

The Sherfield English NDP – report to the 2019 APM

8 May 2019

Recap: The purpose of the NDP is to get a section specific to Sherfield English into the Borough's Development Plan. The NDP follows on logically from the Parish Plan and the Village Design Statement, both of which are available on the village web site, www.sherfieldenglish.org.uk.

SUMMARY

We have reached a key milestone for the NDP with the completion and analysis of a parish-wide questionnaire. We had 96 detailed responses, yielding a very high level of consensus in support of the NDP's key proposals. We are now ready to produce a first-draft policy statement which will be at the core of the final NDP.

PROGRESS IN THE PAST YEAR

1. **At this time last year** we were able to outline proposals for how the NDP could meet the housing and amenity objectives of the Parish Plan, while meeting the environmental and housing stock guidelines in the Village Design Statement.
2. **Grants:** We have reached the final stage in obtaining a grant of £1000 from TVBC. There is further funding available through 'Locality UK' up to at least £9000.
3. **Our main task this year was to validate the outline proposals**, taking us to the point where a draft policy document could be produced. We have done this in two stages: The first was external research and consultation, and the second was consultation within the village.
4. **External Consultation**
 - a. We received specific advice from the TVBC's Planning Service, particularly from their Neighbourhood Planning Officer. We received a comprehensive Neighbourhood Planning Guide, produced by 'Locality UK', a partnership set up by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to help with NDPs and other community-led projects.
 - b. We looked at what has succeeded in other NDPs, with a lot of help being provided by HALC, the Hampshire Association of Local Councils.
 - c. We have also been talking to our two neighbouring parishes, Awbridge and Wellow, who have both been working on NDPs. Wellow provided valuable assistance with mapping tools.
5. **Local consultation**
 - a. Throughout the year the village newsletter provided a valuable forum for both dissemination of information and local consultation, including an informal questionnaire. Some key ideas came in via this route.
 - b. We made Q&A presentations to local groups, specifically to the WI in the Village Hall, and to a well-attended coffee morning in St. Leonard's Church.
 - c. Supporting documents were posted on the web site, with lead-in items on the Home Page.
 - d. Finally we conducted a formal survey of residents' opinions, described below.
6. **The parish-wide questionnaire**
 - a. The questionnaire was shaped by the results of the year's research and consultation, guided by advice from TVBC and other bodies. However, the questions were influenced primarily by the findings of several previous questionnaires, including those for the Parish Plan and the Village Design Statement.
 - b. The 16-point questionnaire was delivered in paper form to every household in the parish, with collection points set up at the Hatchet pub and the village shop/post office.
 - c. A parallel on-line version was created using the SurveyMonkey web site. Residents were encouraged to use this rather than the paper version, and over 80% of residents did.
 - d. The paper responses were transcribed to SurveyMonkey, allowing its built-in analysis tools to be used to generate the overall results.

THE QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

1. **Full results:** The full results, including comments, can be downloaded as a PDF from the village web site at www.sherfieldenglish.org.uk – select the Parish Council tab, then the NDP page. Names and email addresses have been removed from this copy.
2. **Consensus:** The degree of consensus in the responses to the questionnaire was remarkable. In many questions 90% of respondents selected the same option, and no major aspect of the plan received less than 70% support.
3. **The three core objectives:** Support for these – ‘keeping SE as a working village rather than a dormitory area’, ‘maintaining our completely rural character’, and ‘preserving our ‘tranquillity’ – received 94%, 85% and 90% support respectively.
4. **New houses in small groups of 5-10:** 70% agreed, and 68% thought the village would benefit from having a few more residents. Less than 5% were broadly against additional housing.
5. **Housing priorities:** 94% thought the priority should be inexpensive houses for young families to buy, while 50% supported rental options for them. 72% said we also needed houses for downsizing. 2 or 3 bedrooms were the most popular variants in both cases. There was a clear preference for these two categories of housing to be mixed together – only 9% thought otherwise.
6. **Young people:** There was also support – 52% – for providing 1 or 2 bedroom rented property for young people.
7. **Character:** 72% ‘strongly agree’ that new houses must blend into a rural setting. 66% agreed or strongly agreed that the density per acre should be much less than in a suburb.
8. **Cul-de-sacs and play space:** Respondents were largely neutral on these questions, but only 6% were against.
9. **Mix:** Only 9% thought houses for downsizers and young couples should be in separate developments, although views were mostly not strongly held.
10. **Community facilities:** Top of the list here was the village shop and post office, with 95% rating it as ‘Very important’ or ‘Crucial’. Next with this level of support was the village hall at 83%, while 79% said the same about the pub. These figures were 53% and 38% for the café and the church respectively, although 95% rated the church as being at least ‘somewhat important’.
11. **Broadband etc:** The importance of good broadband to the village cannot be overstated – fully 100% rated it as being ‘very important’ with 78% rating it as ‘crucial’. The equivalent figures for mobile coverage were 92% and 60%. Both featured strongly again in the context of businesses. It is not clear how the NDP can help with this, except perhaps through the use of Developer Contributions, but it is very clear that the government’s current policy on funding for rural broadband is grossly inadequate. Conceivably prioritising 5G mobile in rural areas would fix two problems, in which case the NDP might be able to help with planning issues around 5G masts.
12. **Buses:** A bus service into Romsey was rated ‘very important’ for 73%, so access to a bus route must be an important consideration for the location of any development in the NDP.
13. **Amenities:** Safe places for children to play received the widest support with 95% rating them ‘very important’ or ‘crucial’, but footpaths and the sports field came close at 84% and 83%.
14. **Businesses:** 75% support farm diversification, including 70% favouring the conversion of redundant buildings, while 58% would support a small-scale development for rural businesses. 40% of those respondents in employment work from home in a trade or profession and a further 20% work in or around the village. Less than half regularly drive to work.
15. **Green spaces, etc:** Footpaths again come top, with 80% rating them ‘very important’ or ‘crucial’. Open views come next at 76%. Off-road routes to the New Forest were given a similar priority by 60%.

There is a constant need to spread information about what is happening as widely as possible. We ask all residents to bring the NDP up in conversation with others, and encourage them to get in touch via the village web site, the Facebook page, email or (even better) talking to one of the Parish Councillors.