

**Item 6 Marchington
Neighbourhood Plan**



Draft Issues, Options and Vision



Draft - November 2014

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1 Introduction and work to date

1.1 The idea of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Marchington emerged in autumn 2013, as the Parish Council was developing representations on the East Staffordshire Local Plan (Publication Draft) 2013. The intention was to use an NP to consider alternative approaches to accommodating new housing in the Parish. The Parish Council formally requested the Borough Council to make Marchington a Neighbourhood Plan Area in February 2014 and approval was given on April 7th 2014. A Steering Group was established in May 2014 and it has met four times (May, June, August and September).

1.3 Members of the Steering Group were keen to ensure that local residents and stakeholders are involved in the plan throughout its preparation. The first task was to ask people in the local community for opinions on the Parish and what might be included in the Plan through the first NP Newsletter in June. This report identifies the key issues the Plan should address and various policy options for addressing them.

1.5 Some more complex issues have arisen around options for housing and the potential for development at the former Barracks site which may require technical work. In addition, the need for further targeted consultation with the residents of Forestside and Woodlands and businesses at the Industrial Estate has been identified. At the same time the Parish has been awarded direct support (over an 8 month period) from Planning Aid England.

1.4 The anticipated **future programme** for the Neighbourhood Plan is as follows;

Further consultation, research and survey work in November/December

Complete first draft of Plan by Christmas/early January

Early 2015 – revise draft plan depending on SC LP Inspectors report

February/March – 6 week public consultation

April – revise plan and complete related documents and submit to ESBC

August/early September – Referendum

1.6 After submission, the Borough Council will check that the NP meets the Basic Conditions. It will run a further 6 week consultation and invite (consulting the Steering Group) an independent examiner to report on the plan. If it is found to meet the Basic Conditions, it will be subject to a referendum for all registered voters in Marchington in July or August 2015. If it is supported by more than 50% of voters, it will be “Made” and have legal weight. The Basic Conditions are that the NP should be;

- **Positively prepared** - the plan should be prepared based on a strategy, which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements ..., and be consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- **Justified** - the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- **Effective** - the plan should be deliverable and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- **Consistent with national policy** – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the NPPF.

2 Consultation Outcomes

2.1 The 70 responses to the initial newsletter are summarised below, the numbers in brackets are the number of responses for each category.

Likes; Village community (70), Countryside (45), Facilities (22), Shop (15), Traffic management (11), Houses (9), School (4), Buses (3), low crime (2), Pubs (2) Church (1)

Concerns; Smaller houses (41), Traffic (40), Road Conditions (18), Flooding (17), Cycling/walking (17), Environmental-threats (12) Industrial (7), buses (6), sports-facilities (6), Nuisance (3), Renewables (3)

Issues for inclusion; Housing & Employment plus Traffic (59), Community Facilities (23), shops (22) & employment (14)

Other Comments; many of these reinforced the responses to “Likes” and “Concerns.” Referring to, environment, need for smaller houses, traffic, cycling/footpaths and flooding. As such, they did not need to be repeated in full. However some needed specific responses.

Ages; (64 responses) 18/30 (1 – 1%), 31/45 (5 – 8%), 46/64 (26 – 41%) & 65+ (32 – 50%). There is a need to engage people under 45, notwithstanding the biased aged structure of the local population. It is also intended to do something with the school.

Geography The response rate from Forestfields & Woodlands was low and the Steering Group considered that, because of the potential for change around the barracks site and the relative isolation of the areas, a further targeted consultation effort is needed.

2.2 In addition to public consultation, a number of organisations and other stakeholders have been contacted to inform them of the intention to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan for Marchington and to ask for any initial comments. These organisations and people will be engaged throughout the Plan process. The initial comments received concern;

- **National Trust** – requests that the setting of Sudbury Hall to be considered in policy terms and wishes to be part of future consultation.
- **Duchy of Lancaster** (through Savills) – will provide details of land and property holdings and wishes to be part of future consultation.
- **Sport England** – request that the NP should reflect national policy and wishes to be part of future consultation.
- **Staffordshire Wildlife Trust** – welcomes notification and offers to provide data/information and wishes to be part of future consultation.
- **Highways Agency** – no comments but wishes to be part of future consultation.
- **Environment Agency** - no comments but wishes to be part of future consultation.
- **Draycott in the Clay PC** – no comments but wishes to be part of future consultation.
- **Uttoxeter Town Council** – no comments but wishes to be part of future consultation.

