**ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH TOWN COUNCIL**

**Report to: Planning and Transportation Committee**

**Date: 25th April 2016**

**Subject: Neighbourhood Plan**

**Summary:**

* **The purpose of this report is to seek the Committee’s approval to start Regulation 14 pre-submission consultation on the Ashby de la Zouch Neighbourhood Plan.**

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**Background**

The Ashby de la Zouch Neighbourhood Plan was launched in April 2013 and the Neighbourhood Plan area received designation in March 2014. Regular updates on progress with the plan have been provided to this Committee. During the Summer of 2014 five Focus Groups met to look at the issues raised through the first round of public consultation and at potential polices that could address those issues.

Public consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan ran from 13th October to 24th November. Over 50 detailed responses from residents, community interest groups, statutory consultees and developers were received. Each comment has been considered and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has approved some significant changes to the Plan in the light of these comments. There have also been developments at North West Leicestershire District Council regarding the production of the Local Plan, which has made it clear that housing allocations within the draft Local Plan for Ashby will be increased rather than decreased.

**Significant changes to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan (October 2015)**

The following significant changes are reflected in the new version of the Neighbourhood Plan:

Section 2: About Ashby de la Zouch

* Additional background information on the town has been given;
* Details of house prices in Ashby when compared with neighbouring towns.

Section 3: What the plan is trying to achieve

* The Vision has been amended to include reference to ‘the countryside’.

Section 4.1: Towards a sustainable Ashby de la Zouch

* The Limits to Development have been amended to reflect those proposed in the draft North West Leicestershire Local Plan;
* As the proposed developments at Money Hill are now included within the Plan reference is made to concerns about the scale of development envisaged for Ashby set out in the draft Local Plan. Stating that consultation shows that people are opposed to new development and its impact on the town’s infrastructure;
* Employment areas are now shown on the Limits to Development map;
* The section on design has been redrafted to make expectations more explicit and to broaden the remit to all development and not just housing;
* A new section and policy on Areas of Local Separation has been added;

Section 4.2: Housing

* The section on Sustainable Housing Growth has been redrafted to comment on housing allocations in the draft Local Plan and recent planning appeal decisions for Woodcock Way and Money Hill;
* The Policy on Housing Provision has been replaced by one on Sustainable Housing Growth, proposing 2,050 dwellings at Money Hill. This will ensure the Neighbourhood Plan meets the legal requirement of conformity with the draft Local Plan;
* The allocation of 2,050 dwellings is only supported if a Spatial Masterplan, Landscape Masterplan and Design Code are produced for the Money Hill site;
* Reference to the windfall sites has been included;
* Following representations about the original 40% affordable housing target being undeliverable, this has been revised down to 30%;
* For the same reasons the target for 1 bedroom affordable homes has been reduced from 50% to 40%;
* The expectations around the delivery of self-build projects have been simplified;
* The policy on exception sites for affordable housing has been removed in light of the proposal for Money Hill.

Section 4.3; Employment and Economic Growth

* Greater detail is given of existing employment in the town;
* The policy on existing employment land has been redrafted to include expectations on the types of employment permitted within the industrial estates;
* A new policy on the change of use of existing employment sites has been included;
* There is now only one policy relating to ‘Small and Start up Businesses’ rather than two.

Section 4.4: Ashby de la Zouch Town Centre

* Reference to the night time economy has been included;
* A community action has been added regarding the retail mix in the town;
* Reference to shop fronts has been extended to include ‘shop frontages’;
* The section on tourism has been widened to beyond the town centre;
* A policy on the decluttering of signage and on use of internal illumination has been redrafted, with the Legible Signage strategy becoming a community action.

Section 4.5: Transport

* A section on the potential impact of new development on traffic management within the town has been added;
* There is now a separate policy relating to car parking;
* A community action has been included on the improvement of footpaths and cycleways.

Section 4.6: Education, Leisure and Wellbeing

* There are now separate policies relating to ‘Open Spaces’ and ‘Local Green Spaces;
* Important Local Green Spaces are now listed;
* Open space provision in new developments refers to District Planning Policy but still emphasises the need for provision for all age groups;
* Allotment provision is now for schemes of 50 or more, rather than 5 or more;
* The policies on biodiversity and trees and hedges have been strengthened;
* Listed buildings and buildings of local heritage interest are dealt with separately, the existing designated buildings of local interest have been added;
* A review of the Conservation Area has been requested;
* The policy on Areas of Archaeological Interest has been amended following the reference to an ALERT zone and refers instead to recorded archaeological sites;
* Important community assets and assets of community value are now listed;

Section 4.7: Developer Contributions

Greater detail on developer contributions has been included.

In addition minor changes to the presentation of the draft Neighbourhood Plan have been made.

Changes are being made to provide additional justification for some of the policies and these will be available at the Planning and Transportation Committee meeting.

**Proposed consultation**

It is intended that the draft plan will be available for people to download on the Ashby de la Zouch Town Council website and hard copies will be available at the Town Council offices.

A feedback form has been devised to enable members of the public to comment on the plans.

Copies of the plan will also be sent to statutory stakeholders e.g. Natural England, English Heritage, Network Rail, North West Leicestershire District Council, Leicestershire County Council.

The consultation is being publicised through adverts in Ashby Life, social media, posters and flyers. Details will also be sent to people who have asked to be kept informed of progress with the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Next steps**

Following the period of pre-submission consultation, which is expected to conclude on 14th June 2016, revisions will be made to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan and the Examination Version of the Neighbourhood Plan will be prepared.

The Examination Version will be presented to the July meeting of the Planning and Transportation Committee for approval and submission to North West Leicestershire District Council. At that stage the document will start to have some weight when planning applications are considered.

**Conclusion**

1. The Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.
2. The Committee is asked to approve the launch of consultation on the Draft Neighbourhood Plan from 2nd May 2016.
3. The Committee is invited to approve the Draft Neighbourhood Plan that will be used in the consultation.

Karen Edwards
Deputy Town Clerk
14.04.2016