

ROSS-ON-WYE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN SUMMARY CONSULTATION STATEMENT: REGULATION 16

This report covers the period from January 2015 through to Regulation 15 Submission

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document fulfils the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2014. In line with the requirements, this Consultation Statement and the associated reports (the original source material):

- contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- explain how they were consulted;
- summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan.

1.2 This Summary Report is supported by the original and specific event and activity reports. These can be viewed on the NDP pages of the Ross-on-Wye Town Council website: www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk

1.3 The only exceptions to the above are the report on the proposed Local Green Spaces and the various reports on community-generated evidence. Although these constitute a form of consultation, they are more appropriately included in, and therefore available in, the overall Evidence Folder.

2 INITIATION

2.1 Initial work to develop the Ross-on-Wye Neighbourhood Plan (hereafter termed the NDP) started soon after designation in September 2013.

2.2 Background research was undertaken in 2014 under an Innovate UK grant to Re-imagine The High Street. This used face-to-face and on-line questionnaires in the Action for Market Towns format. This gave a comparison with previous use of this methodology in 2012. The 2014 consultative research was supplemented by professional consultancy input on the traffic and parking issues that had been highlighted in all previous work. Materials generated by this, and other prior work such as the 2010 Town Plan, are all held at http://www.rosstc-herefordshire.gov.uk/archive_plans.php.

2.3 The preparation of the NDP started in earnest at the end of 2015, at which point the Town Council, together with the NDP Steering Group appointed consultants in February 2016 to guide and support the plan preparation work. What follows therefore describes the consultation that took place from February 2016.

3 PRINCIPLES OF CONSULTATION

3.1 On the advice of the consultants, the programme of consultation deliberately included, and linked together:

- Opportunities for people to contribute as individuals or families.
- Events open to all in Ross (and others).
- Invited, interactive workshops with smaller groups.
- Active and direct community involvement in evidence collection.
- Ongoing awareness raising about the NDP and opportunities to get involved, and to provide feedback on emerging results and proposals.
- Meetings with Herefordshire Officers.
- Ad hoc meetings with specific people or groups.
- Formal consultation on the Draft Submission Plan.

3.2 The overall approach was very much 'front-loaded' to seek issues, ideas, challenges, opportunities etc. at the earliest possible stage and to engage local people in a number of

the evidence collection tasks (see 1.3 above). Later stages were therefore more about checking and refining, so not including as many higher profile activities.

3.3 All Parish Councils in the areas adjoining Ross-on-Wye were specifically invited to the first open event (Drop-in 1 below) but no reply was received from any of these and, to the best of our knowledge, nobody from these Councils attended any event (or if they did, they did not make themselves known to organisers)¹. It was, however, clear that some people from beyond Ross came to open events, notably some who were interviewed as visitors (see later) and almost certainly some who attended the drop-in events.

3.4 The sections that follow describe what took place by type of event or activity up to and including the formal Regulation 14 consultation. Some activities happened on a specific date, some over a limited period and some were ongoing. This is not therefore strictly sequential.

¹ Some members of the Walford NDP team joined the Steering Group on two occasions to observe our processes; some exchanges on topics of mutual interest followed.

4 QUESTIONNAIRES

Issues Questionnaire

4.1 A questionnaire about local issues was available at the first open, public Drop-in at the end of March 2016 (see later) and also available via the website. The questionnaire listed some 'prompting' issues under several themes such as Housing and Shopping to which people could respond by ticking or crossing on the form, and they could also make further comments on issues listed or add further issues of their own.

4.2 Despite small prizes being offered through a lucky draw, only 8 questionnaires were returned making any detailed analysis inappropriate. It is however our view that, because many more questionnaires were taken away if not returned, the use of the questionnaire helped to develop awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan.

4.3 All the prompting issues were supported. 45 other issues emerged, though some were variations on those listed, and some (e.g. Council Tax levels) were not relevant to the plan. The only issues emerging from more than two questionnaires were the failure to deliver infrastructure in association with new developments and the need for effective flood protection.

Town Trail questionnaire and comments

4.4 This unusual technique, basically intended as an enjoyable and challenging task that shielded a questionnaire, was presented as a problem-solving trail around the town centre. People were told where to start, then had to find their way around the centre using photographs taken at every junction. At each stopping or turning point they were asked to add their thoughts on specific issues (e.g. traffic or design).