2.3 Evans (Leeds) and Hortons, the respective owners of the barracks site and the industrial estate, have also been consulted. In addition, the Steering group is working closely with ESBC, particularly on the Local Plan policy context and the Conservation Area Management Plan review. Very recently, William Davis have sought to engage on Jacks Lane.

3 Parish Profile & Planning Background – summary

3.1 This is a short summary of the Neighbourhood Plan related characteristics arising from the data contained in the Parish Profile, a full copy of which is available separately

3.2 The Parish of Marchington and Marchington Woodlands covers an extensive area. Marchington is a small, attractive village and residents have a strong sense of community and there are good facilities including a Village Hall a primary school, a Community Shop, a church and three pubs. Nearby, to the east there an area of houses known as Forestside and to the west is Birch Cross. Further afield, Marchington Woodlands is spread out over an area of around 3 miles. It has a Church and a Village Hall but consists mostly of farms and residential properties in an undulating wooded landscape. This dispersed settlement pattern, with several nodes is a particular characteristic of the parish.

3.3 The parish also includes a former Ministry of Defence depot. Part of this area is now a large industrial and the former military housing is now the Forestside residential area. The land between these is vacant and includes several barracks buildings, it is owned by the Evans Property Group (Leeds). There is a recent planning permission for a solar park on this land, but the owners are thought to be considering alternatives. The presence of the Barracks site, with the industrial estate and Forestside, and the nearby Dovegate Prison is a further particular feature of Marchington

3.4 The Parish has a **population*** of 1163 living in 473 households (* the recorded figure in 2011 was 2017 but this included 854 inmates at Dovegate prison. The **population structure** is 595 females & 568 males and household composition is:

- 49 one person households (over 65) – **lower** than ESBC average
- 48 one person households (other) – **lower** than ESBC average
- 66 two person households (over 65) – **higher** than ESBC average
- 21 lone parent households – **lower** than ESBC average

3.5 **Housing tenure** is dominated by owner occupation (with 402 dwellings owner occupied – 85% which is significantly above the ESBC average – 70%). There are 64 rented properties, with only 2 local authority. The majority are of which are at Forestside

3.6 The rate of **car ownership** is high, above the ESBC average.

3.7 There are 1095 economically active residents. The key features of **employment** are:

- 343 people are in full time employment (40.7%) – **higher** than ESBC average (31%)
- 245 people are in part time employment (22%) – **higher** than ESBC average (14.6%)
- 165 people are self-employed (15%) – **higher** than ESBC average (8.6%)

- 97 - Managers, Directors & Senior Officials – 12.5% (**higher** than ESBC 10.4%)
- 126 - Professional Occupations – 16% (**higher** than ESBC average 14.6%)
- 119 - Skilled Trades Occupations – 15% (**higher** than ESBC average – 12%)
- 32 - Sales and Customer Service Occupations – 4% (**lower** than ESBC average 7.8%)
- 40 - Agriculture - 6.3% - (**higher** than ESBC average is 1.4%)

3.8 Education is a significant employer with teachers and support staff working at the Primary School and Smallwood Prep. School. There are three public houses employing local people, attracting visitors and generate spending the local economy. Neighbourhood Statistics show significant self-employment, suggesting a higher than average rate of local business ownership and working locally from home, either in small units or from home.

3.9 There is around a dozen **community groups/clubs**, two **churches** and two **schools** in the Parish. There is a playing field, tennis courts, bowling-green and a cricket pitch in the village. These groups and the facilities that they own/use are an important part of the quality of life of the community. The strong sense of community in Marchington and the sense of belonging and pride which people have was a key point to emerge in early consultation.

3.10 Part of Marchington Village is designated as a **Conservation Area**, a number of **Listed Buildings** and two **Scheduled Ancient Monuments**. In addition to the protected buildings and structures, there are other structures in the parish which are valued by local people. The National Trust has provided some useful comments highlighting the need for the NP to recognise the need to protect the setting of Sudbury Hall and its parkland which extends into the north of the Plan area alongside the River Dove. There are **archaeological** features recorded in the Parish. The most commonly found are ridge and furrow and field systems and parkland/deer park associated with old Needwood Forest and subsequent enclosures.

3.11 The **landscape** of Marchington is important. The countryside is attractive and well managed but there is some impact from the former military uses around the industrial estate and the barracks and from the development of HMP Dovegate . The landscape has been influenced in the past by the creation of Needwood Forest in Medieval times, of which old areas of woodland and significant individual trees remain. Enclosure led to hedgerows and parkland, which are significant features in the landscape. There is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), covering 43 hectares of woodland at Forest Bank. The Parish is in NE Character Area - 68 Needwood & South Derbyshire Claylands.

