

# WITHERLEY PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

## CONSULTATION STATEMENT



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## Introduction

This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain:

- a) contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan
- b) explains how they were consulted
- c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted
- d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan

## Aims of consulting on the Plan

The aim of the Witherley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) engagement process was to:

- Inform residents, local businesses, and other stakeholders about the neighbourhood planning process and to invite their participation so that local opinion informed the plan
- Ensure that consultation events took place at critical points in the process
- Ensure that as wide a range of people as possible were involved, that they could receive information and could provide feedback in a way that suited them
- Ensure that information was readily available and accessible to everyone
- Make sure that consultation feedback was available as soon as possible after events

## Background to the consultation - Initiating the Neighbourhood Development Plan

### Defining the Neighbourhood Plan Area

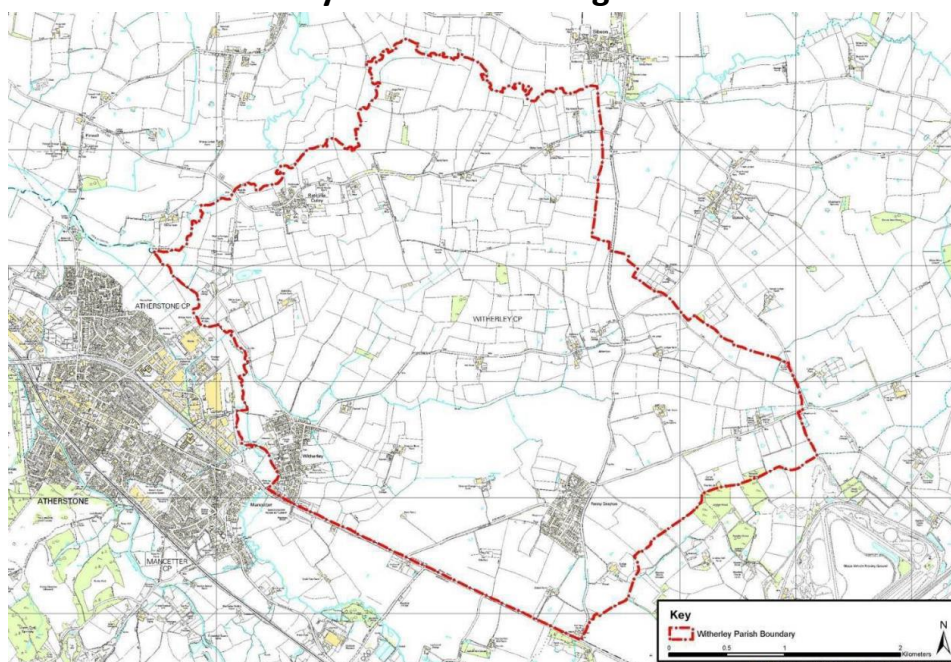
On 29<sup>th</sup> November 2016, a public meeting was organised by the Rural Community Council (Leicestershire & Rutland) to establish the appetite within the Parish for a NDP. At its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2016, Witherley Parish Council unanimously agreed to apply to Hinckley & Bosworth Council for the designation of a parish-wide NDP. The parish area was formally designated on 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017.

### Aims of the Plan in Brief

The Witherley Parish NDP (NDP) sought to demonstrate specific and local planning policies for the development and use of land within the Designated Area. The NDP would provide a

vision for future development in Witherley Parish, based on the views of the local community and supported by environmental, socio-economic and demographic data.

### Witherley Parish NDP Designated Area



### Setting up the Steering Group

On 5<sup>th</sup> September 2017, those residents who had indicated their wish to work on the NDP met and agreed the formation of the Steering Group (SG). The SG’s mandate was to drive the process on behalf of the Parish Council, consult with the local community, gather evidence to support emerging policies, and deliver the Plan. At its inception, the SG consisted of:

- Chair: Kay Conway
- Secretary: Charlotte Ward-Lewis (resigned March 2019, no replacement found)
- Treasurer: Derek Ridgway (resigned January 2020, responsibilities taken over by the Parish Council Clerk)
- Parish Council Representatives: Councillors Maureen Cook, Mark Simpson, Dayle Flude, Brian Conway
- Parishioners: Laura Dyer, David Wilkins, Helen Bullivant, Cindy McDonnell

### Steering Group Meetings

The SG met regularly and in accordance with Parish Council regulations, these meetings were open meetings. Meeting dates were as follows.

