NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN STEERING COMMITTEE

NOAK BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
COMMUNITY CONSULTATION REPORT



Produced by Cllr Terri Sargent Lead Member with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee July 2024

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1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2018 the parish council met with Basildon Council to discuss the prospect of a Noak Bridge Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan. It was felt a Neighbourhood Plan would be a platform to develop local views to enable residents to have an input into planning matters for Noak Bridge, 400 new homes had already been proposed and the Noak Bridge conservation area was losing momentum.

Link below to Noak Bridge Parish Council website where all documents referenced can be found:

Noak Bridge Parish Council

Meeting Minutes: **https://e-voice.org.uk/noakbridgepc/meetings/**

Neighbourhood Plan Page: **https://e-voice.org.uk/noakbridgepc/neighbourhood-plan/**

- **Background**

Following the meeting with Basildon Council the Noak Bridge Parish Council (NBPC) began the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) to give residents the opportunity to shape the future of the local area. The NBPC applied to Basildon Council on 18 September 2018 for an application to designate Noak Bridge as Neighbourhood Area, link below:

Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Area Application (PDF 179 KB)

On 22 November 2018 Basildon Council approved the designation of the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Area, link below:

Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Area Decision Notice (PDF 668 KB)

Followed by the Statement for the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Area Application, link below:

Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Area Statement (PDF 4.05 MB)

- **Resident engagement and consultation**

The process began to set up a steering committee to develop a Neighbourhood Plan in September 2018 and was finalised in February 2019. Training and engagement meetings were held in the village hall. The NBPC also appointed a consultant Rebecca Neil to provide professional help. A steering committee was formed, resident consultation events were planned for the coming months and publicised in an information leaflet followed by two consecutive newsletters, links below:

Neighbourhood Plan Information Leaflet September 2019 (581 KB)

Newsletter - Spring 2019 (PDF - 8.5 MB)

In September 2019, a NP Logo was designed to identify all NP communication. A newsletter, information leaflet and paper questionnaire were delivered to every household within the Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Area. The newsletter and questionnaire were also available online. The purpose of the questionnaire was to identify the initial priorities of the residents of Noak Bridge, as well as to address any concerns they had about development within the parish, link below:

Newsletter - Autumn 2019 (PDF - 8.6 MB)

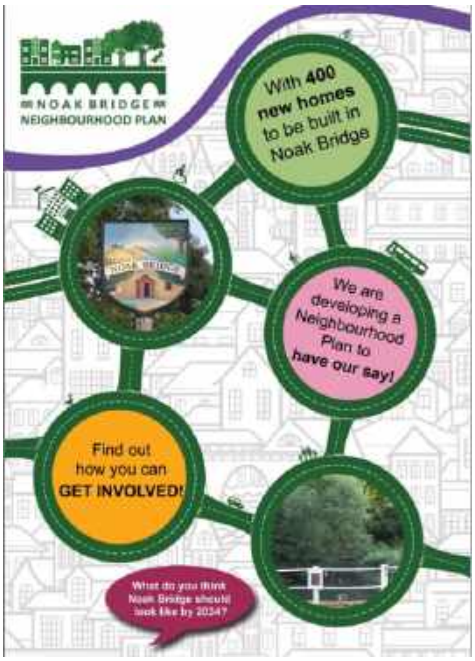
Combined consultation and engagement events were held in the village hall and local public house:

MacMillan Coffee Morning Village Hall on 21 September 2019

Community Quiz Village Hall 5 October 2019

Noak Bridge Public House Consultation Buffet 18 October 2019

- **Consultation key themes and priorities**



Over 250 paper copies of the questionnaire responses were received also online responses that identified 5 key themes: Transport / Roads; Education / Health / Other Local Services; Design / Conservation; Environment / Green Space; Housing, report below:

Consultation Report January 2020 (364 KB)

Stakeholder meetings were held in February and March 2020 with NHS CCG; ECC Highways; Basildon Council Planning Policy Team to inform of the consultation results and to gather further evidence to support the key issues and priorities raised:

NHS CCG Meeting Minutes - (PDF 123 KB)

NBNP Meeting Notes - ECC Highway - (PDF 158 KB)

NBNP Meeting Minutes - Basildon Council Policy (PDF 115 KB)

The responses were analysed and all information gathered is reported in the Initial Consultation Report, link below:

Initial Resident Consultation Report March 2020 (783 KB)



The outcome of the initial consultation identified the five key themes most important to residents.

