

Report of Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation Meetings in Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna, Saturday 19 February 2022 (DRAFT)

Introduction and background

Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna Parishes (BWKM) have formed a Neighbourhood Area to consider and progress the idea of a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) for their area. Designation of the Neighbourhood Area was made by Dorset Council on 11 June 2021. The Parish Council and community is in discussions about the formation of a Steering Group to oversee a NDP process.

This report details results of a public engagement event held to discuss the NDP and, taking the results of this, sets out next steps that the Parish Council or forthcoming NDP steering group should consider taking to progress the concept further with the local community.

Appointment of Professional Support

In November 2021, Andrea Pellegram Ltd was appointed to provide professional support on the development of the NDP, attending (on zoom) a meeting with the Parish Council on 8 December 2021. A further ad hoc meeting was held to discuss the format of a consultation event. In this initial period, a detailed review of Adopted North Dorset Local Plan and emerging Dorset Local Plan policies applying to the area was undertaken, summarised below and with a separate report providing a detailed review to establish the local plan context for the NDP.

At the above meetings, a process for development of the NDP was mapped out, to begin with a public consultation event to gather views on the need for and content of a NDP. This would raise awareness about the NDP and develop an understanding of local community priorities and concerns that an NDP could address.

Geographical Position in relation to surrounding areas - Buckhorn Weston lies on the border of Dorset with Somerset. Two Somerset Parishes border it to the north-west – Wincanton and Cucklington. A third Somerset Parish borders it to the west (Abbas and Templecombe). Gillingham borders it to the north-west and Kington Magna makes up the remainder of the border.

Kington Magna also borders Gillingham to its north-east, West Stour on its main western border. Fifehead Magdalen borders it in the south-east corner. The Somerset Parishes of Henstridge Parish and Abbas and Templecombe border to the south-west and west. Buckhorn Weston provides the main border to the north-west.

The two settlements are located approximately 1.5km from each other. Both are located approximately 5km to the south-west of Gillingham centre.

Local Plan Context

NDPs must demonstrate that they are in general conformity with the Development Plan for the area. The policies and status of both adopted and emerging local plans are therefore highly significant context for the NDP.

Planning Status – The Parishes are situated within North Dorset sub area. Functionally this area is seen to have a relationship to Salisbury and Yeovil Housing Market Area and the A303 Corridor functional Economic Area, as distinct from other parts of rural Dorset to the south, which are more linked to Bournemouth and Poole.

Gillingham, Shaftesbury, Stalbridge, Sturminster Newton and Blandford Forum are identified as the main locations for new development and the provision of services and community facilities. Larger Villages are also identified as local service centres and as places capable of accommodating new development. Smaller villages sit below this (including BWKM).

The Adopted Local Plan is the North Dorset Local Plan Part One 2016 and some saved policies from the North Dorset District Local Plan 2003. The 2016 plan removed the Settlement Boundaries from smaller villages, including both Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna.

Following local government reorganisation resulting in the creation of the unitary Dorset Council, a new Dorset Local Plan is being prepared, with a time period running from 2021 to 2038. The Emerging Dorset Consultation Draft Local Plan (January 2021) does not propose to reinstate settlement boundaries.

With settlement boundaries removed, there is little policy support for new development, restricted to a specific list of acceptable developments. All settlements in both parishes have the status of countryside in planning policy terms.

This means policy for development in the parishes is highly restricted in accordance with Policy 20 of the adopted plan 2016 and the emerging Dorset Draft Local Plan policy DEV8.

Initial Consultation Events

In order to inform and discuss the principle purpose, role and scope of a NDP, two consultation meetings were held on Saturday 19th February (one in Buckhorn Weston Village Hall at 10am until 12 noon and one in Kington Magna Village Hall from 2pm until 4.30pm).

The Parish Council used a variety of means to publicise the event including its Facebook pages, local councillors' social media accounts, public information boards and its website. Every resident in both villages received a leaflet informing them about the NDP and inviting them to the events.

In addition to local councillors and the Parish Clerk, nineteen people attended the event in Buckhorn Weston and twenty-one attended the event in Kington Magna.

The format for each event was based on an introduction from the Chair of the Parish Council, a presentation from consultants (see attached presentation in Appendix 1) and a discussion with the community in attendance. The aim was to answer questions as they arose, encourage debate and the expression of key issues for the community around the development of a NDP, ideally expressed in the form of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT). Points made were recorded on a flip chart and a summary of issues raised is presented below.

