

RINGMER NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NDP)

Notes of

Public meeting to discuss Social, Leisure and Infrastructure needs

Tuesday 13 December 2011, 7.30pm – Caburn Pavilion

Introductory comments

1. Cllr. Kay recapped briefly the NDP process for people who had not attended the previous seminars and its relationship to Lewes District Council's (LDC) Emerging Core Strategy (ECS).

Social and leisure needs

2. Cllr. Kay commented that this was the least developed of the parish council's draft policy areas and that comments on issues to be included or excluded would be welcomed. He outlined the policy areas that had been identified to date and the reasoning behind them. He drew particular attention to the following and invited comments:
 - The shortage of community places to meet and capacity issues relating to the village hall and other venues.
 - Whether community facilities were needed at the Broyleside, what type and if they would be viable.
 - Difficulties associated with maximising the potential community use of the Community College accommodation. A meeting was scheduled with the college governing body to obtain their views.
 - The extent to which additional green spaces were needed
 - The lack of sports pitches and tennis courts which was a serious and longstanding deficiency. Both Ringmer Rovers F.C. and A.F.C. Ringmer currently played matches outside the village. In contrast play facilities for younger children were generally seen as good and less of a priority, although need could expand if the village grew.
 - Outdoor facilities for young people and adults were a major need but as yet no policies had been developed.
 - There was a continuing need, and a waiting list, for allotments and council policy was to maintain provision in line with the level of need.
 - The community orchard had been a success and prompted suggestions that a community woodland was now needed. In response to this a draft policy to support any such proposals had been developed.
 - Maintaining a list of community assets was possible under the Localism Act and allowed the community to bid for such assets, if they became available for sale, as a means of protecting key assets. For this reason the council was proposing to create such a list.
3. In response to public questions the following points were made by Cllr. Kay:
 - Security issues and related staff costs made use of college facilities problematical for many groups. While this would be explored with the governors it seemed probable that the college would remain best suited to meeting a range of sporting needs.
 - He foresaw little problem in acquiring public land to expand the council's allotments as such land would not be that with development potential.

- Regarding the capacity of the village hall he invited Mr West, Chairman of the village hall trustees, to comment. Mr West confirmed high occupancy rates (90% for the main hall, 75% for the smaller hall and 50% for the St. Mary's room). The estimated annual footfall was 38,000 and while there was some scope for expanding capacity this was not large – current improvements centred on access issues, additional storage, some new meeting space and better use of some existing space. The hall was used by groups outside the village, particularly from Lewes, and the new hall in Barcombe had not impacted on demand.
4. The meeting then broke to discuss and complete the first part of a questionnaire that had been circulated concerning these issues.

Infrastructure

5. Cllr. Kay outlined the policy areas and issues associated with this area and on which comments would be welcome. This session started by examining transport related issues and he drew attention to the following:
- Current difficulties accessing the primary roads which would be increased by new out of area development increasing traffic on the A26.
 - The need to improve not only the Earwig Corner junction (as identified by LDC's 2011 SHLAA) but other junctions from there to the A27 which were similarly affected. The parish council's policy was that road improvements were essential prior to any substantial development that would add to traffic volumes.
 - The need to ensure the local road network was not overloaded particularly through policies that avoided overspill parking from new developments; avoided exacerbating existing and creating new pinch points in local traffic flows; and overcame problems of 'rat running' which would put at risk the quiet country lanes that gave Ringmer an important part of its village feel.
 - The need to complete the cycleway and mobility scooter way to Lewes and also extend it through the village to link to the Broyleside and employment sites to the east of the village.
 - Road safety and traffic calming issues were also a priority and the need for a safe, developer funded, pedestrian crossing near the community college had been identified if any development was permitted north of the B2192. Similarly development at the eastern end of the village would require traffic calming measures on the eastern section of the B2192.
 - Public transport provision. This was a difficult area to influence greatly although there might be scope for requesting current bus services to connect to Lewes station.
6. A number of comments were then made from the floor including:
- The overload that currently existed on Ham Lane without taking into account further development.
 - The need for the NDP to highlight the traffic impact of out of area development on the A26.
 - The possibility that reducing congestion on local roads could actually encourage 'rat running' by through travellers.
 - The hazardous situation for pedestrians in Bishops Lane and Church Lane which would need to be addressed if there was major local development.
 - Was there a potential conflict between the council's desire for drip fed development over many years and the need to secure developers contributions to fund much needed infrastructure. How could the large sums needed be accumulated. Cllr. Kay suggested that a combination of section 106 funding and the new Community Infrastructure Levy could solve this problem.