4.5 Once again, despite possible prizes, only 5 completed trails being received. Those responding enjoyed the challenge. No particular issues emerged that did not also emerge from the questionnaire above or from the more fully supported first Drop-in.

School questionnaire

4.6 This questionnaire was given to around 140 boys and girls aged 14 - 17 at John Kyrle High School in Ross during July 2016. It used an adapted version of the emerging plan objectives (called Aims in the questionnaire) and sought their views on these by scoring each from 1 (no support) to 10 (full support), adding any comments then also guessing the score their parent(s) might give.

4.7 Overall, the children scored 5/10 for the given aims, with little difference by age or gender. The only particularly high support from children came for 'less empty shops'. Two aims scored low: 'signs around the town centre' and 'more cafes'. On all but two items (where the difference was very slight), the guessed scores for parental views were higher. The biggest difference between children and parents was on 'more cafes' where the adult score was noticeably higher.

Aims questionnaire

4.8 This questionnaire was put out in hard copy during June and July 2016, mainly at the Ross-on-Wye Library, although a few people accessed it at the Town Council offices or through the website (see later). The questionnaire listed the various aims/objectives developed to date through other stages of consultation. The main focus was the Town Centre but a shorter second section highlighted aims for the Wider Town.

4.9 Those responding were asked to place a tick (for general support) or a cross (for no support) against each aim. There was also an opportunity, if they wished, to add comments. People were asked to provide their age, gender, number in household and length of time living in/near Ross.

4.10 45 questionnaires were returned. Almost all respondents completed the tick/cross task and around 60% added comments. According to the postcodes given, almost all respondents lived in or near to Ross. All aims were very fully supported with a few cautions or elaborations in the comments made.

5 EVENTS

Drop-ins open to all

Drop-in 1

5.1 This took place on 30th April under the Market Hall in Ross town centre (for 6 hours) and on 1st May in a marquee by the riverside (for 7 hours), the latter as part of the River Festival. The events were advertised through various local networks, in the local newspaper and on the project website. The event was staffed at all times by local people and members of the consultant team. The Drop-in was comprised of several sections and methods:

- There were boards which asked people to write and add post-its to say what they liked and disliked about Ross as a whole and about what they liked and disliked about the town centre.
- Other boards included pre-prepared information or statements to which people could add comments or suggestions.
- There were opportunities for people to suggest possible sites for new housing or as Local Green Spaces.
- The Issues questionnaire and Town Trail (see above) were available for people to take away.
- The event was also used as a first opportunity for a survey of visitors to Ross (see above).
- There was a general handout that people could take away. This included the project website address.
- There were also things for children to do.

5.2 Around 200 people attended the event, a few staying briefly but most for some time. At this point, early in the plan preparation process, very few people knew about the plan so this was also a useful awareness-raising exercise. 30 distinct 'likes' were noted for Ross as a whole as well as 46 'dislikes'. For the town centre, 28 'likes' were noted and 40 'dislikes' (all such results suggesting a number of issues for the NDP to address). In most cases, where ticks or crosses were added to post-it comments, they were ticks, showing support for the issue raised. Many comments and suggestions (including sites to use or avoid) were added to the boards on Housing, Town Centre and Local Green Spaces.

Library event

5.3 This took the form primarily of an unstaffed awareness-raising exhibition in the Ross Library from 2nd to 10th June 2016. There were boards on display to promote the plan and explain its purpose, content timing and so forth. People could also pick up copies of the Issues questionnaire and Town Trail (as above). The Association of Ross Traders were given a specific evening session to enable them to view the information in person. It is not possible to be certain how many people attended this so no detailed results are available.

Drop-in 2

5.4 This took place on 6th August 2016 by the riverside in Ross as part of the Ross Carnival. A 'float' promoting the plan and the drop-in circulated the town among all the other floats in the procession as part of the carnival, ending up by the riverside, at which point (from around 14.00 to 18.00) people could visit the Neighbourhood Plan marquee. A total of 55 people signed in, although those people spent on average well over an hour contributing and talking to community representatives and members of the consultant team. Others attended but did not sign in.

5.5 There were several ways for people to contribute:

- On the Theme and Topic sheets (these being based on the now developed objectives) people could add suggestions for what to do to address the themes.
- On the Theme Priority sheets, people could attribute priority ratings to the various objectives.
- There were several maps on which people could comment, showing possible housing sites, possible Local Green Spaces and general issues around the town centre.
- A 'Postcards from 2031' exercise asked people to focus in on what they thought would be the one or two most important improvements in Ross over the coming years.
- There were also activities for children.

