



Answers to Frequently-Asked Questions

in respect of:

The draft Keyworth Neighbourhood Plan

on behalf of:

Keyworth Parish Council

30th September 2015



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1.0. Introduction

- 1.1. This document provides answers to some of the most common questions posed by residents when responding to the consultation draft of the Keyworth neighbourhood plan. This has been produced to aid understanding of how decisions in the plan have been made, and also more generally to understand what the plan is for and how it is intended to work.

2.0. General Issues

What is the Keyworth neighbourhood plan? What is it for?

- 2.1. The Keyworth Neighbourhood Plan is a document which will influence the future development of the village of Keyworth. It is a land use planning policy document and addresses matters of where housing, shops and new leisure facilities should go and how they should be designed. Once completed, it will form part of the planning system, meaning it will be considered when new development is proposed in Keyworth. It is expected to be in effect from 2016.

What is the purpose of the planning system?

- 2.2. The planning system is intended to shape future development (meaning the creation of new buildings, facilities, transport and other infrastructure) to achieve sustainable development which achieves social, economic and environmental aims.

These aims include the creation of new homes and services, the protection of the natural environment and important buildings, and efficient use of resources. These are not always mutually compatible, and the planning system aims to achieve outcomes that balance the different aims. The Keyworth Neighbourhood Plan deals with all of these issues and seeks to arrive at a unified and sensible strategy for the village and parish.

How does the planning system work?

- 2.3. In practice, the planning system in England is based around different levels of national and local legislation and policies. Central government sets out the broad purposes of the planning system, which local authorities (borough, district and city councils) are then responsible for putting into practice by writing their own local plans which reflect the particular issues and needs in their areas. The Neighbourhood Plan must also reflect these issues in its plan.

Developers, landowners and property owners are expected make sure their proposals for new development comply with the national and local planning policies. They are required to seek planning permission for most types of new development. In most cases local councils are responsible for deciding whether proposals comply with the planning system, and whether to grant planning permission. They do this by considering how well proposals meet the policy goals set out in the local plan and (where one exists) a neighbourhood plan.

How do neighbourhood plans fit in the planning system?

- 2.4. Neighbourhood plans are a very recent addition to the planning system, which allow local residents to create their own plans and policies for development in their very local areas. Once a neighbourhood plan has been written and adopted, the local council are legally required to consider the policies in the plan when deciding on planning applications for new development in the area the plan covers. Neighbourhood plans are intended to add more detail to the existing national and local plans, to reflect the particular needs, concerns and ambitions that local people have for their own neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood plans are required to support the general aims and the policies of the rest of the planning system, including national legislations and local planning policies.

How effective will the policies be in requiring developers to comply? Why are some policies written in flexible language instead of being more forceful so that developers are compelled to stick to the policies?

- 2.5. Policies must be written to give some flexibility when applications are considered, so that different issues can be balanced against each other. This is not to allow developers a 'get-out', but so that opportunities to achieve some aims of the plan are not lost because proposals do not fully support every objective of the plan. At the plan making stage it is impossible to consider every eventuality and every possible development that may come forward, or to anticipate the type of development which may occur in five or ten years' time, and as such policies should be designed and written to accommodate the 'as yet unknown'. It is also important that planning policies are worded 'positively' – meaning that they should only say what kind of development is wanted, rather than what is *not* wanted.

3.0. Shops and Services

Can the plan protect other services as community assets in the same way that some pubs are? E.g., the bank, cafes?

- 3.1. Powers to protect assets of community value apply to buildings if the 'current primary use of the building/land or use of the building/land in the recent past furthers the social well-being or social interests (cultural, recreational, or sporting interests) of the local community'. It may be possible that pubs, banks and cafes and other businesses could be recognised as community assets but this would have to be undertaken in parallel to the neighbourhood plan through other legislation set out in the Localism Act 2011. If a designated building came up for sale, the community would be given six months to purchase the building, if they wanted to. However, this would not compel operators (e.g. pub owners) to continue their business at the building.

