



Hermitage NDP

## April 2022 Update

Things are moving apace with production of the Hermitage Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)! Steering Group (SG) members are finalising content for inclusion in the first draft. Our consultant, Navigus, has committed to producing a 'skeleton' Plan by the end of April. We've drafted a rough timeline of events that will keep us all busy for the next 12 months – possibly longer.

As with any project, timelines can be quite elastic and can all too easily lead to delay. SG is determined to minimise this but increasingly find ourselves dependent on other organisations for technical support whose resourcing pressures may unavoidably impact our timescales. That said, our aim is to share a skeleton plan with you in June at a public exhibition.

From the public event held in October 2020 and subsequent feedback about what Hermitage means to you, 5 themes have emerged:

- **Housing** – local needs and type mix
- **Design and views** – building densities/layout, design and materials; impact on AONB views and retention of inter-building views
- **Sustainable design and environment** – encouragement to go beyond national policies regarding energy efficiency; inclusion of native planting and landscaping; minimising of surface water run-off; flood risk mitigation; wildlife friendly design
- **Heritage** – identification of heritage assets important to local community which could be adversely impacted by future development
- **Movement** – access to countryside, alternative routes for walking and cycling

Each section of the NDP will cover one heading, listing the challenges identified by our community and suggesting policies that might be introduced to address them.

However, there are some things you've told us which aren't appropriate for inclusion as policies in our NDP, for example your concerns regarding traffic volumes, speeding and parking problems. SG has met with WBC representatives, liaised with the HPC lead and received assurances from both that these will be dealt with in the current year. We can however flag them up as priority actions in the NDP. Similarly, where national planning policies already exist or are emerging around sustainability, NDP can only encourage developers to incorporate environmentally friendly features into building design.

At the public event this coming June, which will be well publicised, it's really important that you come along, take a look through the draft document and tell us if we've got it right (or not!). Hermitage NDP needs to reflect the views of our community. Without your active involvement, our NDP will fail and development will take place regardless of local residents' and worker's views.

To end on a brighter note, once our NDP is 'made', Hermitage Parish Council will receive more money from West Berkshire Council! Introduced in 2010, Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which landowners must pay on all new developments above 100 square metres. Currently, 15% of CIL collected by WBC is handed back to Hermitage Parish Council. Once we have a 'made' NDP this will increase to 25%. So far, Hermitage has received £16,200 CIL which is being saved until there is enough money to carry out a major project. Parish Councils are expected to consult the public on spending the CIL.

No development means no CIL!

Contact us at [Hermitagendp@gmail.com](mailto:Hermitagendp@gmail.com)