5.6 The event was described informally as a sort of 'what do you think of it so far?' session. To that end, much of the developing work was supported: the overall issues, the general themes, the focus on (but not just on) the town centre and possible housing and green space sites. Two important points emerged. First, the importance of thinking about all themes together to ensure that all actions added up well. Secondly, concern (subsequently acted upon) for the large area of poor quality and underused land behind Morrisons (Broadmeadow).

Carnival 2017

As an informal event, no specific report was produced.

5.7 This event again took place as part of the Ross Carnival. On this occasion it was not really a consultation event but focused more on awareness-raising about the forthcoming informal community-wide consultation on the initial plan.

5.8 There was a small exhibition in a marquee at the main Carnival field during the afternoon of 4th August outlining the policies that would be included in the plan. Members of the Steering Group were present at all times and helped the 60 or so people who attended (almost all new to the process) to understand the plan, its purpose, outcomes etc.

5.9 Only one new issue was raised, subsequently included in the draft plan: the provision of electric charging points in new houses, at places of work and in public and private parking areas.

Carnival 2018

As an informal event, no specific report was produced.

5.10 This event again took place as part of the Ross Carnival, on 4th August 2018. On this occasion it was not so much a consultation event as focused on awareness-raising about the settled proposals in the plan that would be submitted for formal community-wide consultation starting in a few weeks.

5.11 There was again a small display in a marquee at the main Carnival field during the afternoon of 4th August outlining three main topics: the policies that would be included in the plan, the local green spaces, and the development site allocations proposed.

5.12 Members of the Steering Group and Town Council Staff were present at all times and helped the 80 or so people who attended (many of whom were new to the process) to understand the plan, its purpose, outcomes etc.

6 Invited Workshops

Stakeholder Workshop

6.1 This took place on the evening of 12th April at the Larruperz Centre in Ross. The 25 attendees had been selected using a slowly developing list of key stakeholders from various sections of the community: voluntary bodies, the business community, elected representatives and community organisations. 18 people attended. The event was very much a workshop so:

- On arrival, people noted questions about Neighbourhood Plans generally and the one for Ross specifically.
- Following an introduction there was a 'walkabout' for people to comment on, add to and elaborate local issues.
- Following a break, people divided into Topic groups to develop possible plan Objectives based on what had emerged as the key issues.
- A short final 'where next' session looked ahead in particular to next stages for the Plan.

6.2 The results of the very first stage provided the baseline for a series of 'frequently asked questions', subsequently added to the website (see below). The 'walkabout' generated support for issues raised to date but added considerably to and modified this list. Five Topic Groups were formed, on Housing, Working and Shopping, Getting Around, Leisure and Well-Being and Environment. Each group produced some objectives for their topic, one or two also producing overall visions.

Working Group Workshop

6.3 This took place on the evening of 14th July 2016 at the Larruperz Centre. This was deliberately placed between the first and second Drop-ins to learn from one to feed into the other. The numbers invited were similar to those for the workshop above, as was the attendance – 18 (with 7 sending apologies). The meeting was also attended by an Education Officer from Herefordshire Council because the possibility of a new school, and a new site for it, had started to become significant.

6.4 By this stage the issues and emerging evidence had been consolidated and some detailed objectives had emerged. These objectives were the main focus of this workshop. Two large groups were formed, one to consider the emerging objectives for the Town Centre, one addressing objectives for what was now termed the 'Wider Town'. Each group of 9 subdivided to respond to the objectives, add to them, exclude or combine some, reinforce any and so forth. In general, the overall mix, coverage and balance of the objectives was agreed, if with a few important amendments to be made.

6.5 The short final stage of the workshop involved seeking volunteers to collect some of the key evidence needed to support the agreed objectives (but only evidence not available already). This is included in the Neighbourhood Plan Evidence Base.

Steering Group / Working Group Workshop 1

6.6 This took place on the evening of 20th October 2016 at the Larruperz Centre. It was set up at this time for two reasons: (a) the form and content of the draft plan was beginning to come into focus and needed to be checked and (b) issues were beginning to arise about other, potentially major developments. 16 people attended, mainly those invited to and attending previous workshops.

