

# **LITTLE MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

## **CHAIRMAN'S REPORT OF VILLAGE MEETING HELD TUE 13 SEP 2016**

The Village Meeting was called in order to advise villagers what Neighbourhood Planning is all about and to seek their views on whether or not we should proceed with such a plan. Although the date was arranged for mid-September, a number of people who might have attended were on holiday. It was also the hottest September day for many years, which may have discouraged people from attending.

In the event, 20 people attended, which represents 5% of the adult (18 and over) population of the village. Whilst a small attendance, those that did attend were clearly very interested in the process.

I gave a presentation explaining what Neighbourhood Planning involves. A copy of my script is attached at Annex A. We then had a Q & A session and a note was made of the questions and points raised. See Annex B.

We then asked attendees to fill in a one page questionnaire – copy at Annex C. The aim of this questionnaire was to gain an impression of the key issues which the Steering Group needs to consider, find out what a sample of the village thinks is a suitable number of houses for the village and, most importantly, ask them if they support the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan for Little Milton. An analysis of the survey is at Annex D.

Those who attended were very supportive of the proposal to do a Neighbourhood Plan – 95% voted in favour. The range of questions asked, comments made and the responses to the questionnaire all showed that those present have a good appreciation of the planning issues to be addressed. They were generally supportive of the idea of a 5% increase in housing stock as proposed in the draft Local Plan. Most people would like those houses to be within the village (infill) with less support for building on the edge of the village and minimal support for building on open fields. Some people thought a small increase in population would be beneficial; others were concerned about capacity and sustainability. In this regard, particular concerns were raised about the sewage system. It was clear that the issues of housing need, sustainability and capacity need to be carefully weighed. Some people thought that the capacity of the village to offer land for development was limited.

There was strong support for the protection of the BBOWT land (85%); less so for Green Belt land (60%), although overall there was support for the protection of the environment. Design criteria and a desire to maintain the character of the village were high on people's agendas. The proposal not to include site selection in the NP was not questioned.

People like living in our village and like its rural setting and the character of the village. As was reflected in the Little Milton Village Plan, traffic is the major dislike.

Overall I feel the meeting achieved its aims, although turn-out was low.

Barry Coward  
Chairman Little Milton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

## ANNEX A

### NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING – WHAT IS IT ALL ABOUT?

PRESENTATION GIVEN BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE STEERING GROUP AT A VILLAGE MEETING TUE 13 SEP 2016

The benefits of having a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) are that we have a say in what happens in our village, indeed our parish. A NP is about land use.

It is:

“A document that sets out planning policies for the neighbourhood area. Planning policies are used to decide whether to approve planning applications.

- Written by the local community, the people who know and love the area, rather than the Local Planning Authority.
- A powerful tool to ensure the community gets the right types of development, in the right place.
- A neighbourhood plan is an important document with real legal force”

Also:

“A planning document created by a parish council which sets out a vision for the neighbourhood area, and contains policies for the development and use of land in the area.”

Before Neighbourhood plans, we had little say in what went on in planning terms in our village. Now that has changed. We can look ahead for 15 years and have our say in how we want the village to develop in terms of land use, which for us largely means housing. Now we can have a say in the overall planning process. We can influence what happens here within the context of what is happening at district, county and national level.

'Qualifying Body' = Parish Council. The process is guided by a Steering Group working under TORs issued by PC. We have formed a Steering Group of 7 members, which we think is a good working number.

History – big plans like Thame & Henley, larger villages like Chalgrove, now smaller villages.

NP builds on – SODC's emerging Local Plan, Village Plan 2014, Housing Guidance, talks with SODC, 12 months work by Parish Council working group, which has included much gathering of information. Not starting from scratch. We understand the process. But nothing yet is decided.

**Why now?** Emerging Local Plan now proposes a 5% increase in housing stock across smaller villages = 10 houses for us. But don't get locked on that exact figure.

