by building of a new community centre.

A properly drawn up Neighbourhood Plan gives the community the power to access resources, which can contribute to, help design and build this community facility. It also ensures that the community can exercise significant control over where and how it is built.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Our plan is for Focus groups to begin meeting at the beginning of June.

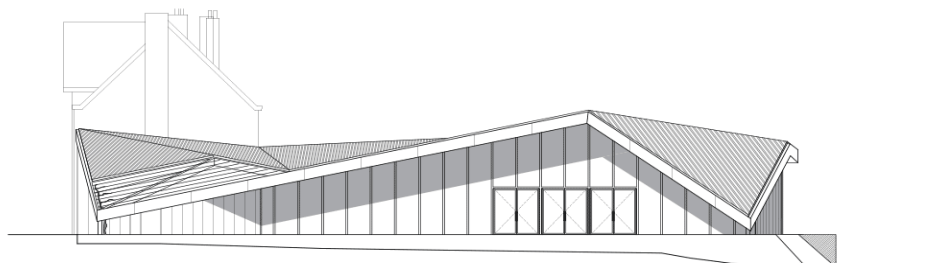
Groups will need to meet several times over the course of the next few weeks if they are adequately to consider the issues before them.

The target is for groups to finish their deliberations by end October. The Steering group will then begin drawing together the various issues and threads highlighted by the focus groups. A draft report will be complete by the end of December 2014.

This draft document will need to be publicised, and be the subject of public consultation before it can be submitted to NWLDC.

It will then be NWLDC's responsibility to arrange for an independent examination of the report and a public referendum on its contents.

Only when the document has gone through these processes will it achieve statutory status.



Community centre designed by Marc Koehler for rural Belgian Town



Many focus group discussions will be professionally facilitated

WHAT WILL THE FOCUS GROUPS DO ?

Focus groups will be tasked to discuss a wide range of planning issues affecting our Town. Some of these are outlined below. The groups will also need to discuss and propose options and policies which address these issues. Their recommendations will be consolidated by the Steering Group into a Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Focus Group	Typical Issues to Consider	
1. Town Centre Vitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How to keep footfall; Tourism; Late night economy; Retail mix; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of conservation area; Independent specialist shops; Visitor accommodation; Living in the town centre.
2. Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current retail and employment infrastructure in Ashby; Opportunities for growth; Relationship between employment available and town population, commuting; Location, number and types of jobs, apprenticeships, manufacturing, retail; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Potential links with neighbouring communities e.g. Ashby Woulds, Coalville; Relationship between local skill base and employment available; Promoting investor confidence.
3. Housing and the built environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenures and type of housing; Affordable housing requirements; Number, type, density and location of houses; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Urban design and townscape; Conservation area; Community connectivity.
4. Accessibility and Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review improvements for a sustainable transport solutions including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> pedestrians, cycles, vehicles parking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road infrastructure; Pedestrian routes; Disabled access; Public transport.
5. Education and Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community infrastructure; Schools; Open spaces; Community centre; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of what is needed and what is being provided in relation to new buildings; Activities for all the population including growing elderly population; National forest.

DRAFT VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR TOWN

A draft vision statement adopted by the by the Neighbourhood Planning steering group reads as follows:

Ashby de la Zouch is a prosperous attractive and historic market town at the heart of the National Forest. Our vision is to build on that uniqueness and create a town that meets the needs of local people whilst making the most of its special qualities to attract visitors and shoppers from further afield.

This will be achieved by creating a safe, clean, accessible and attractive town in which people can shop, work, live and pursue their leisure activities. The town should offer something for everyone regardless of their age, lifestyle or status.'

ABOUT THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING STEERING GROUP

THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING STEERING GROUP IS A SUB-COMMITTEE OF ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH TOWN COUNCIL AND IS MADE UP OF:

Cllr John Coxon

Cllr Roger Bayliss

Cllr Jim Hoult

Chris Tandy (Ashby Civic Society)

Sam Hampton (Ashby Town Team)

Jack Fargher (Town Clerk)

Karen Edwards (Deputy Town Clerk)

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO !

If you are interested in becoming part of one of the focus groups or the reference group get in touch with **Karen Edwards, Deputy Town Clerk**, tel: 01530 416961 or email: info@ashbytowncouncil.org.uk.

Or write to

Karen Edwards
c/o Ashby Town Council
Legion House
South Street
Ashby de la Zouch
Leicestershire LE65 1BQ

Remember to say what group you are most interested in.!



Someone will be in touch in early June to let you know when and where the first meeting will take place

“Ashby has a unique character which needs to be preserved for the benefit of future generations”