Issues raised at Buckhorn Weston consultation event

The concept of the NDP was discussed and the various potential approaches set out in the presentation were discussed. Discussion focussed on whether the community wanted to experience some development, if so what the nature of this was and what mechanisms could be used to promote it.

Discussion centred on a need expressed at the meeting for a small amount of housing to provide for local community needs, specifically for local young people and potentially for elderly people in the village wanting to downsize. Keeping the village alive was seen as a way to protect what services remain and potentially improve them.

In terms of mechanisms there was an openness to considering the restoration of a new settlement boundary and/or identifying and allocating a potential site(s) for local housing. Further information and discussion would be needed on this before deciding if this would be desirable.

A summary of the matters raised in the SWOT exercise are set out below.

Strengths

- Rurality
- Quietness
- Availability of walks
- Community feel
- Wildlife
- Play equipment
- Good relationships with farmers
- Good Pub
- Church
- Village Hall
- Cricket Club
- Village Green

Weaknesses

- Lost basic services
- No mobile library
- Lost Bus Service (this was very poor before being lost, now replaced with a dial-up community bus)
- Long bus journeys to school (first on in the morning and last off at night, one hour each way)
- Use of mobile services needs to increase in order to keep those that remain

Threats

- Satnav instructions lead to traffic cutting through to A303
- Traffic speeds through village are too high (upto 49mph in a 30mph zone)

Opportunities

- Design Policy to capture local styles
- Cross' Garage site – potential development
- Village Green – Local Green Space
- Settlement Boundary definition
- Small site for local housing needs

Issues raised at Kington Magna consultation event

Considerable discussion took place at the event at Kington Magna on the purpose, scope and effects of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. There was particular concern to understand what knock-on effects it could have on development and to understand why a NDP would be advantageous over the status quo of existing local planning policies. Ultimately, the answer as to the benefits of a NDP lies with the community and is based on whether it wants to secure new development or influence it (at whatever scale) differently to now.

There was some concern expressed about how Dorset planning frameworks could change over time (a southward/westward expansion of Gillingham and Shaftesbury) and whether or not the area would become a focus for site promotion in the long term, and so a question as to whether a NDP would help with this.

The event did not move on to a structured consideration of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, but some further topics emerged through discussion:

- Concerns about the potential for large scale renewable energy developments in the locality.
- A similar need (as at Buckhorn Weston) for a small amount of housing to meet local needs and a strong concern to ensure that if this was pursued, then it could be controlled or does not stimulate more uncontrolled development.
- The proximity of farms to the village gave rise to discussion for the potential of farm building conversion to housing under Class Q permitted development to meet local needs.
- The potential to promote solutions to domestic renewable/low carbon energy solutions in the Conservation Area, requiring a dialogue with Dorset Council to investigate this further.
- The strong connection of the village with the farming community.
- Lack of control of lighting impacts from the Henstridge Airfield was mentioned as a concern.

Potential policy themes

The general requirement set down in the National Planning Policy Framework and in NDP Regulations is that strategic planning policies are reserved to the development plan published by Dorset Council. The framework described above indicates that, as things stand, no development is planned in the area for the period of the adopted or emerging plans. Proposals coming forward for development would be assessed against policy 20 of the adopted plan and policy DEV8 of the emerging plan (when adopted). Both are restrictive.

Clearly, local people are concerned to ensure that the overall position does not change significantly, but they may have some interest in securing a limited amount of development to meet defined local needs.

There is also interest in securing local policies which would be used in the determination of applications as and when they arise, on a range of topics of interest to the local community. From the discussions held at the two events on 19 February 2022, the following are highlighted as matters for further consideration:

- Small amount of housing to meeting identified local housing needs, to secure ongoing viability of a balance village community capable of meeting the needs of the young and the old looking to downsize.
- Design policies to ensure sympathetic development in each village as it arises including policies to improve impacts from existing development where possible (such as external lighting in the context of dark sky objectives).
- Consideration of the designation of Local Green Spaces.
- Measures to facilitate the development of renewable energy and low carbon technologies on domestic properties or at a community level, in particular where they are affected by restrictive Conservation Area policies.
- Incorporate a wider (non-planning) commentary on the protection and enhancement of local services.
- Consider potential for renewable energy developments to be promoted by others in the vicinity and considers potential strategy responses to this possibility.

To confirm community views on the matters discussed at the meeting and the themes identified, an online survey of residents was recommended (draft questions attached at **Appendix 2**).