SODC has proposed

“There are currently 58 villages in the district that are classed as ‘smaller villages.’ The smaller villages are expected to deliver 5 percent growth, based on the number of dwellings at the 2011 Census. This will be met through small sites of 10 homes or less, and infill development, and will not be allocated by the local planning authority. Where smaller villages are preparing a neighbourhood plan, they may choose to allocate sites for housing in their plan.

Infill development is defined as the filling of a small gap in an otherwise built-up frontage or on other sites within settlements where the site is closely surrounded by buildings.”

SODC will be looking at the capacity of the smaller villages to accept more growth and will be publishing a report very soon. Also any developments plans must be sustainable.

### **The Plan – what does it contain?**

1. Describes the parish, the village, current housing, constraints on development, environmental factors, facilities = an audit of the parish as it is now. We may think we know our village but we can find out more and record it in the NP
2. Objectively ascertains the housing need – numbers and type of housing against SODC's emerging Local Plan. Uses preferred methodology. Objective assessment of need rather than just seeking people's opinions. We will ask for views and those will be important. Assesses sustainability.
3. Specifies policies which will be applied to any future development, including design criteria
4. Specifies site selection criteria [We do not plan to carry out Site Selection]

Site Selection – no compulsion. Landowner has to offer the land. We cannot allocate it for development. What is available today could change over 15 years. But the whole process of site selection has to be done objectively using scoring systems. The results could be contentious. Likely to take a long time – could add 6-12 months to the NP process. SEA required. You should assess each potential site against these three criteria (suitable, available, and achievable)

**Aim:** The NP puts policies in place so we have a strong say in how any development is achieved. Scale of plan commensurate with size of village

**Does not** – tackle issues like traffic, at least not directly. But we can touch on traffic issues as an Aspiration.

### **Requirements:**

Evidence – all facts supported by evidence eg. census data

Meets Basic Conditions – conforms with national and local policy

Consultation

- now
- through a village survey
- as required on individual topics
- through formal consultation on the first draft

Outside examination

- SODC
- Planning inspector

Respond to comments received and redraft where appropriate

Referendum – village must approve the final plan. If accepted, then becomes a statutory document

We have taken some preliminary steps but have not made a firm commitment yet. The NP area has been designated. Administrative step. No commitment. We have been told that if we go ahead, we will receive grant funding. We have undertaken SEA screening. We have formed a steering group. We have mapped out a programme of work, That is as far as we have gone. We are ready to go if we get the go-ahead.

**[At this point, the speaker paused for Q&As. ]**

**[Then attendees were invited to fill in a short questionnaire]**

**What are the key issues for us?**

- Clear purpose = planning the use of land; housing, employment, green spaces, agriculture, protection of wildlife, watercourses
- Incremental changes to the village or big bang
- Answer the question - what will sustain our community into the future? Our chance to have a say
- Supporting smaller villages by allowing limited amounts of housing and employment to help secure the provision and retention of services” (SODC)
- Environmental factors; impact of Green Belt; BBOWT; conservation area; flood risk area
- Housing need – numbers, type and size balanced against the supply of land
- Character of the village; design criteria
- Capacity & Sustainability; existing facilities; facilities which we lack
- Objective use of evidence, not just opinions; use the CLP data; village survey
- Strengthen the position of the village in planning terms and be a positive exercise
- Ensure that the village, whilst responding positively and primarily to the housing need, remains a desirable place to live
- School redevelopment plans
- Not Chalgrove Airfield – not within scope of NP directly; impact important for the village and PC are engaging in the process

**Time scale** – hopefully finished by summer 2017

**Funding**

- Grant of £5000
- Survey production, analysis and report; printing; stationery; etc

The village website now includes a Neighbourhood Plan section. There is a Library page where we have provided access to major policy documents. There is a Working Documents page where we have started posting some of the documentation we have produced so far.