3.12 NE has defined a series of Statements of Environmental Opportunities (SEOs) and linked objectives. Those relevant to the Plan are summarised below.

SEO 1: *Conserve and enhance the essential character*

SEO 2: *Manage the range of woodlands, veteran trees, wood pasture and parklands.*

SEO 3: *Protect historic and cultural features, in particular traditional settlement patterns.*

SEO 4: *Manage and enhance the network of rivers, flood plains and wetlands,*

3.13 The importance of the built environment of the village and the landscape of the Parish is further highlighted in **the Historic Environment Character Assessment: (August 2013)** **which** was commissioned from the County Council and is part of the evidence base for the Local Plan). In addition to known features, there is potential for unknown Heritage Assets.

3.14 A review of **planning activity** from 1997 to 2013 was undertaken using the ESBC search facility for planning applications. The intention was to identify patterns in past development proposals for new houses and to assess the extent of windfall development. This showed that over the period, there were (approximately) 28 approvals and 13 refusals relating to new housing in the parish. The breakdown of those permitted is:

- New Housing (conversions) – 18 to 24 units, including 6 at Smallwood nursing home
- New Build Housing - 12 units, including 5 at the Bagshaws (Yew Tree Farm) now lapsed

3.15 In the same period, there were 16 refusals, which included 16 units and two farm workers dwellings. More recently, a scheme for 8 dwellings (conversion and new build) at a former Public House in Birch Cross was turned down and there is a current application for a conversion to create 5 dwellings in nearby farm buildings.

3.16 Based on past rates conversions and small scale infill could produce 40 new dwellings over the plan period. The continued evolution of agriculture means that a reasonable level

of applications for farm buildings could remain, leading to opportunities for the re-use of buildings and structure which become redundant. Even if the past rate is reduced by 50% to acknowledge that there will be less redundant farm buildings suitable for conversion in the future, it can be assumed that around 20 dwellings might be forthcoming. This suggests that, unless there are exceptional benefits or opportunities (e.g. relating to the Barracks), it is not necessary to allocate any larger sites for new housing in the Plan and that village and the other settlements in the Parish should continue to develop organically through infill plots and conversions, including appropriate small scale.

3.17 It is considered that Marchington has particular characteristics and that a more focused approach, which could be developed through the Neighbourhood Plan without prejudice to the overall Local Plan strategy. These characteristics are;

- A number of larger farms with the potential for continued conversion of buildings.
- The services in Marchington village (school and community shop) are accessible, by walking, cycling and short car journeys, from Birch Cross and Forest side.
- Significant local employment is provided at Marchington Industrial estate
- The dispersed nature of settlement in the Parish.

3.18 It may be pertinent that two planning permissions have been granted for “Solar farms” in the Plan area. One was in 2011 on the former barracks site and more recently in October 2014 on land at dove View, Moisty Lane.

3.19 However, it is believed that alternative forms of development are being considered and it is acknowledged that the potential for change around the Barracks site may need to be considered as a separate issue in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Local Plan Issues

3.20 The emerging ESBC Local Plan proposes extensions to the settlement boundary of Marchington Village to create potential new housing sites at “The Bagshaws” and off Jacks Lane. Otherwise, new housing is proposed to be limited to that which would be permitted under the rural exceptions policy. The Parish Council considers that alternative approaches could be considered, including an allowance that recognises the clusters of existing housing which occur at Birch Cross, The Woodlands and Forestside, noting that the latter location is accessible to the employment opportunities provided at the business park.

3.21 However, pressure for development in other locations is emerging and, if the outcome of the ESBC Local Plan examination is that decision making is delegated to the Neighbourhood Plan, the NP process will need to be fair to all involved. This will mean a technical assessment of options and sites to meet the housing requirement, including consultation with landowners and developers as well as local residents.

4 Draft Issues & Possible Options

4.1 **Issues** - Based on the Profile and consultation six or seven issues can be identified;

- **Housing;** the scale, location and type of new development to enable choice and direct development to preferred locations.
- **Community Facilities;** retaining the community spirit of the Parish and protecting local facilities.
- **Natural environment;** protecting the landscape at the same time as enabling agricultural change and enabling good quality access to the countryside.

