

SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL COMMITTEE (MOLE VALLEY)

DATE: 9th September 2015

LEAD OFFICER: Jack Straw (MVDC)

SUBJECT: Preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans in Mole Valley – Progress Report.

DIVISION: Ashtead; Bookham & Fetcham West; Dorking Hills; Dorking Rural.



SUMMARY OF ISSUE:
Neighbourhood Development Plans are being prepared by community groups in Ashtead, Bookham, Capel, Ockley and Westcott. This report explains how the preparation of the Neighbourhood Development Plans for these areas is progressing.
RECOMMENDATIONS:
The Local Committee (Mole Valley) is asked to note the content of the report.
REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:
To update the Local Committee on the progress of Neighbourhood Development Plan preparation in Mole Valley.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:
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- 1.1 The Localism Act 2011 provides communities with an opportunity to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) for their area.
- 1.2 NDPs allow local people to plan for the type of development that is needed for their community. They can be detailed or general depending on the needs and wishes of the community. For example, an NDP can set out policies about where and what type of new development should be built or what it should look like. They should only cover land use planning issues and not broader local concerns for example crime or health. The scope of a NDP is for those who are preparing it to decide.
- 1.3 NDPs are prepared by Parish Councils or in unparished areas by Neighbourhood Forums. Before work can get fully underway on a NDP, the area it is to cover has to be agreed by the local planning authority (i.e. MVDC) and where a Neighbourhood Forum has to be established to prepare

the NDP, its make up and constitution also has to be agreed by the local planning authority.

- 1.4 An NDP has to be in general conformity with the Local Plan for the area and the Government's National Planning Policy Framework. For example, if a local planning authority identifies an area for development, the community cannot use the NDP to block development or undermine other planning policies such as the provision of affordable housing.
- 1.5 NDPs are required to be independently examined and subject to a local referendum before they can be adopted by the local authority.
- 1.6 Once an NDP is adopted it will form part of the Development Plan for the local planning authority's area and must be taken into account in the determination of planning applications in the area covered by the Plan.
- 1.7 In Mole Valley, NDPs are being prepared by community groups in Ashtead, Bookham, Capel, Ockley and Westcott. They are all at different stages of preparation.

2. NDP PROGRESS IN MOLE VALLEY:

2.1 The progress that has been made on each NDP is as follows:

(a) Ashtead.

The Ashtead NDP is being prepared by the Ashtead Village Forum /Ashtead Community Vision (ACV) which was designated in July 2013 by MVDC for the purpose of preparing an NDP. The Ashtead Neighbourhood Area which was designated at the same time comprises the three Ashtead Wards. There is a website providing information about the NDP and those preparing it. <http://ashteadcommunityvision.org.uk/>

ACV has been gathering evidence about Ashtead to support the preparation of the NDP. A detailed analysis of the current housing stock in the village and future needs has been followed up with reports on the Environment; Economy; and Transport which have been shared with the community. ACV is now working on the development of planning policies for inclusion in the NDP.

ACV envisages adoption of the NDP in 2017.

(b) Bookham

The Bookham Forum – or Bookham Vanguard as it is also known – and the Bookham Neighbourhood Area comprising the two Bookham Wards were designated by MVDC for the purposes of preparing a NDP in September 2012. Since then it has carried out surveys, prepared reports and promoted its work extensively in the local community, holding public meetings and other community events. It has an extensive website providing information about the NDP and those preparing it. <http://bookhamvanguard.co.uk/>

In June 2015, Bookham Vanguard published its draft NDP for consultation. It contains a raft of policies covering open spaces, trees and design; housing; infrastructure and retail and employment polices. The comments on the draft policies are being analysed by Forum members and responses are being considered which might lead to revisions to the draft NDP.

Bookham Vanguard is likely to submit the draft NDP to MVDC during September. MVDC will then carry out a further round of consultation, arrange for the draft plan to be independently examined and if found sound organise a referendum.

It is hoped that the NDP can be adopted by the middle of 2016.

(c) Capel.

Capel is the latest community to decide to prepare an NDP. In July 2015, MVDC agreed to designate Capel Parish as a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of preparing a NDP. The plan's preparation will be undertaken under the auspices of the Parish Council. It will cover all the parish including the three communities of Capel, Beare Green and Coldharbour.

