

Welford-on-Avon

Neighbourhood Development Plan

2011 - 2031

Welford-on-Avon Parish Council



Parish Consultation: Summary Version
December 2014 – January 2015

Foreword

This is the latest version of the Welford Plan (or to give it its full title 'The Intended Proposed Submission Neighbourhood Development Plan for Welford-on-Avon Parish'). Before the Plan is finally submitted to Stratford District Council (SDC) early in 2015, representative and statutory bodies and those with business interests in the Parish are now being invited to comment on this version of The Welford Plan - as are you, the residents.

Recent changes to Planning Laws in England have given parishes like Welford-on-Avon a greater say in how planning decisions which affect our communities are made. At the same time, there is a presumption in favour of 'sustainable development' in order that the national shortage of housing can be remedied.

Under SDC's emerging Core Strategy there is presently a requirement to construct 10,800 new dwellings across the District by 2031. Welford is identified as a category 2 Local Service Village, and has a target number of new dwellings that need to be built by then. Because the target number or village category could change though public examination of SDC's Core Strategy, we have referred to this target number as the "Upper Level" throughout the Welford Plan.

The urgent need for a Neighbourhood Plan for Welford-on-Avon is underlined by comparing the current Upper Level of approximately 75 homes with the actual number of 88 granted since the start of the Plan Period and, as at December 2014, applications for a further 158 homes submitted and either waiting determination or at appeal.

The Welford Plan has been developed on behalf of Welford-on-Avon Parish Council by Welford residents who volunteered to participate in the Neighbourhood Planning Group. The Parish Council is extremely grateful for all the work that they have done to develop the Welford Plan. Without them, the Plan would not exist and the essential protections for our historic village would not have been developed.

After extensive consultation with residents and using evidence from previous surveys, the Group have developed a Vision and set of Strategic Objectives for Welford-on-Avon up to 2031. These are supported in many instances by specific planning policies which are either complementary to SDC's Core Strategy or address matters special to Welford. None of Welford's policies can conflict with national or district planning policies.

The Welford Plan will be an important and influential document for Stratford District Council, developers and Welford residents alike, and will ensure that the village continues to develop in a manner which best meets the wishes and aspirations of all interested parties. Once approved, the specific policies in The Welford Plan will ensure that any future development in the village and wider parish is only undertaken in a way that meets the expressed wishes of the residents.

A Neighbourhood Plan might contain Site Allocations which precisely define potential development sites. After extensive discussion, the Steering Committee took the decision not to include Site Allocations as SDC proposes to develop its own Allocations Plan by 2016. Site Allocations will normally be made in settlements where the target number of new developments has not been achieved. This is not the case in Welford-on-Avon. Should SDC decide to identify sites in our village, the Parish Council will work closely with them to ensure that their decisions are informed by the Objectives and Policies in the Welford Plan.

All comments from the reviews will be considered and a final version of the Welford Plan will be drawn up early in 2015. The policies only become binding on local authorities once they have been supported by the majority of residents in a referendum. The continuing support for The Welford Plan by residents is therefore vital.

Simon Carter
Chairman, Welford-on-Avon Parish Council

The Welford Plan

- sets out a Vision for the Parish right up to 2031, defines the Objectives to achieve that Vision and sets out clear Policies to support those Objectives
- sets the acceptable framework for development within the Neighbourhood Area in terms of housing type and design, including protection of heritage and environment
- provides an opportunity for local people to influence and take more control over the use of land within the Parish and to decide how they want the village to be in 2031.

The Vision for Welford-on-Avon in 2031

In 2031, Welford on Avon will be

- a thriving, inclusive community, which
- conserves and enhances the village and surrounding parish, and
- meets the aspirations of those who live, work and visit here.