Work that would be required if taking policy themes forward

The following broad **initial** actions would be needed to progress the potential policy themes identified above:

Potential routes to secure local housing needs

1. Produce note on ways to secure local housing if wanted by BWKM.
2. Produce note on implications of establishing a settlement boundary.
3. Produce note on how to identify specific local housing needs.
4. Set out the work required if BWKM want to allocate a site for housing.

Design

1. Convene a sub-group that is interested in design matters.
2. Prepare a Character Assessment for each village which will assess the existing character of the area so that key positive design features can be identified. This will mainly be a photography exercise linked to maps.
3. Develop design principles and policy that can be applied to smaller applications (extensions and modifications) as well as to any sites identified for development.

Local Green Space

1. Create list of candidate sites for designation as LGS.
2. Identify each one on a plan with a boundary.
3. Assess against criteria for designation.
4. Consult with landowners where LGS proposed on their land.
5. Confirm whether LGS status is being requested.
6. Consider management objectives for each site.
7. Include policy designating sites in NDP, with assessed sites (completed pro formas and OS plan per site).
8. Ensure policy addresses potential for specific development (such as signage, paths, seating etc) which can secure management objectives for each site.

Renewable Energy and low carbon solutions

1. Identify the types of potential domestic level energy development that could be required to achieve net zero carbon objectives.
2. Identify the current constraints on securing development.
3. Discuss the issue with Dorset Council to seek solutions and reflect in NDP policy.
4. Consider other solutions at community level (if any).

Community Infrastructure, Assets and Services

1. Create a list of local services and facilities.
2. Via a survey and engagement, seek to determine the capacity and current level of use of each.
3. Identify requirements for improvements in capacity or quality of facilities and services.
4. Identify alternatives if available.
5. Develop a policy.

Potential for large scale renewable energy developments in the area

1. Establish location and capacity of grid connections in the area to determine potential for new developments to come forward.
2. Examine areas within the Parish that would be considered sensitive to such developments.
3. Consider how the NDP could develop policy to protect such sites from the impacts of inappropriate development and/or could secure benefits from development to contribute to other NDP objectives.

Appendix 1 – Presentation Slides to consultation events, 19 February 2022



Slide 1: Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan. 19 February 2022. lee@pellegram.co.uk

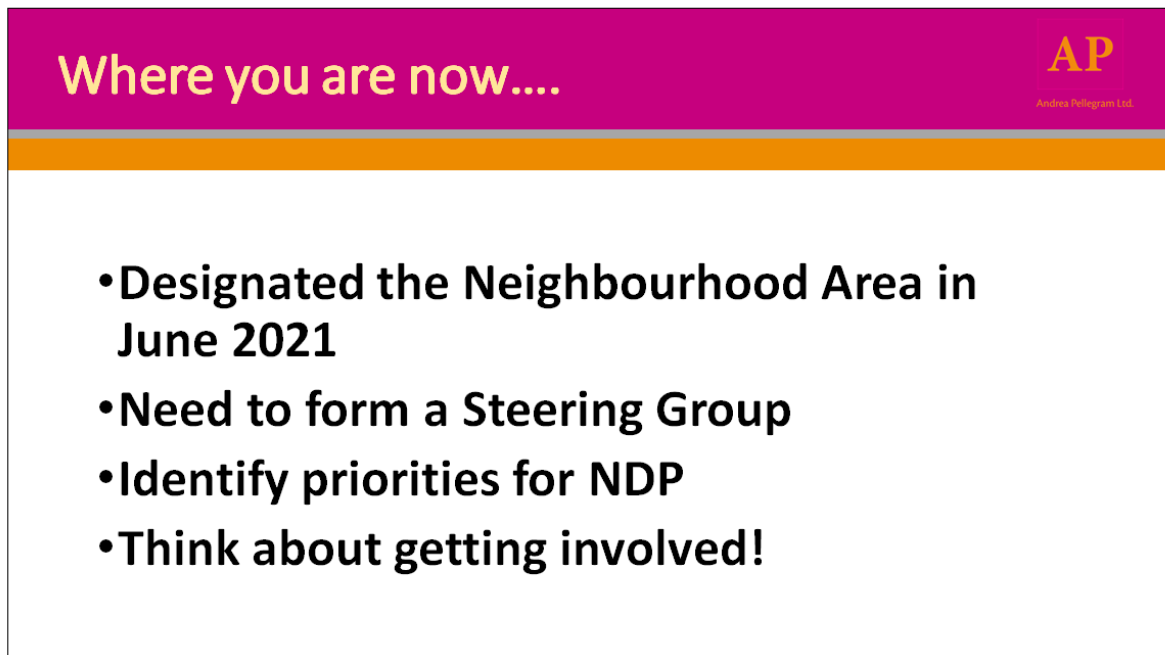
AP
Andrea Pellegram Ltd.

Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna Neighbourhood Development Plan

19 February 2022

lee@pellegram.co.uk

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Slide 2: Where you are now....

- Designated the Neighbourhood Area in June 2021
- Need to form a Steering Group
- Identify priorities for NDP
- Think about getting involved!

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Where you are now....

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Neighbourhood plans must be in conformity with the Development Plan

NPPF para 29:

“Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies”

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Development Plan Context

- Adopted North Dorset Local Plan Part One 2016
- Saved Policies North Dorset District Plan 2003
- Covers the period 2011-2031
- 2016 plan removed settlement boundaries
- Countryside status – restrictive policy 20 applies

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Policy 20

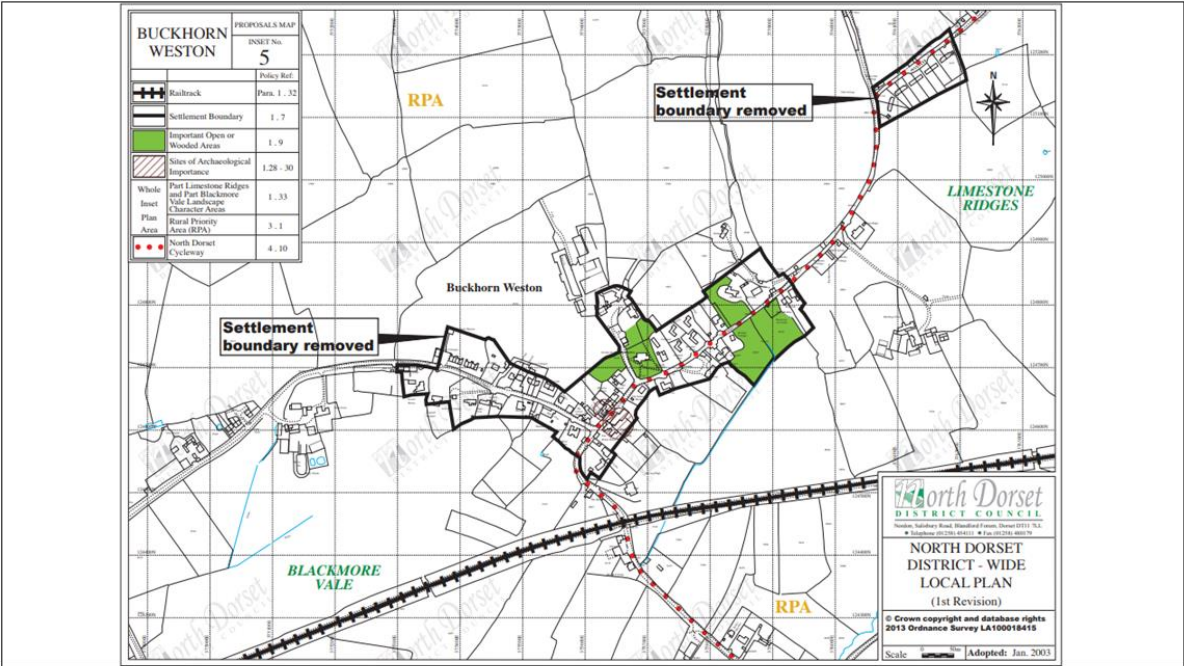
Figure 8.5: Policies Guiding Development in the Countryside

Local Plan Section	Type of Development	Main Policy	Development Management Policy
Environment and Climate Change	Renewable energy schemes	3	22
Meeting Housing Needs	Rural exception schemes	9	-
	Occupational dwellings	6	33
	Re-use of heritage assets	5/6	29
	Re-use of redundant or disused buildings	11	29
	Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	10	26
Supporting Economic Development	The re-use of existing rural buildings	11	29
	Redevelopment or expansion of existing employment sites	11	30
	Equine-related developments	11	32
	Rural tourist accommodation	11	31
Infrastructure	Retention of community facilities (commercial and non-commercial)	14	27
	New community facilities (non-commercial)	14	-

