

Warfield Neighbourhood Planning Consultation - Hayley Green Residents Group Response

A Petition submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9 (Public Participation), against the Warfield Neighbourhood Pre-submission Plan. The petition is submitted and presented by Revd. Dr. Tim Norman, resident of Forest Road, Hayley Green on behalf of the Hayley Green Residents Action Group with regard to their concern about the Plan.

The full text of the petition is:

"We the undersigned petition the council to halt the Warfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan process to allow residents to discuss housing development, especially location, according to national Neighbourhood Planning guidance. We do not endorse the Neighbourhood Plan concept for Hayley Green. Residents were not made fully aware of development plans for Hayley Green until a map was presented on 4th October 2016. We strongly believe that any future development should be sympathetic to the current rural character of the village.

We the residents and custodians of this wonderful corner of Warfield parish wish to keep it for our futures and that of the wider community. We urge the steering group to rethink and therefore we petition to halt their plans.

Development is needed but we feel that it should preserve the countryside focusing on any brown field sites and sympathetic local developments that can be supported by existing infrastructure."

1. Site Selection Process was not Inclusive and Open

NPPF neighbourhood planning guidance:

What is the role of the wider community in neighbourhood planning?

A qualifying body should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its neighbourhood plan or Order and ensure that the wider community:

- is kept fully informed of what is being proposed
- is able to make their views known throughout the process
- has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging neighbourhood plan or Order
- is made aware of how their views have informed the draft neighbourhood plan or Order.

www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#consulting-on-and-publicising-a-neighbourhood-plan-or-order

- No information or views about sites for development were exchanged with the wider Warfield community of 10,000+ residents until almost a year after it began. There was no public call for sites.
- Warfield residents had no idea that site assessment continued between November 2015 and March 2016. The announcement to develop the fields at Hayley Green was made public in October 2016.
- Communications were not explicit:
 - The only website update (February 2016), covering site selection stated: *"the Steering Group has undertaken a full review of the evidence base and draft policies ... and researched policy options for residential development ... "* not exactly explicit for the layman.
 - The April 2016 Wren Warfield Parish Newsletter referred only to *"The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is meeting regularly and working with its appointed Neighbourhood Planning and Development Consultancy to finalize the first draft of the Warfield Plan ... "*
- Residents were presented with a single option in October 2016. Only when it became mandatory to share information at the pre-submission consultation stage was it clear that four options had been considered by the Steering Group.

2. Consultation was Inadequate Inadequate Consultation with Residents

- Residents had no opportunity to give their views on options for development in the parish. 'Options' consultation and involvement of the wider community in decision making is standard practice for NPs, e.g. Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale (<https://ascotandthesunnings.wordpress.com/community-events/options-consultation/>), Stratfield Mortimer in West Berkshire ([www.mortimer-ndp.org.uk/assets/Evidence/Consultation Overview/2 Consultation Statement. pdf](http://www.mortimer-ndp.org.uk/assets/Evidence/Consultation%20Overview/2%20Consultation%20Statement.pdf)).
- When the plan to develop at Hayley Green was revealed in October 2016, residents had no idea how it had been arrived at. Requests for more information about the process were turned down.

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 - Residents were told that meetings held by the Steering Group at this time were *"informal consultations to test the broad acceptability of the Warfield Neighbourhood Plan policy proposals As residents you will all receive notification of the pre-submission consultation when you will have the opportunity to comment further (email to <undisclosed list>, 15 November 2016)"*.
 - The WPC website preamble for this consultation states:
 - *"This is your **first opportunity** to comment on the plan ... "*
 - At the same stage, the Ascot, Sunninghill and Sunningdale Neighbourhood Plan preamble stated:
 - *"This is now your **final chance** to comment on this plan ... "*
 - See (<https://lascotandthesunnings.wordpress.com/community-events/final-consultation/>).
 - And see BFC response to Warfield Neighbourhood Plan (a comment on policy 1, page 13:
 - *"This policy appears to exclude any reference to the existing defined settlement of Hayley Green."*

Inadequate Consultation with Local Businesses

e.g. The Cricketers Pub management was not asked to comment on the neighbourhood plan:

- Greene King has made major investment in turning around this pub, which is loved as a rural pub.
- The Neighbourhood Plan would lead to the loss of this rural character.
- The pub manager was very keen for a copy of the petition to be available in the pub for those who wanted to sign it

3. Draft plan does not reflect Warfield residents' views

NPPF neighbourhood planning guidance:

What is neighbourhood planning?

"Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth of their local area. They are able to choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built, have their say on what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided"

www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2

Strong Resistance to building on Green Fields:

6% Support, 72% Against

Source: January/February 2015 Residents' Questionnaire

The Steering Group elected to build on green fields. Yet there are other options, even in Hayley Green.

Unwanted Community Building

The concept plan for Hayley Green included a community building.

There are several already in the wider area and the Steering Group (email 15 November 2016) said:

"Feedback from ... sessions has been received and much of it used to update the plan - such as the apparent lack of need for a Community Centre ... "

The community building is still in the pre-submission consultation version of the plan.

The residents haven't been told why?