The Welford Plan Objectives for the period 2011 – 2031

1. The Heritage Assets of the village, its character and street scene will have been conserved. These assets include listed buildings, conservation areas, cherished views, sites of special scientific interest (SSSIs), river amenities and other specified sites.
 2. The rural nature of the parish with open spaces, mature woodland with pleasant vistas set in a green environment will have been preserved.
 3. The separate identity of Welford-on-Avon and adjacent settlements will have been maintained.
 4. Excellent infrastructure will support an expanded range of community and business activities including a flourishing home working economy.
 5. Infrastructure to meet the needs of all new developments which impact on the parish will have been secured in advance of their construction. This includes the provision of primary school places at Welford School and the provision of adequate waste water systems.
 6. A mix of market and affordable housing developments that achieve the ambition of the Local Plan in the period to 2031 will have been provided in a sustainable, phased manner and sympathetically integrated into the village environment.
 7. Excellent design of all new development reflecting the character of the village will be championed.
 8. *A multi-purpose community meeting place and sports facilities will support recreational and sporting activities for all age groups.*
 9. *Traffic will have been managed and through traffic will have been controlled thus ensuring the village roads are safe for all residents. Any development will minimise commuting and traffic movements.*
 10. *Public transport will have been improved, and the extensive network of footpaths and cycle ways further developed and maintained.*
 11. *Sustainable green and low energy consumption using existing and emerging technologies will have been championed.*
 12. *River and surface water flooding will have been controlled.*
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Welford Plan Policy or Parish Council project?

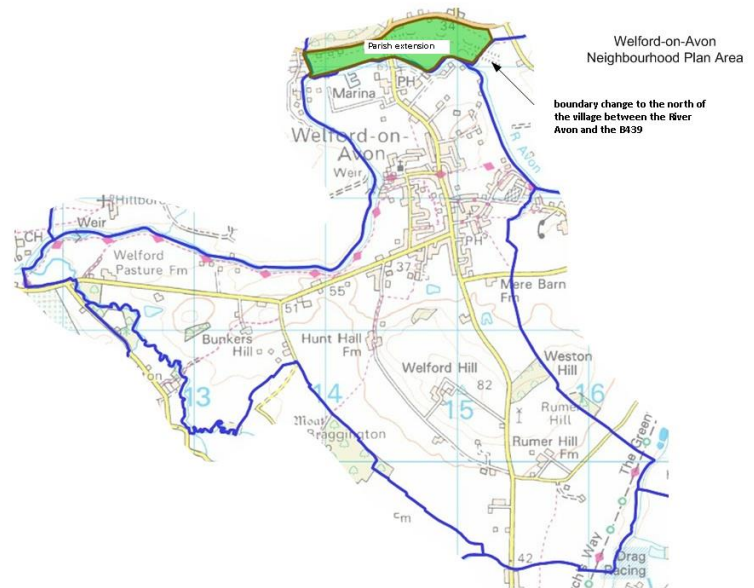
As community input was received, particularly from the April 2013 Community Survey, it became clear that the Vision and Objectives of the Welford Plan would be achieved in two distinct ways:

1 Objectives 1-7 will be delivered primarily through the planning policies defined in the Welford Plan which, together with the Local Plan, will control land use throughout the parish. These policies are grouped into related areas addressing:

- Heritage and Environment
- Infrastructure
- Economic Development
- Housing and Land Use.

2 Objectives 8-12 (italicised) are not easily achieved through the planning process but may be taken forward at the discretion of the Parish Council. These projects address:

- A multi-purpose community meeting place with sports and recreation facilities
- Traffic management
- Public transport, footpaths, cycle ways
- Green initiatives
- Flooding.



Civil Parish Boundary and designated Welford on Avon Neighbourhood Area

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Welford Plan: Planning Policies

A. Heritage & Environment (HE)

Welford-on-Avon understands that it has a major responsibility to protect, preserve and enhance the village's distinctive character and the built and natural environment. The consultation in April 2014 on the proposed Welford Plan policies demonstrated over 95% support for all Heritage and Environment policies.

- HE1. The key views across the village of Welford from significant vantage points around the parish will be protected by resisting development that will be excessively obtrusive by virtue of its shape, size or material.
- HE2. Green areas (including their fauna and flora) of particular importance to the local community will be protected by designating the following as Local Green Space:
- Cress Hill & Avon Valley Way
 - The Glebe Lands & local green space
 - Millennium Project
 - Village Greens
 - Verges in the Conservation Area
 - Islands in the River Avon
 - Avon Valley Way from Bell Green to the parish boundary with Weston-on-Avon.

- HE3. Development adjacent to any Local Green Space will only be permitted if it does not encroach or in any way detract from these spaces.
- HE4. Developments in the Conservation Area will only be supported if they
- conserve or enhance the Conservation Area, and
 - have no negative impact on the views, vistas and street scene, and
 - are in conformity with the Stratford-on-Avon-District Design Guide.
- HE5. Any development outside physical confines of the settlement (or built up area boundary when defined) which results in the reduction of the gap between Welford-on-Avon and Weston-on-Avon will be refused.
- HE6. Open countryside will be protected.