2017 Meetings	2018 Meetings	2019 Meetings	2020 Meetings
5 <sup>th</sup> September 11 <sup>th</sup> September 18 <sup>th</sup> September 3 <sup>rd</sup> October 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	9 <sup>th</sup> January 7 <sup>th</sup> February 11 <sup>th</sup> April 14 <sup>th</sup> May 11 <sup>th</sup> June 2 <sup>nd</sup> July 6 <sup>th</sup> August	8 <sup>th</sup> January 2 <sup>nd</sup> February 18 <sup>th</sup> March 17 <sup>th</sup> April 13 <sup>th</sup> May 11 <sup>th</sup> June 17 <sup>th</sup> June	6 <sup>th</sup> January 5 <sup>th</sup> February 11 <sup>th</sup> March

	3 <sup>rd</sup> September 8 <sup>th</sup> October 30 <sup>th</sup> October	9 <sup>th</sup> July 15 <sup>th</sup> July 13 <sup>th</sup> August 19 <sup>th</sup> September 9 <sup>th</sup> October 13 <sup>th</sup> November 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 16 <sup>th</sup> December	
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At a meeting of the Parish Council on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020, it was agreed to disband the SG and create a NDP Committee of Councillors to oversee the final stages of preparing the Draft Plan for Regulation 14 consultation, with the continued support of YourLocale. It comprised:

- Chair: Cllr Geoff Robinson
- Councillors: Mark Simpson, Maureen Cook, Dayle Flude, Brian Conway
- Co-opted member: Kay Conway (past Steering Group chairman)

2020 Meetings	2021 Meetings
6 <sup>th</sup> May 28 <sup>th</sup> May 18 <sup>th</sup> June 24 <sup>th</sup> July 19 <sup>th</sup> November	11 <sup>th</sup> January

## Funding and Support

The Rural Community Council provided initial professional support and organised the first three public drop-in events and later, the three public update meetings. Following a selection process involving three planning consultancies, YourLocale was appointed in August 2018. Initial funding came from the Parish Council before grants were awarded from the Locality fund to finance YourLocale.

## Formation of the Theme Groups

In April 2019, three Theme groups were formed to manage Neighbourhood Development Plan policy development. Each Theme group was supported by a YourLocale facilitator with expertise in the relevant field. Other members of the community volunteered to participate in the Theme Groups, as follows:

- Housing & Built Environment - Lead: Barry Smith. Members: Laura Dyer, Pat Roberts, Julia Deeming, Richard Trivett, Cllr Brian Conway, Cllr Geoff Robinson, Cllr Maureen Cook
- Natural & Historic Environment - Lead: Dave Wilkins (resigned December 2019, replaced by Tony Deeming). Members: Helen Bullivant, Cllr Dayle Flude, Rob Flude, Brian Bates
- Community Resources & Sustainability - Lead: Mike Preston (YourLocale). Members: Roger Laine, Rhiannon Taylor, Denise Bloomer, Samantha Ridgway, Kay Conway

The aim of these groups was to explore in detail the issues that had been raised by

parishioners at the first consultation event and to collate evidence and identify emerging priorities. Their expertise, local knowledge and commitment helped make sure that the Plan reflects the particular characteristics of Witherley Parish. They met regularly, conducted research and collated a significant amount of evidence to contribute to NDP policy development.

## Consultation methodology

In 1972, a group of residents in Witherley attempted to produce a Village Plan without success. So it was considered important to make sure villagers there were aware that the NDP would be more comprehensive and would have greater statutory weight than the previous initiative.

The SG identified the need for regular communication in different formats to ensure maximum reach across the whole community. Examples of the leaflets, notices and letters are attached as appendices. Communications methods adopted were:

- Update from the Steering Group at the monthly Parish Council meeting
- Articles in the two Parish Magazines
- Notices (Parish Council notice boards)
- Electronically via Parish Council website and on Facebook (dedicated NDP page plus pages specific to Fenny Drayton, Ratcliffe Culey & Witherley)
- Community Consultation events
- Informal face to face meetings (e.g. presentations to WI)

## Activities

Below is a detailed account of Neighbourhood Plan Activities that involved either a public event or a piece of public communication. (For a full list of all meetings and activities - see Appendices - NP Timeline).

<b>Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
29-Nov-16	Public event to explain NDPs, Parish Room, Witherley
05-Sep-17	Inaugural Steering Group meeting, Parish Room, Witherley
Oct-17	Dedicated NDP page created on Parish Council website
	Dedicated Facebook page created
17-Nov-17	Open Consultation Event, Witherley Football Club
23-Nov-17	Open Consultation Event, Ratcliffe Culey Church
25-Nov-17	Open Consultation Event, Fenny Drayton Church
27-Feb-18	Stakeholder Meeting, Parish Room, Witherley
Mid Nov 2018	'Household Survey Coming' posters distributed
	Adult Survey hand delivered to every household – online Survey Monkey incorporated an electronic version of the Young People's Survey
1-2 Dec 2018	Household Surveys collected
04-Mar-19	Theme Group Invitation Event, Parish Room, Witherley
Jun-19	Posters advertising Public Update meeting distributed
02-Jul-19	Public Update meeting, Parish Room, Witherley
03-Jul-19	Public Update meeting, Ratcliffe Culey Church
04-Jul-18	Public Update meeting, Fenny Drayton Church

Early Feb '20	Posters advertising Feedback events distributed
20-Feb-20	Public Informal Feedback event, Parish Room, Witherley
22-Feb-20	Public Informal Feedback event, Fenny Drayton Church
26-Feb-20	Public Informal Feedback event, Ratcliffe Culey Church

