

Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan

The Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan was brought into legal force ('made') and became part of the statutory development plan for the Chichester Local Plan area, in September 2021.

Since then, the Plan has been cited in a number of documents produced by both Chichester District Council and Westbourne Parish Council. These pertain almost exclusively to land use policies, specifically in the context of planning applications/appeals. These include:

4.2.5 Policy OA1: Sustainable Development

1 Within the Settlement Boundary, ..., there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development that will apply to proposals that meet all the policies of this plan.

2 Outside the Settlement Boundary, development proposals will not normally be considered either appropriate or sustainable unless;

(i) they comply with all other policy requirements of the development plan; or

(ii) it is sustainable development where the benefits demonstrably outweigh the harm, and is of a form or type that could not reasonably be located within the Settlement Boundary; or

(iii) they are rural exception sites to meet local need.

3 Development proposals will need to demonstrate that they have had regard to all relevant NP policies.

This policy has been used to avoid development occurring outside the Settlement Boundary whilst, at the same time, supporting the development of affordable housing on an exception site adjacent to this Boundary.

4.5.28 Policy OA3: Community Balance

OA3-1 GTTPS PLOTS/PITCHES

Development proposals to meet the needs of the Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople community (as defined in Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2015) or any subsequent policy) will be permitted where they:

a) Can demonstrate a local connection;

b) Can demonstrate that there is no alternative available pitch which could be used in the locality;

c) Do not result in sites being over-concentrated in any one location or disproportionate in size to nearby communities;

d) Are capable of being provided with infrastructure such as power, water supply, foul water drainage and recycling/waste management without harm to the special qualities of the National Park;

e) Provide sufficient amenity space for residents;

- f) Do not cause, and are not subject to, unacceptable harm to the amenities of neighbouring uses and occupiers;
- g) Have a safe vehicular and pedestrian access from the public highway and adequate provision for parking, turning and safe manoeuvring of vehicles within the site; and
- h) Restrict any permanent built structures in rural locations to essential facilities.

Proposals for sites accommodating Travelling Showpeople should allow for a mixed-use yard with areas for the storage and maintenance of equipment.

This Policy has been cited whenever applications for Traveller/Gypsy pitches have been received. However, it is disappointing to have to report that, whilst our objections have been supported by CDC, their refusal has been overturned by the Inspectorate on at least two occasions. It would seem that this is due to the fact that the District Council has not been able to identify the number of pitches required for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showmen. The fact that the Parish of Westbourne has far more than its fair share of Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople pitches and plots does seem to continue being overlooked.

4.6.7 Intent:

The Neighbourhood Plan introduces design policies to conserve the local distinctiveness of Westbourne Parish to ensure that change enhances and does not damage its special character.

Good design in the Westbourne Neighbourhood Plan means developments which:

1 will respond to the rural nature of the Parish and reflect the character of local surroundings and materials while not discouraging innovation;

2 will establish a strong sense of place, where the individual identity of the Parish, actual or perceived, is maintained;

3 prevent coalescence with Westbourne Parish, Hambrook, Emsworth and Southbourne and maintain the separate identities of the settlements of Westbourne Village, Aldsworth and Woodmancote by the introduction and maintenance of local gaps.

This policy has been used, relatively successfully, when considering applications for development between Westbourne and Emsworth, which would erode the local gap between the two communities and impact significantly on the separate identities of the settlements. For example, the Policy cited in a decision by the Inspectorate to turn down an appeal concerning the extension of a development on the corner of North Street and Long Copse Lan, which would have extended into the gap between Westbourne and Emsworth. The proposed development would not have taken place on an identified NP development site.

Moreover, a planning application has been received regarding one of the three sites that were identified in the NDP.

4.5.3

...Therefore the Parish Council supports appropriate proposals for the provision of starter homes, affordable housing for rent, as well as live/work and self-build initiatives in line with

national policy and where they meet the policies of the development plan. A high priority will be given to identifying and securing affordable housing in time for the next review of the plan.

4.5.4

In light of this a Westbourne Community Trust was formed in November 2018. The vision for the Trust, focused on the Parish of Westbourne, is to make Westbourne a better place to live. The primary objective for the Trust is the provision of affordable housing that is locally owned and controlled for the benefit of residents of the Parish who have housing needs. 12 dwellings are to be delivered and will be “affordable” for people with a local connection to Westbourne. The rented homes will be let at no more than 80% of market rent value. The village has a significant housing need as shown by the housing needs survey and as such these homes would go towards meeting this demand. This initiative will accelerate the provision of affordable housing for the local community, harnessed through the Trust and planning system. This approach offers the ability for neighbourhood planning to secure a significant affordable housing supply for local communities that could also be applied more widely across the country.

Since the NP was made in 2021, work to provide affordable housing for the local community has continued and it is hoped that construction work will commence in Autumn 2022.

Update: There have been a number of delays to this project. These include the transfer of land into the ownership of Westbourne Community trust (WCT), the granting of planning permission and securing of the requisite funding, this being largely the consequence of recent significant increases in interest rates and building costs. However, these challenges would now appear to have been met and it is very much hoped to have spades in the ground in Spring 2024. WCT are very grateful to CDC for their help and support throughout the process.

4.11.2 Policy SS1: Land to the West of Monk’s Hill

Land to the west of Monk’s Hill is allocated for not less than 6 dwellings for the period 2017-2029. Proposals for the site shall include:

- 1 New development shall have regard to the principles contained in the Westbourne Village Design Statement;
- 2 New development will comprise only single-storey dwellings with pitched roofs;
- 3 A single point of access from Monk’s Hill. The existing frontage hedgerow and trees will be retained consistent with providing suitable visibility splays; and
- 4 Prior to the submission of a planning application for new development, bat surveys shall be undertaken by suitably qualified ecologists to determine the presence of Bechstein’s Bat and flight routes in this area and if necessary provide a plan for appropriate mitigation measures and habitat management in advance of planning permission being implemented.
- 5 Developments will be expected to avoid or minimise harm to significant archaeological assets. In some cases, remains may be incorporated into and/or interpreted in new development. The physical assets should, where possible, be made available to the public on-site and opportunities taken to actively present the site’s archaeology. Where the archaeological asset cannot be preserved or managed on-site, appropriate provision must

be made for the investigation, understanding, recording, dissemination and archiving of that asset, and must be undertaken by suitably-qualified individuals or organisations.

In June 2022, a planning application for 10 dwellings on this site was received by CDC and the policy will, no doubt, play a central role when the application is discussed by Westbourne Parish Council and CDC.

Update: This is the identified site that is referred to above. The initial application, for 10 dwellings, included three or four two-storey dwellings. Concerns were raised by WPC as this was contrary to the NDP, which only allowed for single-storey dwellings and, after communication with the owners and developers, a compromise was reached and the two-storey dwellings became chalet/dormer bungalows.

Summary: The NDP made in 2021 foresaw 25 dwellings in the Parish of Westbourne. Sixteen of these were constructed at The Shire, North Street, even before the Plan was made. Twelve more concern the affordable homes still to be built off Mill Road. Nine (see above) are in the pipeline and we still await an application at the last identified site (corner of Foxbury Lane and Cemetery Lane), where a maximum of six dwellings are foreseen. In other words, Westbourne Parish is well on the way to meeting the housing requirements set by CDC.