- **Transport;** managing traffic at the same time as retaining rural character.
- **Built Environment;** protecting the character of Marchington Village, including the Conservation Area and protect the setting of Sudbury Hall and other recognised heritage assets.
- **Employment;** enabling the successful operation of the industrial estate whilst minimising any adverse environmental or traffic impacts.

4.2 In addition, the Plan could set out criteria for any development which is sought in areas of potential change, primarily focused upon the **former barracks site**, between the Industrial estate and the houses at Forestside (originally the MOD Marchington depot).

4.3 Responses to the first newsletter identified village character, sense of a community, local facilities and the countryside as the main things that people like about living in Marchington. Less good things included; traffic, flooding and the need for housing choice.

4.4 **Options** - The following approach, could address the above issues, but choices will need to be made to ensure that we produce a balanced, evidence based, Neighbourhood Plan which meets local needs in a practical and robust way.

Housing

A - Accept the settlement boundary and housing sites at The Bagshaws and Jacks Lane in Marchington village, as proposed in the Local Plan, but set strict criteria for layout design & the type of houses. **or**

B - Undertake a new site allocations exercise and settlement boundary review, but continuing to focus development in and around Marchington village. **or**

C - Propose a dispersed approach to development, including Birch Cross and Forestside. (**NB** this could be viewed as being in conflict with the ESBC Local plan and is dependent on the outcome of the Local Plan Examination).

D – Based on the outcome of a planned local housing needs survey, develop policies to enable specified types of housing to meet local needs, within the overall requirement for 20 dwellings and by permitting “Exceptions” sites.

Community Facilities

A - Protect and enhance existing community facilities, including open spaces, sports grounds, meeting halls, churches and the community shop

B - Seek improvements to the environment and community facilities at the Barracks site.

Natural environment

A - Develop specific local detailed policies to protect the landscape and, where possible, control development on agricultural land and buildings, including renewable energy. **or**

B – Rely on ESBC Local Plan policies and national guidance (NPPF) to manage development in the countryside.

Transport

A – With the Borough and County Councils, address traffic from (HGVs and commuter traffic) from Industrial Estate HMP Dovegate and large employment sites nearby.

Built Environment

A - Protect and enhance the character of Marchington Conservation Area and identify and protect other local heritage assets throughout the Parish. **or**

B - Rely on ESBC Local Plan policies and national guidance (NPPF) to protect heritage assets.

Employment

A - To enable the further development of the industrial estate and the potential for employment development through agricultural diversification and the re-use of buildings. **or**

B - Rely on ESBC Local Plan policies and national guidance (NPPF) to manage employment and business development.

C – Facilitate home working and self-employment through positive policies on extensions and conversions and by enabling IT and communications development.

Former barracks site

A – Draft a policy to accommodate a range of possible developments, focussing on the potential to contribute to the development needs of the Parish and provide a better environment for Forestside. **or**

B – Rely solely on Local Plan policies with no specific Neighbourhood Plan coverage.

5 Draft Neighbourhood Plan Vision

The Steering Group will also need to develop a Vision for the Plan which should be forward looking, using the Local Plan period (2013 to 2031). The Marchington NP Vision, should reflect the characteristics of this community and the identified issues, based on the outcomes of consultation and the evidence. This draft is a starting point for discussion; *“By 2031 we would like Marchington to be an even better place to live, with a continued strong sense of community and viable local services. The Parish will have adapted to change and accommodated reasonable new development and supported the rural economy, but with the character of the settlements and the surrounding countryside will have been protected and enhanced”*.

6 Consultation on Issues, options and the Draft Vision/Objectives?

The identified Issues, Options and the Vision will need to be subject to consultation with local residents, landowners and businesses and then reviewed in the light of responses. The need for and proposed form of a further consultation exercise is set out below.

It is also important that we follow up on the summer consultation to keep people involved in the process, but we need to have something substantial to say to them and avoid consultation fatigue taking into account the possible local housing needs survey.

It is suggested that, a pre-Christmas newsletter and a couple of events or drop in sessions (in Marchington and in Woodlands) would be useful and, we could include a simple questionnaire (or live voting sessions) at the events to tell people about the issues that we have identified and to ask which of the options they support and if they agree with the draft vision and objectives. The suggested text for a newsletter/questionnaire is Agenda Item 7

Non Neighbourhood Plan Matters -where matters are raised which cannot be dealt with through the NP, the Parish Council will need to liaise with other bodies (Borough & County Councils, police etc.) to ensure that they are properly addressed.