What will the plan do to protect and improve service provision including schools and doctors?

- 3.2. Community assets, including schools, the health centre, leisure facilities and the library will be protected by the plan by resisting development which would result in their loss, except where they are replaced with equivalent or better provision. In addition, contributions from developers will be sought to strengthen existing provision. It is also worth noting that existing doctors and schools have confirmed that they currently have physical capacity to expand and so could accommodate additional residents without having to build new facilities.

4.0. Transport

What will the plan do about existing traffic problems?

- 4.1. The plan seeks to ensure that future housing development avoids adding to existing traffic problems. As currently drafted, Policy TA2 (Highways and Access) will seek financial contributions from new development to fund highways improvements, including widening Platt Lane and improving junctions at Nicker Hill, Normanton Lane, Station Road, Nottingham Road and Debdale Lane. The Neighbourhood Plan steering group is working closely with the County Council highways department to ensure that proposals are viable, sensible and achievable. It is important to note that an independent traffic assessment has not found traffic conditions within Keyworth to be especially poor, although it is noted that there are key junctions that are locally a problem at peak hours, nor that the allocated developments would result in especially poor traffic conditions. However, care has been taken to minimise any impacts, however, minor, on the surrounding road network.

How will the plan ensure that new residential development does not result in large increases in car traffic?

- 4.2. Draft Policy TA1 (Sustainable Modes) requires new development to take advantage of existing services and facilities and to be within easy walking distance of bus services. The policy also sets out goals for ensuring that travel plans are delivered for larger schemes, which should make use of sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling and public transport) to access the development. Draft policy H1 requires proposals for development at the allocated sites to demonstrate that they will meet localised convenience retail needs. This is intended to ensure that large housing developments include appropriate local stores. This will reduce the need for residents of new developments to drive into the village centre. The allocated housing sites have been intentionally spread around different points at the edges of the village to avoid concentrating the impact of new development at any one point.

5.0. Housing

How have the proportions of types of housing in Policy H2 been decided? Where is the evidence of demand for mostly smaller houses? Will the plan encourage enough young families to move into Keyworth to 'keep it alive'?

- 5.1. The housing types have been decided on in response to people's views expressed in the community consultation and to reflect the need set out by Rushcliffe Housing Needs Survey. This demonstrates that there is a key demand for smaller bungalows and elder people's accommodation. The current housing mix has also been taken into account, including the fact that the significant portion of the existing housing stock is 3 and 4 bed detached dwellings. The housing mix is designed to offer different housing options and opportunities allowing for a diversification of the housing mix. The proportions of housing includes a large element of 2-bedroom starter homes intended to attract young families as well as a range of family housing suitable for a variety of families of different sizes.

Why has the accommodation at the proposed care home/sheltered accommodation been included in the 480 homes designated in the plan? Will the shortfall from the true number of houses allocated in the Local Plan be made up elsewhere in the village?

- 5.2. The inclusion of the care home in the figure of 480 allocated homes was in accordance with national policy for housing and was based on needs identified by the community consultation. However, in discussions with Rushcliffe Council this may need to be changed to allow for a wider scope of older persons accommodation. The Neighbourhood Plan is being amended to bring it more in line with Rushcliffe's housing strategies and housing need. Work is underway to ensure that the neighbourhood plan meets the targets for housing set out in the local plan and meets the community's desires, as collated from the consultation.

6.0. Site Allocations

Why have the sites allocated for housing been chosen? Particularly sites at Nicker Hill and off Platt Lane. Sites on the west side seem more suitable, considering traffic problems on the east side, the landscape and access to services. Why are more houses not proposed for the south of the village, to balance the spread of development? Particularly SHLAA site 376 (land south of Bunny Lane).

- 6.1. All sites have positive and negative aspects as places to build houses, with consideration given to aspects including highways and access, landscape and visual impact, heritage, conservation and sustainability considerations, and access to services. The three sites that were eventually allocated (and those two safeguarded sites) were those which were found, on balance, to be the best. The approach taken to the allocation of sites is detailed in the draft Neighbourhood Plan, in the Assessment Table in Appendix 2 (this is available to view at the Parish Council Office). Site owners have also been involved in this process, where they have put forward their land for consideration for inclusion.

