

# ARDINGLY PARISH COUNCIL

## Statement on progress of Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan

6 July 2012

### **Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan**

The Ardingly Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared in the context of the Localism Act, the National Planning Policy Framework and the Mid Sussex District Plan.

The Parish Council resolved to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan in November 2011, and applied for Frontrunner Funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government. A Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee was established comprising the eleven members of the parish council plus four coopted residents which meets on a monthly basis and is followed by a Parish Council meeting to confirm decisions taken. Four work groups have been established to focus upon strategy, demographics, infrastructure and sites/ landscape and report back to the main committee.

The Neighbourhood Plan area was advertised and designated in May/ June 2012

### **Baseline evidence**

Frontrunner funding of £20,000 was awarded by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012 and this has enabled us to undertake detailed studies on a wide range of issues relevant to the parish:

- A village survey was sent to all households in March 2012 and posed a range of questions based on the requirements of the work groups. Responses were received from around 43% of households.
- A comprehensive Landscape Character and Capacity Assessment was commissioned from Landscape Architects Hankinson Duckett Associates in April 2012.
- A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken by Action in rural Sussex in May/ June 2012 to update the survey originally undertaken by the same organisation in 2006/07.
- A parish wide desktop Biodiversity Report was prepared by the Sussex Biodiversity Records Office in May 2012.
- A Community Profile for the parish has been commissioned from Action in Rural Sussex.
- A Settlement Characterisation report for Ardingly parish has been undertaken by the High Weald AONB Unit, July 2012.
- A Comprehensive Traffic Appraisal for Ardingly parish is to be undertaken by independent consultants in Autumn 2012. Funding is in place and tender documents are being finalised.

### **Sustainability Objectives**

Sustainability Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan have been developed and included in a Scoping Report which was the subject of consultation with statutory authorities, namely the Environment Agency, Natural England, English Heritage, High Weald AONB Unit and Mid Sussex District Council from 30 April to 5 June 2012. Detailed responses were received from all consultees, and their observations and recommendations have been included in the Sustainability Appraisal.

### **Consultations and engagement**

Consultations have taken place with business organisations and interest groups within the parish, and we are in regular contact with Planning Officers at MSDC.

We are working hard to engage with the local community. We recently held two open days at the village hall on 22/23 June to update residents about progress on the Plan and the outcome of the surveys that have been undertaken. There is an item on every Parish Council agenda on the Neighbourhood Plan, and articles in the quarterly village newsletter which is distributed to all households. We have met with interest groups such as the youth club and mother and toddler group.

### **Neighbourhood Plan Vision:**

'The vision for this document is to put in place policies which help to conserve and improve Ardingly, encourage a greater sense of inclusion, safety and pride in the community, and promote sustainable and vibrant economic activity while protecting the outstanding landscape setting of the village.'

### **Neighbourhood Plan Objectives:**

Based on those in the Mid Sussex District Plan:

- Protect and enhance the natural and built environment of Ardingly
- Promote economic vitality within the parish
- Ensure a cohesive and safe village community
- Ensure that the community has a high quality and healthy lifestyle

Plus some more local ones:

- *Reduce the impact of traffic in the village*
- *Increase the self sufficiency and sustainability of the village*
- *Retain the distinctive village character of Ardingly*
- *Ensure that necessary infrastructure and services are provided in the village and that all the community has access to them.*

### **Policy headings**

We have also started to identify policy headings for the Neighbourhood Plan that will sit below the strategic policies of the Mid Sussex District Plan:

- Protection of countryside
- Biodiversity and protection of natural habitats
- Rights of way and recreational facilities
- Community facilities and assets, local services
- Historic environment
- Economic development and policies for major businesses
- Housing- numbers/ mix/sites
- Affordable housing
- Character and design
- Securing Infrastructure, eg allotments, traffic management
- Ashdown Forest Safeguarding

As the Neighbourhood Plan is developed, the strategy and policy options will be tested against the sustainability objectives in order to identify appropriate policies for inclusion in the Plan. The outcome of this exercise will be included in the Sustainability Appraisal, which is being prepared alongside the Neighbourhood Plan.

Both documents will be published for public consultation for a period of 6 weeks in accordance with statutory requirements.

## **Options for housing**

In addition to the four known housing sites identified as available by Mid Sussex District Council in its input to the District Plan, we are aware of two infill sites within the built up area, and are assessing a range of sites identified in the Landscape Assessment. We are investigating opportunities for staff housing at Wakehurst/Millennium Seed Bank and Ardingly College, and for a further rural exception site in the parish.

## **Outline programme for Neighbourhood Plan**

Nov 2011	Parish Council resolved to prepare Neighbourhood Plan
March 2012	Frontrunner funding of £20,000 awarded by Dept for Communities and Local Government
Spring 2012	Information gathering and surveys
May 2012	Designation of Plan Area and consultation on sustainability objectives
June 2012	Neighbourhood Plan Open days
Oct/Nov 2012	Publication of draft Plan and Sustainability Appraisal (6 week consultation)
Jan 2013	Consider responses and make amendments to Plan
Feb 2013	Submit Plan to District Council
March 2013	District Council checks for compliance with policy (6 week publicity)
July/Aug 2013	MSDC appoints examiner/ examination takes place/ examiner's decision issued
Sept 2013	Referendum

**If outcome positive, District Council adopts Neighbourhood Plan**