6.7 In the first part of the workshop, after an introduction to the very first suggested format for the plan (which was supported), small groups looked at and made suggestions on four aspects that appeared to need further work to advance the plan. They were:

- Branding (of the town and area, to potential residents, visitors, businesses etc.)
- Better use of the River, Riverside and Links to Town
- Better Town Centre for Traffic and Pedestrians
- Improving/Creating Foot paths and Cycleways.

6.8 In each case (if differently according to topic) each group looked at some of the issues and aspirations and then at ideas. In some cases the ideas could be included in policies in the final plan, others could be included as potential projects, others would best be dealt with through other mechanisms. Some groups mapped their ideas (eg. to show new or linked footpaths).

6.9 In the second part of the workshop, the consultants introduced the significant new issues that were emerging or which might well do so within the plan preparation timeframe. This included, all of which remained 'possibles' only at this point:

- Finding a site for a new primary school (replacing the existing Ashfield Park buildings).
- Possibly relocating the Children's Centre (Ryefield) jointly with the new primary school.
- Deciding how best to use the Ashfield Park land if the school was to be relocated.
- Finding sites for further housing (even before the next point below).
- Finding housing land to replace the Hildersley development if it failed to secure permission (or any permission was called in).
- Finding employment land to replace the current and at the time unviable Model Farm scheme if it failed to secure Growth Fund financial underpinning.

6.10 Various options had been developed by the consultants and discussed with Herefordshire Council (see later). These were outlined to each of the four groups and they were asked to evaluate them. One option secured general support but is not elaborated here as it involved land that later proved not to be available. Nevertheless, the criteria used by the groups proved valuable in later work on further options.

First Sharing of the Draft Plan

6.11 By early 2017 it had been possible to prepare a very first draft plan. This was circulated solely in December 2016/January 2017 to those on the stakeholders list (which included the Steering Group) because it was assumed that those in this group would be familiar enough with the process to treat the draft as exactly that. Even though it was clear that this draft would change, the other aim of producing and circulating such a rough version was to give all on the stakeholders group a sense of the nature, length, layout and language of the eventual plan. Comments were sought and some members of the group chose to do so. Their comments, mostly about explanation, clarification and minor points of correction, were then incorporated in the developing plan.

Steering Group / Working Group Workshop 2

6.12 This took place on the evening of 25th May 2017 at the Larruperz Centre. It covered three aspects:

- Comments on the latest version of the plan, following changes suggested by group members and Herefordshire officers (see second Herefordshire meeting below).
- An update on green infrastructure, Local Green Spaces, possible housing sites, Broadmeadow/Tanyard Lane and Marsh Farm.
- Suggestions for practical action projects to support plan policies.

6.13 20 people attended, including some completely new to the process. Where appropriate, comments on the draft plan were then added, some changes were made to the approach to Local Green Spaces and housing sites, two people offered to collect further evidence on green infrastructure and many possible practical projects were listed.

7 ONGOING ACTIVITIES

Ross Town Council NDP Subcommittee* Meetings (* also known informally as NDP Steering Group)

7.1 The Steering Group's original overall membership was around 30 people, including Ross-on-Wye Town Councillors, Herefordshire Councillors, representatives of local groups and organisations and interested members of the public. The core group of regular attendees soon reduced to around 15 people. (Members of the public were invited to attend any or all meetings.) The group met monthly, with occasional exceptions, on most occasions receiving and discussing a Progress Report from the consultants and also raising and discussing emerging issues and concerns.

General Promotion

NDP 'Consulting You' website

7.2 A plan-specific website was set up early in 2016. The plan-specific website ceased to have new content added when the Town Council website hosted the Regulation 14 consultation materials. Site visitors are redirected to the Town Council website. As well as providing basic, background information about plans generally, frequently asked questions and the Ross plan in particular, the website also covered:

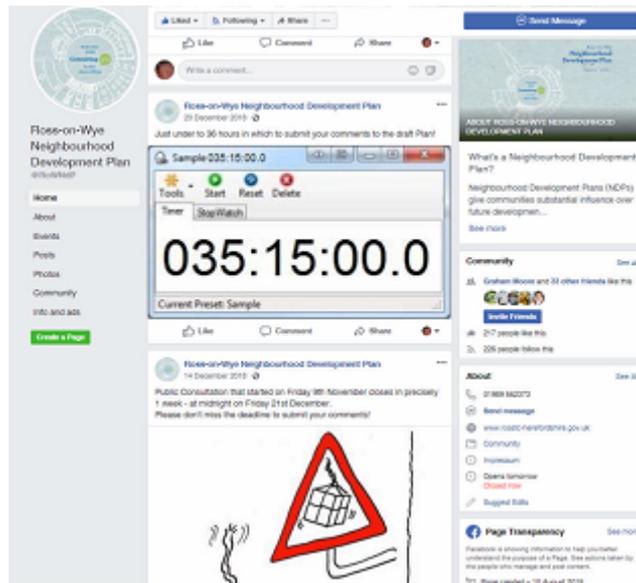
- Occasional but regular updates about progress in general.
- Advance information about forthcoming events or activities.
- Feedback (including summary and full reports) from key events.
- Requests for information (e.g. as above, on Local Green Spaces).



Social Media

7.3 A plan-specific Facebook page was set up in August 2015. As well as providing basic, background information about the Ross plan the website also provided:

- Regular updates about progress in general.
- Notices of events.
- Requests for information (e.g. as above, on Local Green Spaces).
- Opportunity to feedback general comments.



7.4 Site usage statistics were very dependent on the events and activities underway but had an average 'organic' reach within the parish of just under 700 individuals, peaking at 1,500 on some topics.

7.5 The Facebook page also directed people to the project website.

Town Council – Newsletters

7.6 Ross-on-Wye Town Council publishes occasional newsletters delivered to every home in the town. On two occasions there were specific mentions of the Neighbourhood Plan. In March 2016 this was the main topic in a leader. The next appearance was a substantial centre-page spread in the Summer 2016 newsletter at what was, at that time, a middle stage of the plan's development. On the next occasion in Spring 2017 there was a brief mention to update people of progress but also to inform them of potential delays given the prospect of a new school site being added to the plan. Subsequent additions have all contained progress reports.

Town Council – Webpage

7.7 The Ross-on-Wye Town Council website has consistently contained mention of the NDP activity, including a link to the project website, together with notices and minutes of all Steering group meetings. This has featured key updates on the Plan's progress and draft documents for people to view and comment on. The website then hosted the Regulation 14 online comment forms and all the plan-related materials; the latter function continues.

Local Papers

7.8 Mentions of the Neighbourhood Plan were made on several occasions in the main local newspaper, the Ross Gazette, in response to information supplied by members of the project team or Steering Group. Such mentions were about:

- General awareness raising about the plan.
- Advance information about specific events.
- Requests for information and ideas (e.g. suggestion for possible Local Green Spaces).

7.9 Most of these mentions also directed people to the project website.

7.10 There were also occasional articles about the plan generated by Gazette journalists (e.g. reporting comments made at Town Council meetings).

Ross Voice

7.11 Ross Voice is a free publication delivered to every home in the town, has also carried editorial and advance information about specific events.

8 MEETINGS WITH HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

8.1 Though not strictly consultation, several significant discussions took place with Herefordshire Council officers and others that have had significant implications for the NDP.

Primary School Meeting 1

No minutes of this meeting were provided by the officers.

8.2 This meeting followed a request from Education officers in the Council about a strategy they were beginning about possible reorganisation of the primary schools within and around Ross. This was judged to be likely to result in construction of a new primary school and hence requiring a site and sale of the land of Ashfield Park School. The only route available at that time for dealing successfully with any future site allocation and the sale of land was seen to be through the NDP

8.3 The meeting took place on 14th July 2016 at John Kyrle High School. Three members of the Ross NDP attended the meeting, which was mainly for heads and governors of all the area's primary schools (and John Kyrle). There was discussion of the need for more school places, the general location of these (with or outside Ross) and some possible options for the future. No final decisions were taken.

Primary School Meeting 2

No minutes of this meeting were provided by the officers.

8.4 This took place on 3rd October 2016, again at John Kyrle High School with the same group. By this point the strategy was beginning to focus in on rebuilding Ashfield Park School elsewhere in Ross and selling the site. NDP team members commented on the sites suggested and suggested one additional one that secured general support - part of the Tanyard Lane land near the town centre and one that was less well supported and part of the Marsh Farm land.

Please note: A later decision was taken not to pursue, at this time, the relocation of the primary school.