The Neighbourhood Plan is an exciting but challenging prospect

What does a plan look like? Search Marsh Gibbon or Blewbury Neighbourhood Plans

## **ANNEX B**

### **Questions and Comments during the evening**

- Strong endorsement that the Parish Council should go ahead
- If we accepted a 5% housing increase and developed a plan would it afford us protection if a developer came forward with say a plan for 50 houses
- How are we going to assess the housing need given that most residents might not want any more housing
- If we want a viable community in the future we need to accommodate more housing
- If we accept a 5% increase in housing stock what type of housing does the village need
- What density of housing would we be looking at
- There were a few questions on infra-structure particularly sewerage. There was also a concern about Great Haseley and the impact that development in that might village could have. There was a comment that people and not houses put pressure on the sewerage network implying that an increase of population within the existing housing stock could have an impact.
- A question whether planning applications would be influenced by previous planning decisions on a site.
- Had the Parish Council been given a specific housing allocation of 5%

## **ANNEX C – SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE**

### **LITTLE MILTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – Sep 2016 Village Meeting Questionnaire**

Q1. In no more than 10 words, what are the key things you like or dislike about our village?

Q2.1 How many new houses do you think the village needs over the next 15 years? (circle one option):

1-10

11-20

21-30

31-40

40 or more

Q2.2 Why do you think the village needs that number?

Q3.1 Should the following be protected from development? (tick all that apply):

Green Belt land (land west of A329)

Conservation Area (centre of the village)

BBOWT land (north and east of the village)

Flood risk area (south end of the village)

Q3.2 Should we build new houses? (tick all that apply):

Within the current village

So as to add on to the edge of the current village

On the open fields outside the village

Q5 If we are to have a say in any further housing development in our village, what do you think are the three most important issues to be considered? No more than 3 word answers on each line please:

1.

2.

3.

**Q6. Do you support the proposal to develop a Little Milton Neighbourhood Plan? YES / NO**

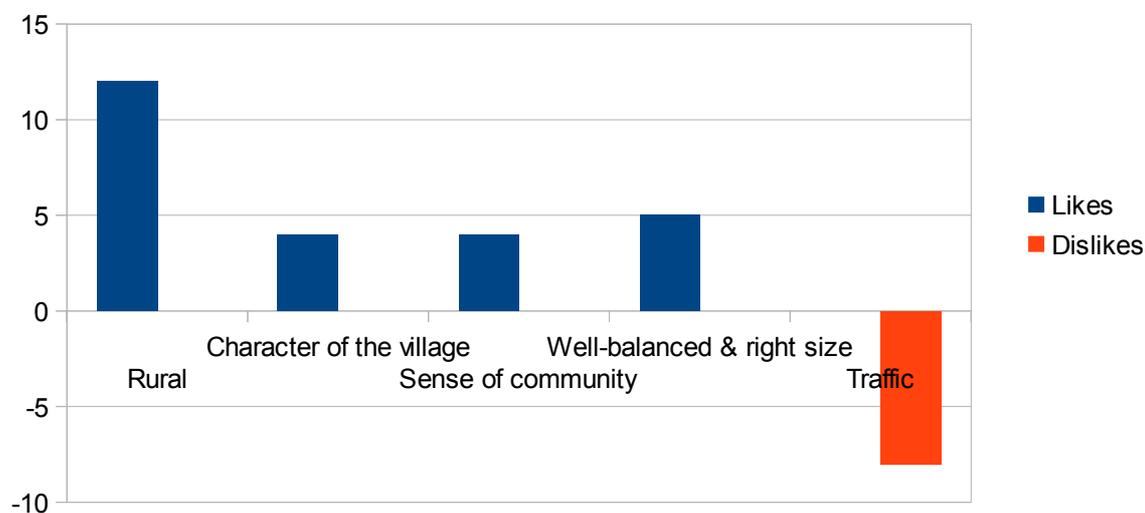
## ANNEX D

### LITTLE MILTON VILLAGE MEETING 13 SEP 2016 SURVEY RESULTS

At the Village Meeting on 13 Sep 2016, a short questionnaire was completed by the 20 people who attended, which represents 5.1% of the adult population of the village. A sample size calculation<sup>1</sup> indicates that at the 95% confidence level, a margin of error of 21% is expected, so results should be treated with caution.

