

Record of the Third MCNP Engagement meeting, held in Fritwell Village hall on 30th January 2017.

In attendance: 21 residents, 3 Parish Councillors, Sarah McCready from MCNP Executive and the Parish Clerk.

Residents spent about 40 minutes viewing the boards displaying recent updates to the MCNP, in particular the draft policies. They were then invited to sit down for discussion.

The discussion was opened by the Chair of Fritwell Parish Council, Councillor Ultsch, who welcomed all those in attendance and explained the following:-

- This is the third Engagement meeting.
- The MCNP consists of 11 parishes and the Dorchester Group, who are the developers at Heyford Park.
- In total, the population represented is around 7,000.
- 24 draft policies have now been prepared and are the subject of this part of the consultation process. These are also available on the MCNP website.
- Expert advice has been sought in the drafting of these as the NP must comply with the Cherwell District Council Local Plan.
- The **policies** cover
 - **Transport and traffic**
 - **Community Infrastructure**
 - **Housing**
 - **Development**
 - Other issues are covered by the **Community Action Plan**.
- There will be a Referendum sometime in Summer 2017 to give residents the opportunity to express support or otherwise for the adoption of the MCNP.

Councillor Ultsch then introduced Sarah McCready (SM) and invited those attending to raise questions and comments. These were as follows:-

- **Concern was expressed that this could be the last opportunity for consultation on the MCNP as many residents felt there was still too much uncertainty in the wording of many policies.**
SM responded that the consultations so far had focused on 1. The vision, 2. The Objectives and 3. The Policies. The draft NP will be published ahead of the planned referendum. She explained that further views of residents can be expressed via the website going forward and by approaching Parish Councillors. She also added that those who were particularly interested in seeing how certain an area of the plan developed in more detail were welcome to volunteer to become more involved, as people in other parishes had been co-opted on to specific working groups .
- **Many residents felt that there will indeed be a need for further consultation events as the process unfolds.**
SM explained that she believed that funding had been applied for to provide the finances to print and deliver a physical copy of the NP to every household in the NP area. She agreed to check this and confirm. SM, PF and SU all noted that if those gathered felt another consultation on the final plan would be a good idea, they should record this on their feedback forms.
- **Many residents expressed concern that the policy documents on the website represented ‘work in progress’ and more detail was in evidence on the documents displayed at this event.**

The view was expressed that the updated documents need to be readily available via the website.

SM explained that CDC will do a check on compliance with the Local Plan before the referendum. They will need to view the draft plan for about 6 weeks before publication and will check for gaps in the evidence base, thus the final version that local people see will be complete and will include all the appendices. She added that the MCNP is an additional layer of detail, to be read by planners alongside the Local Plan.

- **What will happen if the referendum vote is for rejection of the MCNP?**

SM explained that if the group wished to resubmit, and the group made changes to the draft, the Neighbourhood Plan would go back in terms of the stages of the process, and thus more consultation and another review from the inspector would be necessary.

- **The wording relating to proposals for developments outside the Settlement Areas of Category A villages is vague and contains phrases such as ‘consideration on a case by case basis’. What criteria will be used in making such decisions?**

SM agreed to go back to the Executive and discuss the issue of case by case criteria in more detail, with a view to providing detail on what a case by case decision might come down to.

- **Issues relating to Public Transport do not appear in the Transport Policy. Why not?**

*SM: The NP covers physical development and spatial planning in its policies. Other areas, such as public transport, are addressed in the **Community Action Plan**. However, developers of larger sites are required to make Section 106 payments to CDC and the MCNP Forum is creating a ‘wish list’ of spending possibilities of importance to residents. So far, these appear to be*

- *Public Transport*
- *Doctors’ Surgeries*
- *Cemeteries*

Councillor Ultsch explained that Fritwell Parish Council had already expressed the desire for S106 money arising from 297 dwellings at Upper Heyford to be used for transport mitigation strategies in Fritwell.

- **As there appears to be a focus on development at Upper Heyford, could not a hub for bus links from local villages be established there so that passengers can travel by bus to Upper Heyford and from there to Bicester, Banbury or Oxford?**

- **In discussions about Affordable Housing for local people, how is need to be defined?**

SM: Affordable housing includes housing association and local authority provided housing. CDC has a list of those needing housing of this type, prioritised by need, and has provided numbers of how many people on this list are living within the MCNP neighbourhood area. However, the Executive are investigating whether a local lettings place could be achieved for the neighbourhood, which would envisage that local Affordable housing should be allocated to MCNP area residents, rather than to those from, for instance Bicester or Banbury who may have a higher priority according to the list held by CDC. Such measures are currently working at Heyford Park. CDC can provide the MCNP Forum with numbers (not names) on those on the housing list for each village and this information will be sought on behalf of Fritwell. Any

developer of a site of more than 10 dwellings must provide 35% Affordable housing within each development unless a robust justification is made for a different percentage.

- **Building Affordable Housing outside the Settlement Area on Rural Exception sites will be supported by the MCNP if the other benefits of allowing development are considerable. What criteria will be used in making such judgements?**

As with the previous question regarding what criteria would be used in a case by case basis, SM offered to get this detail from the Executive.

- **The Policies so far seem to lack clarity. How will further clarity be communicated to residents as this process proceeds? Not all residents can access the website.**

SM: Via the website, via Parish Councillors and via the MCNP mailing list whereby reports and other information can be emailed to residents who provide their contact details. Further information can also be disseminated via the Parish Council's electronic list of residents. Councillor Ultsch added that Fritwell PC uses a file of hard copies of important documents, placed in Wrighton's shop, specifically for those unable to access the internet.

- **How has the need for local housing been assessed?**

SM: Both the SHMA document, that has been used by Cherwell as the basis of their Local Plan, plus an additional neighbourhood specific survey that the MCNP commissioned from AECOM, have been used. Both inform the housing mix cited in the MCNP.

- **What is the current status of the Local Green Spaces listed on the display boards? Who decided on the identification of these sites?**

SM: These will be formally designated if the MCNP is finally accepted. Meanwhile, as the NP progresses, it carries increasing weight.

Councillor Ultsch: The Parish Council decided to apply to CDC for this status on the sites listed before the MCNP process began. However, no response was received from CDC and when the NP process began, the PC decided to approach the Green Spaces from this point of view. Residents are welcome to suggest further sites for inclusion in this category. Our Village Green is registered as a village green and this provides the necessary protection.

- **Further consistency is clearly needed within the MCNP area regarding applications for Green Space designations.**

- **Local Schools are mentioned in the Community Action Plan but the wording is vague. How can the MCNP better protect local schools?**

SM: The wording can (and hopefully will) be strengthened. The MCNP Forum is currently assessing predictions of pupil numbers at Heyford Park, both primary and secondary, to assist in planning the appropriate numbers of school places. Whilst it is difficult to capture education within a neighbourhood plan, due to the fact this is not spatial planning, if the expansion at Heyford Park is planned for in a way that provides reassurance to Fritwell, then we can detail the size of Heyford Park Free School in the Plan.

Councillor Foster: Heads and Governors of all local schools do now attend meetings to further co-operate.

- **What is the role of Community Land trusts?**

SM: Community Land Trusts could approach land owners in regards to establishing rural exception sites for affordable housing. There was some debate as to whether MCNP would support these outside of the defined settlement boundaries, and people felt some of the wording in this policy was confusing. SM offered to take this back to the Exec for further clarity.

Councillor Ultsch thanked all those who had attended and commented that providing timely feedback to residents appeared to be the biggest concern expressed during the meeting. Anyone with suggestions on how to facilitate this process was asked to email the Clerk with their ideas.

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