

**ASHBY DE LA ZOUCH
TOWN COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN**

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Part of the Government's **localism** agenda

Simplification of a **remote and complex** planning system

An opportunity for local people to **directly shape and influence** planning policy on matters that affect them

Involves drafting **planning policies** that become part of the decision making process

What can it do?

The Neighbourhood Plan will cover **planning issues** in areas such as housing; environment; community facilities; heritage sites; businesses; highways and leisure

It adds **local detail** to broader planning policy and can say what **open spaces** are protected; what type of **new housing** is built and what it looks like and what **new facilities** are needed locally

What can't it do?

The Neighbourhood Plan can't be used to **block** all development, but it can include policies to say where **new development** should take place and what **type of housing** is needed

The Neighbourhood Plan needs to be **in general conformity** with **strategic elements** of local and national planning policies and address issues of environmental, economic and social sustainability

What is involved?

Once a decision is taken to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, the Town Council needs to be formally designated as a **Qualifying Body**

Consultation needs to take place with local people through activities such as drop-in events and questionnaires

Other **evidence** will be gathered about what policies are needed, and the Neighbourhood Plan will take shape

Policies will be written and **further consultation** will take place

The draft Plan will be submitted to North West Leicestershire District Council to confirm that it **conforms** to their **strategic policies**

The Plan will be publicised by the District Council and people will have a **further opportunity** to comment

The Plan will be subject to an **Independent Examination** to test compliance with what is known as **'basic conditions'** – primarily conformity with local and national planning policy

Once the Plan passes the examination, there will be a **referendum** involving everyone on the electoral register in Ashby De La Zouch

If the referendum passes a 'yes' vote with a simple majority, the Plan is **'Made'** and becomes part of the statutory **decision making process** for planning applications

Acknowledgement:

Ashby Town Council is grateful for the financial support from the Community Development Foundation, Awards for All, North West District Council and Leicestershire's Big Society Fund in the preparation of this Neighbourhood Plan.

What have we done so far?

The preparation of the Ashby De La Zouch Neighbourhood Plan is being led by a **Steering Group** comprising Town Councillors, local residents and local business people with support from Neighbourhood Planning Consultants *Yourlocale*.

There are many **stages** in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan and it is envisaged that a draft plan will be ready by Christmas.

The first stage, **evidence gathering**, has been undertaken. This has included:

- Gathering **background information** such as key statistics from the Census, and national and local planning policies that will have an impact on the plan
- **Workshops and consultation** events
- A **consultation exercise** held with two local primary schools and Ashby School
- A letter sent to **statutory consultees** and other local interested bodies and parties, notifying them of the Plan and seeking their comments
- **Publicising the Plan** through articles in the local newspapers and newsletter, posters, leaflets and through the Web
- A series of **'Focus Groups'** that have taken place involving town councillors, officers from the District and County Council, local residents and stakeholders. Each one has focussed on a key issue that has been identified as being of special importance and significance to Ashby. These looked at Economic Growth; Transport; Education & Leisure; Housing and the Town Centre.

Employment and Economic Growth

The **Neighbourhood Plan** is looking at the **employment** needs across the Parish and whether more employment **opportunities** should be made available. It is also looking at **existing** provision.

The Plan is seeking to develop a **high quality business environment** that allows business to form, grow and remain in Ashby.

Some of the key emerging policy areas are to:

- Promote and nurture business growth especially staff intensive businesses
- Protect existing employment sites
- Encourage home working
- Support tourism and the development of an outside market
- Identify further employment sites for expansion

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Write on the post-it notes below

Transport and Access

This is a high priority for improvement for local people.

The **Neighbourhood Plan** will include policies that aim to **improve** the current situation.

Some of the key emerging policy areas are:

- That all new developments must the limit impact of traffic congestion
- Support for the District Council conducting a review of car parking
- Promoting alternatives to car: i.e. walking, cycling, public transport
- Introducing locally specific and tailored Travel Plans
- Strengthening footpath and cycle routes
- Protecting the Ivanhoe Line route
- Working with the County Council on a Transport Plan for Ashby
- Improving signage for footpaths and cycle routes around the town

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Community Facilities

Consultation has told us that the **protection** and **enhancement** of community facilities is important to Ashby.

Some of the key emerging policy areas are to:

- Seek to identify and protect existing important community assets
- Give most important special protection through Asset of Community Value designation
- Support provision of new arts/community centre
- Identify action in relation to education provision/places

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Natural Environment

The **Neighbourhood Plan** is considering policies that affect the local **environment**.

It can identify sites that are **suitable** for development. It can also identify sites that need to be **protected** from development, including land that separates communities from one another.

Some of the key emerging policy areas are to:

- Identify and protect important green spaces – work to identify and evaluate Local Green Spaces to be finalised. What do **you** think?
- Include within all new development adequate green space provision
- Ensure that this green space provision reflects an ageing population e.g. trim trail and allotments
- Protect locally important wildlife or wildflower sites
- Protect important trees and woodlands

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Housing and the built environment

The need for new housing is acknowledged, as is the need for Ashby to take a **fair and proportionate share**

Some of the key emerging policy areas are to:

- Improve the range of housing types and increase the number of smaller homes to provide better mix
- Meet housing numbers through identified sites - to be agreed with the District Council through the emerging Local Plan
- Provide affordable housing to meet the needs of specific sections of the community, especially older residents and disabled people. Priority to be given to local people.
- Prioritise self-build to encourage self-reliance and support the local economy
- Update the development boundary within which any development can be undertaken
- Ensure all development proposals protect and enhance the special character of Ashby
- Reinforce and publicise those assets that are protected through legislation e.g. Listed Buildings, Conservation Area and Ancient Monuments status etc. and look to protect locally important buildings and sites
- A Design Guide is to be prepared to establish design standards

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Town Centre

Ashby has an **historic, popular and attractive** town centre and it is important to retain this **diverse retail offer** and to maintain a **high standard** of design – complementing and enhancing the Conservation Area.

Some of the key emerging policy areas are to:

- Permit non-retail use in Primary Shopping Area only if integrated into retail development
- Support a broad mix of retail where possible
- Ensure retail use dominates in Primary Shopping Area
- Allow out of town retail **ONLY** if it cannot be accommodated in town centre
- Support conversion of empty spaces above shops
- Protect and enhance existing tourism facilities and to support additional provision
- Support additional space for car parks
- Agree Primary Shopping Area
- Prepare Design Guide to set standards

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Developer Contributions

Through the Neighbourhood Plan it is possible to highlight additional infrastructure and services that will be required to meet additional development.

These will need to be considered alongside statutory contributions requested by other bodies e.g. for education, health and roads.

What are your priorities?

- Community Centre?
- Car parking?
- Play areas?
- Play equipment?
- Public transport?
- Traffic signs?
- Something else?

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What happens now?

- The public are being consulted on the **Emerging Policies** from the end of July 2015.
 - Work has already started on preparing a draft Neighbourhood Plan, which will be **developed** alongside the public consultation (with the District Council)
 - Elements of the District Council's Emerging **Local Plan** as it affects Ashby will need incorporated into the draft Plan
 - The aim is to obtain Ashby Town Council approval for the examination version of the Plan in **December 2015**, with the referendum being held as soon as possible in **2016**
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