The independent transport study commissioned for the Neighbourhood Plan found that the highways around Nicker Hill would have sufficient capacity to accommodate the level of traffic expected to arise from the allocated development. The proposed number of dwellings is less than was put forward by the developer in order to ensure minimal impact on traffic and transport. There was also no evidence that traffic impact from sites to the west of the village would have materially less impact on the village than any site on the east. In fact, the principle routes of departure for commuter traffic from the village are to the north and north-east which means that if all the houses were placed to the west a large proportion of traffic would have to travel through the village to depart.

SHLAA Site 376 has not been allocated in the Neighbourhood Plan due to its proximity to the village's Conservation Area. It was felt that developing housing here would have an unacceptable impact on this important character area of the village.

Why has housing for older people been allocated at site H1.2 (Platt Lane) when it is isolated and distant from the village's services?

- 6.2. The inclusion of older people's housing at Platt Lane was proposed by the developer involved with the site. No other developers or owners of sites around the village have come forward with such a proposal. As such, while it is appreciated that the site does have some shortcomings for this type of housing, the decision was taken to ensure the delivery of the older people's housing for Keyworth (in line with the communities wishes), by allocating it in the plan at this location. The steering group are exploring options for this as part of other sites, but we must ensure that this is deliverable and achievable in line with national policy.

7.0. Environmental and Green Belt

Will the plan allow for development on the Green Belt around Keyworth? How does the plan relate to the review of the Green Belt boundary?

- 7.1. Yes, the sites allocated for housing development are in the Green Belt around Keyworth. There is no non-green belt land around Keyworth that can accommodate the level of housing development allocated to the village, which is required to meet housing need. The green belt sites identified for housing have been assessed to identify those that were most important to the green belt, and the neighbourhood plan has tried to avoid allocating these for development as far as possible. This process and approach was discussed at length with RBC to ensure that its approach was in line with their own reviews of greenbelt.

Rushcliffe Council, the local MP and the Parish Council are currently liaising with the Department of Communities and Local Government (responsible for planning) over whether Green Belt sites around Keyworth can be released for housing development, as required to meet the borough's identified housing needs. The steering group are heavily involved in this discussion and the outcome will effect the final neighbourhood plan.

Why has land to the south of Debdale Lane (site ED2.1) been allocated for development when the site features a ridge and furrow?

- 7.2. The site was allocated in order to balance the spread of new development around the village and as a logical continuation of the existing employment site at Debdale Lane Trading Estate.

The ridge and furrow pattern does not appear to be considered of significant importance (by English Heritage or the County Council Heritage Officer) to warrant legal protection from development. The conservation and heritage officers at Rushcliffe have been consulted about all sites allocated in the neighbourhood plan and they did not raise any concerns about the landscape or heritage at this site.

8.0. Important Views

How has the importance of key views been assessed? Why have some important views (e.g. from Nicker Hill, from Station Road towards Clipstone Woods) been omitted from the landscape report? Why does the plan propose development that will impinge on some of the identified key views? (Policy HC3 Key Views)

- 8.1. These 'key views' were rolled forward from the Village Design Statement, which arose out of the Village Plan and had been endorsed by Keyworth Parish Council and Rushcliffe Borough Council. These were assessed in consultation with the community both at that and previous stages. Most key views are at gateways, along public footpaths and at other publicly accessible places. The views contained within the landscape report were for a totally different purpose and bear no resemblance to those within the policy. The views used in the landscape report are simply broadly based on the landscape and visual appraisal strategy as outlined in that report.

Nevertheless, where possible, the sites allocated in the plan have been chosen to avoid impinging on these key views. This has achieved the protection of key views of the Conservation Area and in ensuring that the area of some of the proposed allocated sites is smaller than set out in developer submissions. Only two of the key views will be effected by the allocated development and this is considered to be an acceptable approach.