## Consultation – list of people and bodies consulted

The following stakeholders were contacted prior to the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation:

Leicestershire County Council  
 North Warwickshire Borough Council  
 Warwickshire County Council  
 Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council  
 Homes and Communities Agency  
 Ancient Monuments Society  
 Natural England  
 Leicester & Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership  
 The Environment Agency  
 CPRE Leicestershire  
 Historic England  
 The Coal Authority  
 Network Rail  
 Health & Safety Executive  
 Highways England  
 Western Power Distribution  
 Fenn Lanes Group of Churches  
 BT Openreach  
 Mobile Operators Association  
 Three  
 EE  
 Vodafone  
 Leicestershire & Rutland Wildlife Trust  
 West Leicestershire Clinical Commissioning Group  
 Atherstone Surgery  
 National Grid  
 British Gas Business  
 British Gas Connections Ltd  
 Severn Trent Water  
 Federation of Small Businesses  
 Country Land & Business Association  
 National Farmers Union  
 GATE (Gypsy & Traveller Equality)  
 Vista Blind  
 Action Deafness  
 Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living  
 Age UK Leicestershire & Rutland  
 Fenn Lanes Group of Churches  
 Interfaith Forum for Leicestershire

Voluntary Action LeicesterShire  
Sport England  
Leicester-Shire & Rutland Sport  
Leicestershire Police  
Leicestershire Fire & Rescue  
East Midlands Ambulance Service

- **Local Planning Authority:** Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

- **Adjoining Parishes**

Atherstone Town Council  
Higham on the Hill Parish Council  
Hartshill Parish Council  
Mancetter Parish Council  
Caldecote Parish Council  
Sheepy Parish Council

- **Member of Parliament:** Dr Luke Evans MP

- **County Councillor:** Ivan Ould

- **Borough Councillor:** Kevin Morrell

- **Businesses**

Blue Lion pub, Witherley  
The Gate Inn, Ratcliffe Culey  
Royal Redgate, Fenny Drayton  
Roberts Coaches

It should be noted that other businesses identified are owned by residents or landowners and would have received notification as a resident or landowner.

- **Education:** Witherley C of E Primary School

- **Landowners**

In June 2019, a 'Call for Sites' letter was sent to local landowners informing them about the NDP and inviting them to put forward sites for assessment (see appendix X). They were also sent a further letter (the same as for the Statutory Stakeholders) prior to the Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation.

## Summary of findings from the events and questionnaires

By involving residents, business owners and other stakeholders in the development of the NDP, the Plan is both evidence-based and has been shaped by local opinion. There has been detailed analysis after each consultation event or survey which has informed the next step in drafting the NDP.

Examples of these reports can be found in the Appendices.

## Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Consultation

Ahead of the Consultation it became apparent that Government Covid-19 restrictions would prevent residents from being able to view a hard copy of the Pre-Submission Draft NDP/Appendices at venues in the Parish during the Regulation 14 consultation. To ensure a greater public awareness of the consultation, an 8-page Executive Summary, funded by a special Locality grant, was produced by YourLocale and delivered to every property in the Parish.



The Regulation 14 consultation took place over a seven-week period (20<sup>th</sup> November 2020 to 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021). It was advertised on the Council’s website and noticeboards (in addition to the Executive Summary), and via email to statutory consultees and stakeholders. Following a request from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council for more time to respond, an extension was agreed to Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2021. This decision was publicised via the Council’s website to ensure residents were granted the same extension.

The comments were received by the Clerk and collated and tabulated and after an initial review by YourLocale, the NDP Committee considered the comments and appropriate amendments to the Plan were agreed. The revised documents were then submitted to the Parish Council for final approval ahead of submission to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council. The comments and responses are detailed in the Appendices.

## **Conclusion**

The Witherley Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan is now ready to be submitted to Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council who will publicise it for a further six weeks. The Council will then forward it, with accompanying documents and all representations made during the publicity period, to an Independent Examiner who will review it and check that it meets the ‘Basic Conditions’. If the Plan successfully passes this stage, following any modifications, it will be put forward for referendum.

The referendum question will be a straight “yes” or “no” on the entire Plan, as set out by Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. People will not be able to vote for or against individual policies. If 50% or more of respondents vote for the Plan, it will be brought into force (‘Made’) and become part of Borough-wide planning policy.

This Consultation Statement and the supporting Appendices are provided to comply with Section 15(2) of part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

## **List of Appendices**

- Appendix (i) RCC Report Community Drop In 2017
- Appendix (ii) RCC Stakeholder Consultation Events 2018
- Appendix (iii) Household Survey Analysis Dec 2018
- Appendix (iv) Household Survey Young Persons Analysis Dec 2018
- Appendix (v) RCC Witherley Consultation Result Feb 2020
- Appendix (vi) Regulation 14 Consultation Comments and Responses
- Appendix (vii) Community Communication evidence