Any development outside the physical confines of the settlement (or built up area boundary when defined) will be refused unless

1. it is on a brownfield site where the benefits of the development demonstrably outweigh the harm to the countryside, or
2. the development meets one of the categories defined in SDC's Core Strategy Policy AS.10 sub-sections d to v which relate to allowable development in the countryside.



- HE7. All development must demonstrate excellent landscape design, encourage preservation of the existing mature tree population and the planting of new trees as defined in the SDC Design Guide.
- HE8. The allotments off Headland Road will be maintained and preserved in their current form. Any development of the site will be refused unless
- replacement provision be made of at least equivalent land quality, located at reasonable convenience for the existing plot holders; and
 - clear and significant social, economic and environmental community benefits could be derived from the proposal; and
 - agreement is given by the Trustees of the Shorthouse Bidston Allotment Trust.
- HE9. All new development within the flood plain will be opposed. The relevant flood plain is designated by the 1 in 100 year flood map. Replacement development (residential or commercial) will be considered on an individual basis. Any such development must be demonstrably neutral or beneficial to the capacity of the flood plain.

B. Infrastructure (INF)

A number of services are critical to the successful development of a thriving village in 2031. Some services are already under strain whereas others are woefully inadequate and must be addressed.

- INF1. Any development within the parish must minimise light pollution avoiding all obtrusive external and street lighting. Security lighting should operate on a timed PIR system of not more than 5 minutes illumination per activation.
- INF2. Development will be supported if it does not adversely impact the core infrastructure services delivered to existing, neighbouring properties at any time.
- INF3. Development will only be supported if there are adequate primary school places at schools accessible within 6 miles or readily accessed by scheduled public transport.

C. Economic Development

The proportion of economically active residents who commute out of the village is high. Over recent years, the number engaged in traditional rural activities has significantly reduced.

SDC's Local Plan amply provides policies to support economic development in a village such as Welford so it was concluded that no specific Welford Plan policies were required.

D. Housing & Land Use (HLU)

As a general principle, housing developments will be supported which:

- *meet established local housing needs*
- *comply with SDC's Local Plan*
- *comply with policies (such as size and dispersal) identified in the Welford Plan*
- *are delivered in a sustainable way consistent with our village environment.*

HLU1. A development proposal that would result in the construction within Welford-on-Avon of more than the Upper Level of new homes in the plan period will only be supported in exceptional circumstances.

HLU2. Development will be supported if it is phased in line with the SDC Local Plan.

HLU3. Only developments which demonstrate high levels of design excellence will be supported. New development should be of a similar density, footprint, separation, scale and bulk to neighbouring properties unless it can be demonstrated that the proposed development would not harm local character. All new development must:

- (a) Respect established building lines and arrangements of front gardens, walls, railings or hedges, where such features are important to the character and appearance of the area
- (b) Respect established plot widths within streets where development is proposed, particularly where they establish a rhythm to the architecture in a street
- (c) Respect the separation between buildings, and between buildings and the site boundaries, in relation to likely impact on the privacy and amenity of neighbouring properties
- (d) Observe the Stratford-on-Avon District Design Guide, and
- (e) Embrace design which reflects the vernacular and unique characteristics of Welford-on-Avon or demonstrate clear innovation (as contrasted with pastiche or off-the-shelf designs).

HLU4. Any new development abutting Welford's extensive network of footpaths, pavements and cycle ways shall ensure that all boundary treatments enhance the intrinsic environmental quality and public amenity of these paths by the predominant use of natural planting.

Any new development in the near vicinity of this network shall, where possible, include proposals to connect to, extend and develop it for access and improved safety for all. Any new footpath will be a minimum of 2 metres wide and conform to the same requirements as described above.

HLU5. The Market Housing component of all new developments must include a mix of housing types broadly consistent with the evidence from the Community Survey which requires:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 5% - one bedroom | 40% - three bedroom |
| 40% - two bedroom | 15% - four bedroom or larger. |

Development of accommodation (including the building of bungalows) which meets the needs of the elderly and disabled will be strongly supported.