The NDP is in the very early stages of preparation and the emphasis at this stage is on explaining the purpose, benefit and remit of a NDP to the local community. A web site has been created <http://parishplan.co.uk/> but a timetable for the plan's preparation has yet to be established.

(d) Ockley

In March 2013 MVDC agreed to designate the Parish of Ockley as a Neighbourhood Area for the purpose of preparing an NDP. The Parish Council is leading the work and has an NDP page on the parish website <http://ockley-parishcouncil.co.uk/neighbourhoodplan>

So far, work has been focussing on how to enable the provision of more affordable housing in the village and considering site options. Transport issues are another priority for the NDP to address, including car parking at Ockley station and the need for improved bus services.

At present, there is no timetable for completion of the NDP.

(e) Westcott.

The Westcott Village Forum and Westcott Neighbourhood Area were designated by MVDC for the purposes of preparing an NDP in March 2013. Since then, the Forum has canvassed views of the local community about their village and surveyed the village in terms of its character, facilities and infrastructure. The Forum has a website which provides information about the preparation of the NDP. <http://westcottvillageforum.com/>

A draft NDP was published for consultation at the end of 2014 and work is on-going to enable it to be submitted to MVDC for the next stages.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 Once the Neighbourhood Forums/Parish Councils have prepared a draft NDP and consulted their communities, the Plan and related supporting information is submitted to MVDC.
- 3.2 MVDC will then check that the submitted NDP has followed the legal processes and that the plan has met the legal requirements for consultation and publicity

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- 3.3 MVDC is also responsible for publicising the proposed NDP, making it available for inspection and inviting anyone interested to comment on it by a specified date which has to be not less than six weeks from the date of it being publicised.
- 3.4 At the end of this period, MVDC will appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced person to carry out the independent examination of the NDP. This appointment is agreed with the Parish Council/Neighbourhood Forum responsible for the NDP.
- 3.5 Following the examination, the examiner will issue a report to MVDC and the Parish Council/Neighbourhood Forum. If the NDP meets the basic conditions, the examiner will recommend that the NDP proceeds to the referendum stage or may suggest modifications are needed to the NDP so that it can proceed to referendum. It is MVDC's responsibility to make such modifications.
- 3.6 If the examiner concludes that the NDP does not meet the basic conditions and should not proceed to the referendum stage, it will be necessary to consider the reasons behind the examiner's conclusions and whether the NDP can be changed to address those reasons.
- 3.7 If an NDP is found to meet the basic conditions and proceeds to the referendum stage, MVDC will have to give 25 working days notice of the referendum. The referendum question will be "Do you want MVDC to use the NDP to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"
- 3.8 If more than 50% of those voting in the referendum vote "yes" then MVDC will bring the NDP into force. Planning applications for development within the Neighbourhood Area will need to be made in accordance with the NDP unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 3.9 Neighbourhood Forums exist to prepare NDPs and have a designation of 5 years only. They do not have a formal role in the implementation of the NDP. The members of a neighbourhood forum may want to consider how they can stay involved and support implementation of the NDP they have prepared. Parish Councils who prepare an NDP will continue to be consulted about planning applications by MVDC.

4. OPTIONS:

- 4.1 The Local Committee is being asked to note the progress that has been made by those local communities who are preparing NDPs in Mole Valley.

5. CONSULTATIONS:

- 5.1 District and County Council members whose wards include areas covered by NDPs will be consulted at the key stages in the preparation of the NDPs.

6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:

- 6.1 N/A

7. LOCALISM:

7.1 Although it will be those communities within the Neighbourhood Area who will be most affected by an NDP, (currently Ashted, Bookham, Capel, Ockley and Westcott) adjoining areas will be consulted at the key stages of an NDPs preparation and will have an opportunity to feed in their views to the Plan's preparation.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	No significant implications arising from this report
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report)
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report)
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report)

9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

9.1 Preparation of NDPs involves significant commitment by those involved. MVDC has been and will continue to provide technical advice and support to those communities preparing NDPs. It is hoped that the Bookham NDP which is the most advanced of the five plans will be submitted within the next month and that it can reach the adoption stage by the summer of 2016. The other NDPs will follow thereafter.

9.2 The Local Committee will be kept up to date with progress on the preparation of these NDPs and will be advised of any additional requests by local communities to prepare one.

10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:

10.1 See Section 3 above.

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Consulted:

N/A

Annexes:

N/A

Sources/background papers:

N/A

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