Officer and Member Meeting 1

8.5 During the autumn of 2016, in addition to the primary schools strategy work involving a search for a new school site and possible sale of the current school site, other potentially large scale issues were 'in the air' about:

- The possible refusal of the planning application for c.200 houses at Hildersley. Had this happened the NDP would have been tasked with replacing the housing numbers.
- Possible use of a site to the north of the A40 for housing.
- Possible housing development on the Marsh Farm site to the east of the A40.
- Development on the Tanyard Lane land, either or all housing or housing and the primary school.
- Finding suitable uses for the large and important Broadmeadow site given its current Flood Zone 3 limitations.

8.6 The NDP team therefore requested a meeting with a number of Herefordshire officers from different departments and teams, as well as someone from the NHS because health provision had also become an issue needing to be addressed.

8.7 The meeting was held in the Herefordshire Council offices on 21st October 2016. 15 officers (covering all the issues the team had wished) and four members of the NDP team attended. Place Studio staff outlined the range of issues to discuss and presented some initial options, (subject to later decisions about, for example, Hildersley). The key point for the NDP team was that, with so many issues 'in the air', it was essential to have a truly corporate approach and to link that directly to the NDP wherever appropriate. The key points to emerge were:

- The need for an overall strategy was agreed.
- The NDP should continue to plan for at least 900 houses and ideally be able to accommodate more.
- The existing Children's Centre is in poor quality accommodation and should be co-located in future with the new primary school. (This would make the existing Centre site available for development.)
- Rather than seeking new locations for doctors' surgeries, the NHS are considering a 'health hub' in Ross, consolidating around the existing Community Hospital.
- There was no support for housing on the land to the north of the A40, Broadmeadow and Tanyard in particular have serious access, contamination and flooding problems affecting likely financial viability.

Officer Meeting 2

8.8 Following the meeting above, the NDP team and many of the Herefordshire officers had made progress on developing issues so a further meeting was called. This took place on 7th April 2017, again in Hereford. 13 officers and 3 NDP team members attended. The meeting was mainly set up to discuss:

- Emerging options for sites (some officers left after this item).
- Feedback on the very first draft of the NDP.

Options

8.9 Officers were supportive of the approach to Broadmeadow and Tanyard, in fact hoping that an approach could be found to make it all a mixed development. They did however raise, again, the technical problems with both sites. Since the last meeting the situation with regard to access to Tanyard Lane had changed as a result of (a) suggestions of an access through the laundry site on Ledbury Road and (b) access from the recent Persimmon estate to the east now that the kennels land had been put up for possible development.

8.10 With the possible exception of Marsh Farm (see main plan), the nature and scale of developments east of the A40 were regarded as strategic and therefore inappropriate for the NDP.

8.11 The Schools strategy was now focusing on three options: Tanyard Lane, Broadmeadow and the existing Ashfield Park site.

8.12 It was suggested that the NDP team could usefully consider (but not include in the plan) possible sites for Gypsies and Travellers. There was also a brief discussion of the scope for a 'Pre-application Community Involvement Protocol'.

8.13 It was agreed that officers would provide all necessary technical information on sites options where available and keep the NDP team up to date on other developments.

Officer Meeting 3

8.14 This meeting was held with officers from several departments on 5th October 2017, very much to check progress generally but also to highlight some key issues. These main items were:

- The potential for all of the emerging Broadmeadows/Tanyard site, including the potential for part of it as a replacement primary school site. (some officers left after this item.)
- Tactics in relation to the land east of the A40.
- The interim proposals for housing sites considered for allocation.
- Next stages.

8.15 There was general support for addressing Broadmeadows/Tanyard as a whole and the stated support of landowners (those contacted to date) was appreciated. This was, however, the point at which it appeared unlikely that the primary school would be replaced (in a timescale relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan) and that affected the land east of the A40 as well as Broadmeadows/Tanyard. It was agreed that proposals for the land east of the A40 should be regarded as strategic and not therefore for the Neighbourhood Plan to address in any detail.

8.16 Both negative and positive comments were made on all potential housing sites, warranting further detailed consideration.

Officer Meeting 4

8.17 This took place on the 22nd February 2017 solely with planning officers. The meeting was mainly procedural and tactical, helping to refine the emerging overall plan, in particular in relation to sites. Decisions were taken on specific sites for allocation (some to include, some to exclude) and on some recent proposals (e.g. from the Rowing Club). Some useful tactical advice about advancing the Broadmeadows/Tanyard site was received.

9 LANDOWNER AND DEVELOPER CONTACT

See Contact with Landowners folder in the Consultation Statement Folder.