7. The meeting then broke to discuss and complete the next part of the questionnaire concerning these issues.
8. The meeting resumed and Margaret Constable, a community governor representing the governing body of Ringmer Primary School, outlined the severe admission problems they had faced over the last two years due to increased intakes. Intakes of 50 reception pupils in 2010 and 33 in 2011 had presented major problems in organising classes and necessitated some tough choices which had had to be explained to parents. The head teacher's view was that if further development took place the school could not cope with additional pupil numbers. Cllr. Kay pointed out that the parish council's policy was that it was a top priority that all eligible Ringmer children should be able to be accommodated within its primary school.
9. He went on to outline other related infrastructure policy areas and drew particular attention to:
 - The importance of a similar policy in relation to nursery schooling
 - The current absence of a policy for developing the Ringmer children's centre
 - The current draft policies on primary & community care services and dental service provision. In his view the new health centre had the physical capacity to meet increased demand and provide additional health care services (up to a point) provided funding and staffing were available. However, dental service provision was limited and a show of hands demonstrated that the majority of those present obtained dental care elsewhere.
 - The need for increased water supply, and the existing strains on drainage and sewage systems. The council was mindful to support proposals for improvement at the Barcombe Mills water works, if needed, and was minded to support an additional bank-side reservoir west of the A26 if required to meet future need. It was also proposed that improvements to drainage and sewage systems should precede any significant development and that construction on known flood affected areas should not take place unless preceded by flood amelioration works.
 - Regarding electricity the council felt that supplies to new developments should be underground to ensure resilience of supply and that any further developments at the electricity sub-station should be subject to the National Park planning policies. Regarding gas there was a need to expand the extent of supply to reach any new homes and, if possible, more existing homes.
 - Waste disposal and recycling were a major concern and the council was proposing a new, more appropriately located, Ringmer based recycling depot that accepted a wide range of waste. It had identified the Diplocks Industrial Estate as a potential site.
 - The existing cemetery had only limited spare capacity, unlikely to be sufficient for the next 20 years, and the council was proposing that land be allocated for its extension. It was also testing support for any proposals for green/woodland burial sites.
 - Regarding electronic communications the main issues related to the speed of broadband connection and cost. Unbundling the local broadband loop at the Ringmer exchange could significantly reduce costs to users.
 - Regarding 'green infrastructure' there were a number of issues included in the Emerging Core Strategy that the council thought worth considering: linking green spaces with wildlife corridors; maintaining and enhancing bio-diversity; and encouraging local food production and marketing. If future developments encompassed existing footpaths the council would like to see these retained with an associated green corridor alongside them.
10. Cllr. Kay also asked the meeting to consider if policies were needed for additional areas including: flood defence; energy conservation; shops; and facilities for the elderly. Suggestions and comments at the end of the meeting or by email would be welcome.

Conclusion

11. Martin Harrop, a planning consultant with Croudace developments present in the audience, identified his interest and shared his views of the NDP agenda. It was a learning process for everyone and his over-riding impression was that the local community either wanted no housing or at best for any new development to be drip-fed. His interpretation of the government's localism agenda was that it was designed to give people the opportunity to examine their communities, identify necessary improvements, and fund them via approved development. Without development funding for such improvements would not be forthcoming. The NDP was the big chance for local people to say what they wanted and take steps to put it in place. He felt that that had not been the message put at the four seminars. If development of a certain scale was supported it would result in significant funding for community purposes but if a drip-fed approach was adopted the benefit would be much less. In response a contrary view was offered from the floor suggesting that a combination of continued section 106 funding, the Community Infrastructure Levy, and the new homes development bonus would offer a way forward. District councillor Peter Gardiner, also present in the audience, expressed a contrary view, that CIL was effectively a roof tax.
12. The meeting closed at 9.15 pm with 44 people having signed the attendance record. Completed questionnaires with responses to issues raised during the evening were collected.

A synopsis of the “What do you think?” questionnaires for this seminar is attached below

“Ringmer to 2030”

NDP Seminar 4, Tuesday 13 December 2011

What do you think?

About you: Name (optional) _____
Home postcode _____

Are you (please tick all that apply)

a Ringmer village resident	_____	26
a Broyleside resident	_____	4
resident in Ringmer’s countryside	_____	6
employed in Ringmer	_____	2
interest in land for development	_____	4
other interest _____	_____	3

Section 7: Social & leisure facilities in Ringmer

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|--|---|
| 7.1 Community facilities: Ringmer village | 7.6 Sports pitches and tennis courts |
| 7.2 Community facilities: the Broyleside | 7.7 Outdoor play facilities for children |
| 7.3 Ringmer Community College: community role | 7.8 Outdoor facilities for young people & adults |
| 7.4 Tourist attractions in and around Ringmer | 7.9 Allotments, community orchard and woodland |
| 7.5 Ringmer Green & other open spaces | 7.10 Community assets |

Are there any areas that you want to comment on ?

Comments _____ many _____

Do you agree with the proposed allotments policy ? YES (40) NO(0)

Do you agree that we should support a community woodland ? YES (38) NO(1)

Do you agree that we should create a list of Ringmer’s community assets ? YES(39) NO(1)

Are there any Social & Leisure areas that we have missed ?

Comments _____ some _____

Section 8: Infrastructure requirements

Do you support the proposed **allotments** policy on Earwig Corner/A26 ? YES(34) NO (2)

Comments _____confusing word included in Q, in error_____

Do you support the local road network policy ? YES (35) NO(2)

Comments _____some_____

Do you support the cycleway/mobility scooter policies ? YES (40) NO(0)

Comments _____some_____

Do you support the road safety policies ? YES(36) NO(2)

Comments _____several_____

Do you have views on Ringmer's public transport services ?

Comments _____several_____

Do you support the proposed water supply policies, including a possible new reservoir west of the A26 ? YES (31) NO(7)

Do you support the proposed drainage & sewerage policies ? YES(33) NO(4)

Comments _____

Do you support the proposed policies on waste disposal & recycling, including a new recycling depot for Ringmer village YES(38) NO(1)
YES(36) NO(0)

Do you support an extension to the New Churchyard ? YES (35) NO (0)

Do you support establishing a green or woodland burial facility in Ringmer ? YES (32) NO (4)

Are there any infrastructure areas we have missed?

Comments _____some_____

Green Infrastructure

Would you support a new Countryside policy creating wildlife corridors ? YES(37) NO(0)

Would you support a new Countryside policy for maintaining biodiversity ? YES(33) NO(0)