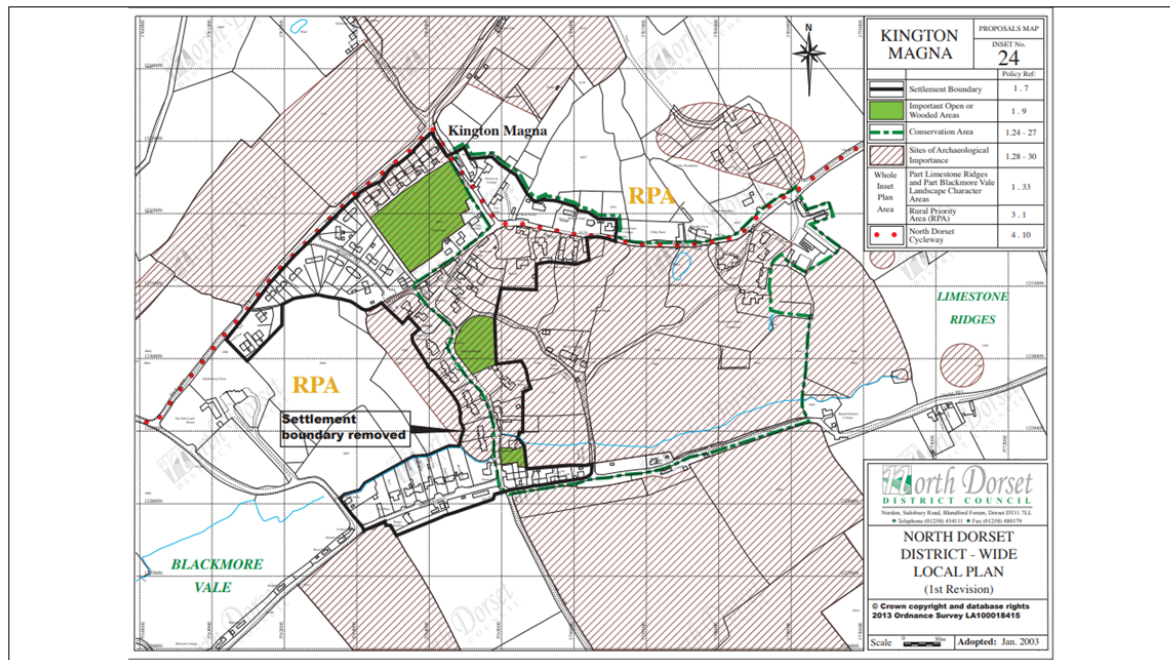
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Emerging Dorset Local Plan

•To cover the period 2021-2038

- DEV4: Growth in the northern Dorset functional area In the northern Dorset functional area housing growth will be delivered: at the market towns of Gillingham and Sherborne, including through major urban extensions to the south of Gillingham and the west of Sherborne; through the more modest expansion of Shaftesbury and the smaller market towns of Sturminster Newton and Stalbridge; and *through windfall and infilling within existing settlements defined by local plan or neighbourhood plan development boundaries.*
- DEV6: Development at villages with development boundaries in rural Dorset - Within neighbourhood plan development boundaries, residential, employment and other development will only be permitted if it accords with the relevant policies in a neighbourhood plan.
- DEV7: Development outside local plan and neighbourhood plan development boundaries in rural Dorset - In rural Dorset beyond the South East Dorset Green Belt and outside any local plan or neighbourhood plan development boundary, development will be strictly controlled, having particular regard to environmental constraints and to the need for the protection of the countryside. Development will be restricted to.....


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- agriculture, forestry or horticulture or related enterprises such as farm diversification and equestrian development;
- alterations and extensions to existing buildings in line with their current lawful use, including their subdivision or replacement;
- new employment, tourism, educational / training, recreational or leisure-related development;
- rural exception affordable housing + rural workers' housing;
- the re-use of existing rural buildings;
- sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople;
- proposals for the generation of renewable energy or other utility infrastructure;
- flood defence, land stability and coastal protection schemes;
- local facilities appropriate to a rural area or close to an existing settlement; and
- landscape and / or green infrastructure requirements associated with specific allocations in a development plan document.

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What can a NDP do for the community?


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- Secure greater financial contributions from development
- Require developers to have regard to assets important to the local community
- Provide detailed local policies to guide developers
- Justify specific local requirements over more general district-wide policies
- Promote additional development to meet local community needs
- Grant planning permission for specific developments or types of development.
- Provide policies which can be applied over time as applications come forward.