(NB. This does not include contact with landowners about potential Local Green Spaces, addressed elsewhere.)

Taylor Wimpey/Savills

As this was an informal meeting, no minutes were kept. The issue was superseded by the decision to exclude developments on land east of the A40 from detailed consideration in the Neighbourhood Plan (see Officer meeting 3 above).

9.1 At the meeting with Herefordshire officers on 7th April 2017, the Neighbourhood Plan team were made aware of interest by Savills in the Marsh Farm site and it was suggested that a meeting could be arranged. This took place on 11th May 2017 at the Ross Town Council officers with two members of the plan team, a representative from Savills and one from their clients – Taylor Wimpey.

9.2 The meeting was strictly informal. The team outlined the current position on the NDP as a whole, notably the need to at least consider further housing, and the view of Herefordshire officers that the future of overall developments to the east of the A40 was a strategic issue and not therefore for the NDP. This left choices for how or whether the NDP might deal with Marsh Farm, not least because progress on that site depended on road access from Model Farm (part of the strategic initiative).

9.3 The NDP team made clear that they would be happy in principle to include the Marsh Farm site within the NDP (subject to access and other issue such as flooding) and further ideas were shared about the implications of developing Marsh Farm, including the suggestion of a further possible primary school site. It was left that Savills/Taylor Wimpey would meet again with Herefordshire officers to discuss their specific site and the other emerging ideas.

RSPCA

9.4 During the plan preparation period, the RSPCA took over ownership of the potential Brampton Road housing site. This site had been assessed as unsuitable by Herefordshire Council in their 2012 SHLAA process in terms of (a) visual impact on the AONB and (b) vehicular access.

9.5 The agent for the RSPCA and their planning consultant met the Chair of the Neighbourhood Plan team and one of the consultant team on 13th March 2018 to discuss their emerging ideas for the site and, in particular, how they might deal with the Council concerns. This was an informal meeting so no minutes were made.

9.6 Since then, the owners put on a public exhibition of their proposals on Thursday 27th September 2018 in St. Mary's Church Hall in Ross from 3.00 to 8.00. No outcomes are yet available.

Broadmeadows / Tanyard

9.7 All landowners of the whole Broadmeadows and Tanyard area, including Herefordshire Council, were contacted as soon as it was decided to consider the area for future development. This included the owners of what is termed Phoenix Yard but only after they purchased their site late in 2018. Some landowners were contacted by email and some through face-to-face meetings (occasionally more than one).

9.8 The landowners were kept in touch regularly as proposals developed and given an opportunity to comment.

9.9 All the landowners were also included personally in the Regulation 14 consultation.

Chase Hotel

9.10 The owner of this site was contacted both by email and with a face-to-face meeting during the preparation of the plan to discuss what was proposed at the time as a site allocation for a small amount of housing on the hotel site. This proposal generated a number of objections through the Regulation 14 consultation. This topic is expanded on below in Section 11.

10 REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION

The full log and a summary document is available on the Town Council website (see 1.2 above). Organisation names are included but the names of individuals have been removed. The final column in the full log describes briefly any response now made (or not, as appropriate) in the submission plan.

10.1 This took place in the winter of 2018. In line with the Regulations;

- A list of statutory consultees was developed and agreed with Herefordshire Council. (Some of these, e.g. Welsh Water, required the information in a slightly different format.)
- Methods were also developed to make people in the Ross community aware of the process, e.g. via the local press, Facebook and websites as well as a by now extensive list of personal contacts.
- The letter announcing the consultation stated that the main plan, the Consultation Statement and various evidence folders could be accessed from the Ross-on-Wye Town Council.
- Hard copies of the main plan were to be made available in the town Library and Larruperz Community Centre, and on request; all material was available for inspection during opening hours at the Town Council offices.
- The consultation period was from 9th November to the 21st December 2018.

10.2 In terms of responses:

- 54 people or organisations sent in responses.
- Given that some respondents made comments on more than one topic, there were 284 comments in total.
- Comments were received from all statutory consultees (although Natural England stressed that their comments were informal because of lack of time).
- The largest number of specific comments from a single respondent came from various teams within Herefordshire Council (as a statutory consultee).
- Comments were received from a number of landowners or their agents.
- Comments were also received from individuals from within Ross.