HLU6. Developments will only be supported which are of a small scale. For the purpose of the Welford Plan, 'small scale' is defined as less than 3% of the existing housing stock of the settlement. (*This equates to about 18 houses.*) Developments larger than this will not be supported.

Where an application site is in close proximity to another site(s) where, during the Plan Period, permission has been granted or for which an application has been made, the aggregate number of houses on all sites must not exceed the definition of 'small scale'.



HLU7. 1 for 1 Replacement Dwellings will only be supported where the character and street scene of the neighbourhood will be enhanced and maintained without any detrimental loss of amenity to existing residents. 'Detrimental' for this purpose refers to any of the following:

- Loss of amenity of neighbouring properties through loss of privacy and/or loss of daylight
- Visual intrusion by a building or structure
- Loss of car parking
- Loss of mature vegetation or landscape screening
- Additional traffic resulting from the development
- Not being of a scale and size suitable for the plot.

HLU8. Development of Residential Gardens, Backland Development and Tandem Development will be resisted except for small, well designed residential sites which:

- do not have a detrimental effect on the surrounding area and neighbouring properties, and
- do not have the potential for loss of amenity of neighbouring properties; through loss of privacy, loss of daylight, visual intrusion by a building or structure, loss of car parking, loss of mature vegetation or landscape screening, additional traffic resulting from the development, and
- are of a scale and size suitable for the plot, and
- have direct highway access.

HLU9. Developments on the periphery of the village will be refused unless they provide a sensitive transition from agricultural to residential land use in terms of property density, height and boundary treatment. Such development proposals will be designed to complement and enhance the relevant landscape characteristics of the locality through:

- Locating structures where they will be viewed against existing built form
- Retaining the proportion and scale of built structures and the space between them
- Referring to the built vernacular of the neighbourhood area
- Conserving and restoring traditional boundary treatments
- Using appropriate plant species in a comprehensive landscape scheme with appropriate boundary treatments to integrate with the rural character.

HLU10. Development of any building of more than two and half storeys will be refused.

HLU11. Proposals to amend permission for holiday caravan sites to allow permanent residency will be refused. New caravan sites for either holiday or permanent residence will be refused.

How You Can Get Involved

Who is being consulted?

This consultation is aimed specifically at residents of the Welford-on-Avon Parish. As with previous consultations on the Welford Plan, when you respond you will be asked to give your name and postcode. This is because for the residents' survey we can only accept feedback from people who are living in the parish.

A similar survey is being carried out at the same time with businesses in the parish and other interested parties.

Consultation Dates

This consultation is taking place between 10 December 2014 and 31 January 2015. **Please be sure to return your response form by the end of January.**

Getting your copy of the full Welford Plan

This booklet is just an abbreviated version of the full Welford Plan.

You may wish to read the complete Welford Plan before you comment. You can do this by;

- Downloading it from the *Welforward* website: <http://www.welforward.org.uk>
- Ringing 01789 750 100 and requesting a copy to be delivered to you. Please be sure to leave your full address and other contact details!

Copies can also be obtained from Welford Primary School, St Peter's Church, The Methodist Chapel Rooms and the Memorial Hall.

Commenting on the draft Welford Plan

A response form is included in the mailing which includes this document. You are requested to use this form when providing your feedback; this will make it easier to ensure that your views are properly addressed in the final version of the Plan. You can also download the Response Form from the *Welforward* website.

Please send your comments on the draft Plan to:

Vanessa Lowe
Clerk to Welford-on-Avon Parish Council
The Headland, Headland Road,
Welford-on-Avon, CV37 8ER.

What Happens Next

The responses will be analysed by the Parish Council's Internal Auditor who will collate all the findings. We hope to have a final version completed towards the end of February 2015 at which stage our independent consultant will review it to ensure complete conformity with Government requirements for Neighbourhood Plans. The Parish Council will formally adopt the Plan immediately prior to its submission to SDC. All being well, this will occur before the end of March 2015.

At that stage, responsibility for progressing the Plan falls largely to SDC. We understand that it might take up to four months for all the formal checking to take place. This means that the referendum on the Plan – the last formal part of the development process to involve residents – could occur in early July. Assuming that a majority of residents voting endorse the Plan, it will then be adopted and become a formal part of the planning process by which SDC scrutinise any development in the Parish.

Thank you for your continued support and involvement in developing The Welford Plan.