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Basic steps to produce a NDP

1. Decision to proceed (NDP or other plan)
2. Neighbourhood Area
3. Secure funding
4. Community consultation (Vision) and report
5. Evidence gathering
6. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) (screening)
7. Consultation on final draft (Regulation 14)
8. Submission to Local Planning Authority (Regulation 15)
 - a. Basic Conditions Statement
 - b. Consultation Statement
 - c. SEA
9. Regulation 16 Consultation
10. Independent Examination
11. Modifications by Local Planning Authority
12. Referendum
13. Monitoring and review

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This is a good way to look at the Steering Group



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What are your priorities?

- Respond to local Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats.
- Make a local contribution to key national concerns.
- Meet a local development need.
- Influence future developments.
- Control specific outcomes through policies.

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Thank You

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Appendix 2 - Draft Online Survey Questions

It is suggested that Survey Monkey could be used to set out and deliver the questionnaire.

Introductory text and some potential draft topic questions are set out below for discussion.

Introductory text

Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna Parish Council have started work on a Neighbourhood Development Plan. This will provide a plan that will contain local parish planning policies which, once the plan is made, would be used by Dorset Council in making decisions about planning applications in the Parish.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan can cover a wide range of topics and make policies on them. It can provide evidence to support local concerns and can identify important issues that require action. If the community wants, the plan can also allocate sites for specific forms of development needed in the Parish and can protect Local Green Space where this exists.

The Neighbourhood Development Plan can cover the whole Parish or just parts of it and it can cover many policies, or just one. It's up to the community to decide what goes into a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

On 19 February 2022, public consultation events were held in Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna Village Halls. In total, around 40 people attended and they identified a number of issues they would like to see a Neighbourhood Development Plan tackle. These included:

- Consider if a small amount of housing is needed to meet identified village housing needs.
- Include design policies to ensure sympathetic development in each village as it arises.
- Protect Local Green Spaces.
- Make the development of renewable energy and low carbon technologies on domestic properties easier, particularly where this is restricted in the Conservation Area.
- Protect and enhance local services.
- Respond to the potential for renewable energy developments to be promoted by others in the vicinity.

The Parish Council is undertaking this survey to get more views from residents on priorities for communities in Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna. It asks for views on the above issues and for other potential priorities that community feels are important to be identified.

Following the survey, responses will be collated and analysed. The results might support or oppose issues already identified and could identify new issues which need to be tackled in the plan.

Question 1a

The need for some new housing in small amounts in the villages has been mentioned. This question asks how much you agree or disagree with this. No matter where you live, please indicate below your view about the following statement by choosing one response:

Buckhorn Weston needs a small number of new houses to provide some housing for local young people and to help the elderly people in the village move into smaller properties to suit their needs.

Kington Magna needs a small number of new houses to provide some housing for local young people and to help the elderly people in the village move into smaller properties to suit their needs.

Response

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Slightly Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Slightly Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Question 1b

Please explain why you have responded this way?

Response

Free comment

Question 2a

Please choose one response below to the following statement - 'I would support the inclusion of a Design Code or a Design Policy to ensure local developments are in keeping with the village/location where I live'.

Response

1. Strongly Disagree
2. Slightly Disagree
3. Neither agree nor disagree
4. Slightly Agree
5. Strongly Agree

Question 2b

Please explain your view further in the space provided

Response

Free comment

Question 3a

A wide range of topics were raised at the public consultation events. Please choose a number 1, 2, 3, 4 or 5 (with 1 representing the least importance and 5 representing the most importance) to rate the importance of including policies on the following topics in the Neighbourhood Development Plan:

1. Local Green Space
2. Design policies
3. Site for housing for young people from the Parish
4. Site for housing for the elderly from the Parish
5. Site for general housing
6. Site for employment development
7. Site for development of community facilities
8. Renewable energy on domestic properties
9. Local services and facilities
10. Public transport services and school transport
11. Traffic Management
12. Walking and cycling routes
13. Wildlife and 'green infrastructure'
14. Light pollution and dark skies
15. Heritage sites

Response

Select number between 1 (least importance) and 5 (most importance)

Question 3b

Please use this space to provide any further comments you have on priorities for the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Response

Free Comment

Questions about you

In order to understand whether there are any similarities or differences of view, it is important to know some things about you. Please complete the following questions to help with this, leaving blank any you do not wish to answer.

Question 4

Please say where you live

Response

1. Buckhorn Weston
2. Kington Magna
3. Elsewhere in the Parish

Question 5

Please indicate your age from the categories indicated

Response

1. 0-17
2. 18-35
3. 36-55
4. 55-75
5. 76+

Question 6

For how long have you lived in the Parish?

1. 0-10 years
2. 11-30 years
3. 31+ years