Villagers were first asked what they like or dislike about the village. The most consistent responses were as follows:

What are the key things you like or dislike about our village?

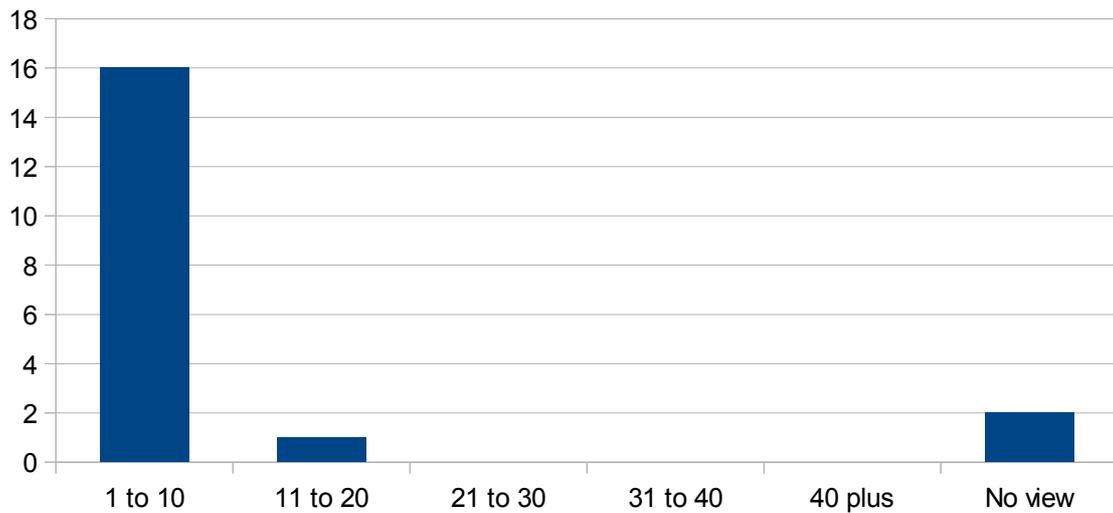


People like the rural nature of the village, its character and its sense of community. Also there is a feeling that the village is about the right size and well-balanced. Traffic was consistently the one major dislike.

During the presentation given by the Chairman of the Steering Group, he indicated that the emerging Local Plan indicated a working figure of a 5% increase in housing stock or, for our village, about 10 houses. When subsequently asked how many houses the village needed, the responses were:

<sup>1</sup> Survey Monkey Sample Size Calculator

How many houses do you think the village needs over the next 15 years?



The questionnaire then asked 'Why do you think the village needs that number?'. There were a variety of answers. The most common were:

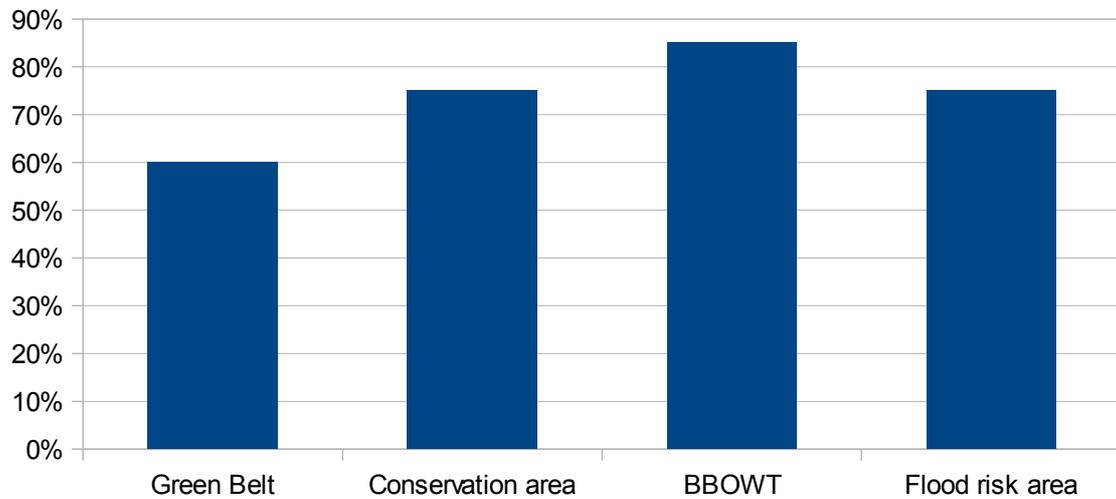
It is the minimum needed (6)

Too many would raise sustainability concerns (5)

On the other hand, some people felt we needed to increase the population to sustain the village (3); also we needed more houses for younger people (2). Individual concerns were expressed that there was limited scope for expansion, too many new houses would change the nature of the village, that the Green Belt was the only available location.

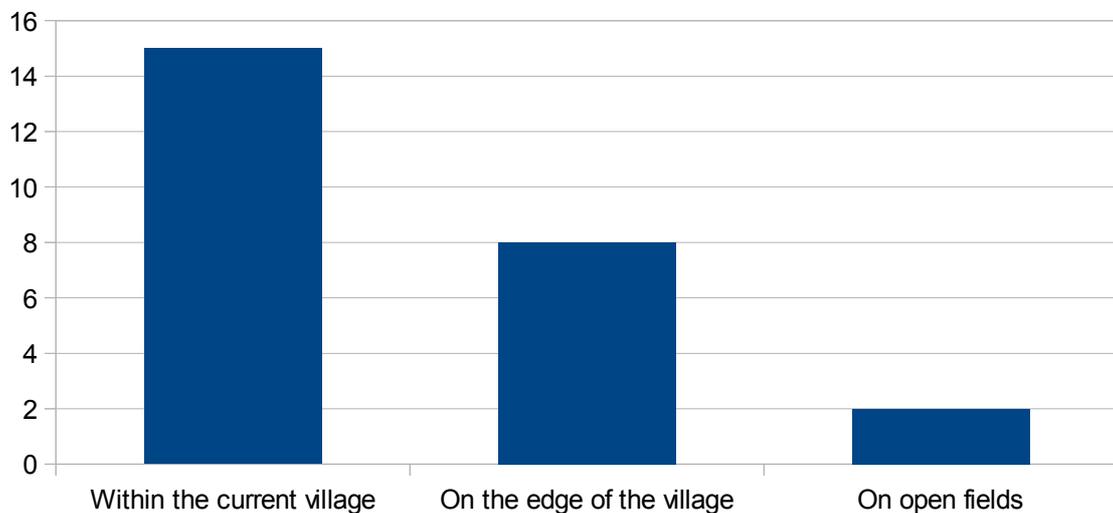
When asked if the following should be protected from development, the responses were:

Should the following be protected from development?  
% answering Yes



When asked where new houses should be built, the responses were:

Should we build new houses? (tick all that apply)



People were then asked what they considered to be the three most important issues to be considered in a Neighbourhood Plan. There was a wide range of answers. The most commonly mentioned were:

5. Sustainability and capacity issues; the need for facilities (11)
6. Good design (6)
7. The capacity of the sewage system (6)
8. Transport, traffic, parking (6)

9. The character of the village should be preserved (5)
10. Location and types of housing (5)
11. Infill development should have priority (4)

Finally those attending were asked if they supported the proposal to develop a Little Milton Neighbourhood Plan. 95% voted in favour.