

Meeth Neighbourhood Plan

Key objectives for adoption in principle at meeting on 13th September 2018

1. Housing development

The Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire (NPQ) sought to answer, relative to potential development —

- “*when?*” — over a period of the next 15 years; 70% of respondents did not wish to see development in the next 2 years but about half of respondents did feel there was a need for some development over the following 3 to 10 years. 69% of respondents felt that there was no need for development more than 10 years hence.
- “*what?*” — a separately commissioned objective and independent housing needs survey undertaken by Devon Communities Together identified that there would be two applicants who would meet statutory criteria for affordable social housing. Separately the NPQ identified most support for community owned affordable housing.
- “*where?*” — categorically, those who responded to the survey overwhelmingly voted to maintain the current Meeth village development boundary. Further, no respondents wanted to see development on a “greenfield site away from the village”

Additional comment and feedback indicates that —

- affordable and social housing should be truly local and protected as such
- efforts should be made to best utilise existing housing in the village centre rather than simply build new housing

Therefore the Local Plan Key development Objectives are —

- *to object to planning applications outside of the agreed development area without exceptional counterbalancing reasons*
- *to support a modest volume of open market housing close to the village within the agreed development area*
- *to fulfil the plan's social objectives and Meeth's social and affordable housing needs by way of a Community Charitable Trust or similar mechanism) to oversee the provision of affordable housing, preferably by buying and refurbishing houses which come up for sale in the village.*

2. Social and Demographic

Meeth's population is ageing (83% of respondents are over 56 years old) and 46 % of respondents are retired.

Comment and feedback indicates that those who have retired to Meeth sometimes find themselves having to move later in retirement, often reluctantly.

The NPQ also identified a strong preference to see a post office and/or village shop and pharmacy or surgery provision. There was also a strong response to preserve village assets such as the pub, village hall.

One option which might be explored further is have the pub listed as a community asset although it is suggested that the preferred starting point is simply to have a working understanding that the Community Charitable Trust would acquire the pub in the event that the current owners wished to sell and no buyer could be found to operate it as a going concern.

Local Plan Social Objectives are therefore —

- *to provide one social housing unit to a suitable local key worker to assist those in the village who want to stay in the village but need help to maintain their independence for as long as possible;*
- *for the Community Charitable Trust to acquire identified village assets if they become available.*

3. Environment and Leisure

The NPQ identified preserving the undeveloped nature of our open countryside, views, scenery and dark skies as of particular important to parishioners.

Footpaths are more than twice as important to respondents as cycle paths and the focus of responses was upon linking the Devon Wildlife Trust site to the village.

Local Plan Social Objectives are therefore —

- *to support linking the Tarka Trail to the village and Devon Wildlife Trust site and maintain existing public rights of way but not to support green field extension*
- *to improve village parking when opportunities arise*
- *to develop a community orchard and/or wild flower meadow subject to acceptable cost.*

4. Other

Two other issues are particularly important to parishioners — better broadband speeds and traffic speed through the village.

This plan does not attempt to find a solution to broadband speeds.

Regarding traffic calming, in the absence of funding, no solutions are offered by the plan and it is recognised that while there is substantial clamour for traffic speed reduction there is also poor consensus on how this should be achieved and no money to implement the plan.

The plan therefore simply identifies traffic calming as a priority objective in the event that a consensus can be found and funding is available.