10.3 All comments were logged, as well as any suggestions/proposals made by respondents.

11 POST REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION ON THE CHASE SITE

(All that follows is elaborated in the Chase Process Report in the evidence folder.)

11.1 As the Regulation 14 consultation process was underway, the owners of the Chase Hotel near the centre of Ross-on-Wye announced that the hotel was no longer viable, they could not find anyone to purchase it as an operating hotel and it was to be closed in September 2019. They also announced their intention to proceed towards a housing development on the site and requested that this be included in the Neighbourhood Plan.

11.2 The Steering Group expressed their regret at the loss of such a significant facility in the town, and also some concerns for the mainly green and open qualities of the site were housing development to proceed. Nevertheless they felt obliged to consider the suggestion for including something in the final plan, though not necessarily a formal allocation.

11.3 The site owners were aware that they would need to provide some supporting evidence that a housing development could, in principle, be possible and appropriate on the site. They therefore agreed to organise a public consultation on the principle of development. In order to ensure that this consultation was set up and managed in a way that would produce robust results that the Steering Group could then take into account, the chair of the Steering Group and the plan consultants provide some guiding advice on the process.

11.4 The consultation took the form of an open drop-in day based at the hotel. The display boards outlined the proposals in text, supported by some purely illustrative sketches mainly to demonstrate the likely impact of development on the surroundings and on the locally valued green and open qualities of the site.

11.5 163 people signed in at the event, 70 leaving completed feedback forms. A Full Feedback Report was produced as well as a shorter Summary Report. The key points from the latter were as follows:

- *The biggest concern raised was about the potential loss of the hotel as a locally valued facility.*
- *The next most common issue of concern was the impact of extra vehicles on local roads. Some people commented on the scale of the development, some but not all considering it too much.*
- *The site is clearly valued by nearby residents for its wildlife and ecology although the comments were not all objections on this aspect, more about ensuring no damage.*
- *One aspect that attracted a number of comments was about the effect of possibly overloading local services, notably doctors and schools.*
- *A few people were concerned about what they thought might be the loss of the current large area of open space in the hotel grounds.*
- *Very few people stated a blunt objection to the proposals, although around a dozen made comments raising serious enough concerns to suggest future objections. (Reasons given were largely as covered in the other comments.)*
- *At the same time, some people were very positive about the proposals (and in some cases the consultation) and a few even expressed an interest in purchasing a property if the development proceeds.*
- *There were also a few miscellaneous comments.*

11.6 On the basis of these results, the apparent significance of the site to local people and general concerns about the proposals, the Steering Group decided that it would be important to include the site in the final Neighbourhood Plan but not as an allocation.

11.7 In the weeks that followed, the proposal for housing development caused considerable concern locally. A petition was raised to keep the hotel open and there was a large amount of correspondence to the Town Council about having the green space on the site protected/designated in some way.

11.8 The advice of the plan consultants was that neither a hotel retention policy nor a Local Green Space designation would pass examination. A structured survey was therefore undertaken to assess community views more formally than was possible via the petition etc.

11.9 The survey was undertaken from 8th to 28th June 2019. It was widely promoted through local social media and in the Ross Gazette. It was also sent directly to residents living immediately around the site, those who had objected most strongly in earlier stages.

11.10 The survey had three elements:

- A letter from the Town Council outlining the purpose, timing and format of the survey.
- A background note from the plan consultants elaborating why the resident-promoted options were not possible and outlining their two alternative approaches as above.
- A survey form for people to complete.

In addition to the hard copy versions sent directly to adjacent residents, and available to others via the Town Council, the survey could be completed on line using Survey Monkey.

11.11 A total of 211 responses were received to the survey, 189 from people in the wider areas of town and 32 from those living adjacent or very near to the site. The latter rated the importance of the site very highly, those from other areas of Ross did not do so. Both options proposed by the consultants, (a) adding a section in the plan about open and green spaces and highlighting the Chase land and (b) adding a section about support for development in line with key criteria, were supported in the survey. Only a few comments were received about hotel retention and Local Green Space. A summary of the results ('The Chase Site Consultation June 2019 Results Report') is available on the NDP pages of the Ross-on-Wye Town Council website.

11.12 At a Steering Group meeting on 4th July a number of residents living close to the site lobbied for designation of much of the land as a Local Green Space but this was not generally supported from the survey results. Given the general support from the survey for the two proposed added sections, the Steering Group voted unanimously to ask them to be added to the submission version plan.