

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN & NEW HOUSING

PUBLIC MEETING

IN THE VILLAGE HALL

THURSDAY, 16TH FEBRUARY at 7:30 p.m.

Dear Resident,

You may have heard of the Localism Act which became law in November 2011. Its aim is to bring planning down to a more local level, whilst ensuring there is adequate land brought forward for development to meet the country's needs for new housing and industry.

A specific feature of the Localism Act is to allow neighbourhoods (and in rural areas, neighbourhood means parish) to produce a local planning document, called a Neighbourhood Development Plan, which will be a legal document shaping development in the parish for many years to come.

Sounds good so far!

However, the Plan has to be in accordance with the overarching Leeds City Council planning documents – called the Local Development Framework (LDF). These documents are in production as we speak, and one piece of the jigsaw with regard to Leeds' LDF is to establish where the many thousands of new houses that Leeds needs will be best accommodated over the next 20 years.

Leeds City Council has already asked landowners and developers to say where they would like to build new houses and has undertaken an initial analysis of these potential sites – this document is known as the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This document has identified a number of sites throughout our parish, for the most part focused upon Green Belt land around the centre of the village and some very large sites on the edge of Garforth (which also fall into Aberford Parish). Some of you will be aware of these potential sites as a result of the consultation exercises we undertook in producing our Masterplan last year. For those who want to see/know more, please visit www.leeds.gov.uk, and enter SHLAA as a search item. A link has also been posted on the Parish Council website, at www.aberfordonline.com.

Of course, Aberford is not alone in needing to show how it will potentially accommodate new housing – Barwick, Scholes, Micklefield and all other nearby communities are having to do exactly the same thing right now.

In the light of these changes, your Parish Council believes that the only way to gain some measure of control over future developments in our Parish will be by producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan. It is the intention of the Parish Council to formulate an acceptable Plan complemented by a Village Design Statement which is currently being prepared. As you know, our recently completed Master Plan took a great deal of time and effort on the part of Councillors and much that is in that Plan will form a foundation for our Neighbourhood Plan, but we need to go further.

So, what is this Neighbourhood Development Plan exactly? What does it look like? How long will it take to produce? Who is going to do it?!

Well, the best way to answer these and many other questions will be at a public meeting – the Parish Council proposes to hold a meeting for everyone interested in finding out more about the Plan and the scale of the new housing that is being proposed for our Parish. At this meeting, we will also be seeking volunteers to help in preparing the Plan – there is much to do and the Parish Councillors cannot do it all themselves!

Clearly as the process unfolds there may be a need to employ professional help and the Parish Council has set aside a budget from existing funds for this purpose. Whether this will be sufficient is a matter of conjecture and further funding may have to be found in due course. However, it is the view of the Parish Council that this Plan has to be produced if we are to have any say in the future shape of our community - otherwise decisions will be taken out of our hands. We have a responsibility to our Community now and for future generations.

So, please come to this public meeting – all are invited – and find out:

- Where new housing (and other development) is currently being proposed.
- What the Neighbourhood Development Plan is and the difference it can make.
- How you can contribute to its development and success.

It's your parish – come and contribute!