

## **Some basics about Neighbourhood Plans:**

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community-led framework for guiding the future development and growth of an area.

Neighbourhood Plans are about the use and development of land and associated social, economic, and environmental issues. It deals with a wide range of issues like housing, heritage, green space, economic development and sustainability and, particularly, issues that are of particular importance in the local area. Some issues are outside the scope of Neighbourhood Plans – for example finance, highways, education or health and the provision of services such as buses or sports classes.

Frodsham's draft Plan contains a vision, aims, planning policies, proposals for protecting areas and allocation of key sites for specific kinds of development.

Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan is supported by a wealth of evidence; several professional reports have been commissioned, for example a Housing Needs Analysis, a Masterplan, a Design Codes report, a Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA), a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and previous documents have been accessed for example Frodsham Town Design Statement. Extensive consultation with the community has taken place, including a business questionnaire, face to face events, meetings, and consultations with youth groups.

All Neighbourhood Plans are subject to external examination and referendum and then form part of the Local Development Plan. This statutory status gives Neighbourhood Plans a key role in local planning decisions.

## **How does Frodsham's draft Plan compare with others?**

The Steering Group have taken advice from CWaC Planning officers and from Cheshire Community Action (a non-profit organisation specialising in supporting those drafting NPs). In comparison with other Plans the feedback we have received is interesting:

Frodsham has approached the Plan in an appropriate way – some areas produce a Plan in order to stop a particular development rather than from the point of view of considering the long-term development of the whole town.

Frodsham's draft Plan is comprehensive and is only one of two in Cheshire that has identified a number of sites for development, which adds to the complexity of the Plan.

The quantity of responses to the formal consultation was very large, 713 responses from individuals in the community, organisations, employers, and statutory bodies. The responses for some other Plans range from 30 to 129.

The quality of the responses was very good, most comments were relevant, considered, and pertinent.

The consultation process was thorough and varied, the use of social media was highlighted (and it was even noticed by and praised by a Neighbourhood Forum in London!), as was the attention to detail for example leafletting all households and hand delivering information when the postal strike was on.

### **Where are we up to and what happens next?**

We have completed the statutory six-week consultation and have collated all the information received.

The Steering Group are currently reviewing all the responses and updating the policies based on relevant comments. The comments that reflect the community's concerns but are outside the scope of the Plan will be forwarded to FTC for their consideration.

We then must produce a Basic Conditions Statement, a Consultation Statement and review and update the HRA & SEA. Once all those are completed, we submit the Plan to CWaC planning authority.

The Steering Group's responsibility ends at that point, with the exception of updating the Plan based on the examiners comments.

### **Proposed Solar Farm on the Marshes:**

This project is due to deliver over 50mw of power, it therefore meets the criteria for a "nationally significant infrastructure project", this means the Secretary of State will make the planning decisions about the project.

Frodsham Neighbourhood Plan supports renewable energy as part of the sustainability of the town. Consultations with the community highlighted how much the residents and visitors to Frodsham valued the Marshes. Protecting the environment, encouraging biodiversity, supporting health and wellbeing,

and enhancing the visitor economy are all strong themes within the draft Plan. Once the Plan is made these will become part of planning requirements.