Transport and Roads is a major issue which has got so much worse over time, heavy traffic and bad congestion impact residents lives on a daily basis causing pollution, frustration with traffic backing up on Wash Road, spouting fumes and poor repair of the Highway. These issues identify the desperate need for infrastructure investment if more homes are developed on land East of Noak Bridge. The proposal for 400 homes in Noak Bridge has been in the pipeline for years and will add negatively to the issues identified. Parking is also a major issue, the village was built long before multi car owners, proving the NP must give due regard to transport, roads and parking and insist on infrastructure to support it.

Residents with children voiced concerns regarding local primary school places which is currently at capacity, they want their children educated locally. Having to take children to schools over Basildon creates transportation issues, unnecessary car journeys and pollution, and in some cases siblings are in different schools. The need for a new school in the parish is clearly identified at the present time and if more homes are built, a new local school is a necessity as there is no room to expand the existing school.

Health is very important to the mixed age group of residents living at Noak Bridge including many children and older people whose health needs must be met. Residents would like to see the local GP surgery expanded to extend the existing health offer to ensure patients healthcare needs are met locally.

Noak Bridge village is a conservation area and the consultation identified that the design and conservation of the village warrants a design policy which also deals with conservation of the unique features and characteristics of the Noak Bridge village which should be maintained in future development.

The environment is extremely important to Noak Bridge residents, fortunately with a high number of green open spaces which they enjoy. Residents would like existing play areas and open spaces, like the village green and playing field to be retained and regularly maintained and for a specific site in Fore Street to be awarded permanent green space status. The nature reserve has recently received designation status and is a facility enjoyed by many in which Basildon Council and the Parish Council have invested in.

With over 1,000 properties in the parish and a current population of 2,800, residents feel that 400 new homes will overwhelm the plan area, cause over development of the parish and encroach into the bordering parishes of Burstead and Ramsden Cray's. Views will be spoilt, local services will be heavily impacted as will residents quality of life. Residents specifically asked for the NP to have a policy to protect the green belt. If new homes are built locally they ought to have a mix of bungalows, low rise flats allowing older people to downsize and homes for first time buyers with a lower density to prevent overdevelopment.

2. ACTIVITIES

In March 2020, a public meeting due to take place had to be cancelled because of the onset of the Coronavirus Pandemic. To continue with the Neighbourhood Plan a way forward was agreed, to meet virtually and develop innovative ways of communication. It was agreed a Transport Assessment would supply evidence for the transport and roads key theme and Steer were commissioned to do the review, link below:

NBPC Steer Transport Assessment Review (PDF 334 KB)

- **Competitions - Engagement**

In April, May and June 2020 consultation letters were sent by email to businesses within the parish.
A short quirky video to grab residents' attention was designed. An art competition for entries by children and a video competition for young people was agreed and posted on the website and social media. This gave the steering committee an opportunity to continue to consult residents and obtain their views on the five key themes identified in the first consultation to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan was heading in the right direction.



YOUTH VIDEO POSTER



ART COMPETITION WINNER



Although the Covid Pandemic delayed activities, a newsletter in Autumn 2020 promoted the Video and Art competition plus the short information video informing residents how they could get involved in the NP. A resident drop-in session in November was planned and advertised but had to be cancelled due to a further pandemic lock down which caused another delay in the NP timetable.

Autumn 2020 (PDF - 1MB

January and February 2021 meant further pandemic lock down measures which led to the parish council appointing new consultants to prevent the Neighbourhood Plan losing professional help and falling behind with the NP. Bluestone Planning Consultants were appointed March 2021 where a new timetable was agreed to get the Neighbourhood Plan back on track. An article in the Spring 2021 newsletter outlined a gap analysis and evidence required to support the identified five key themes.

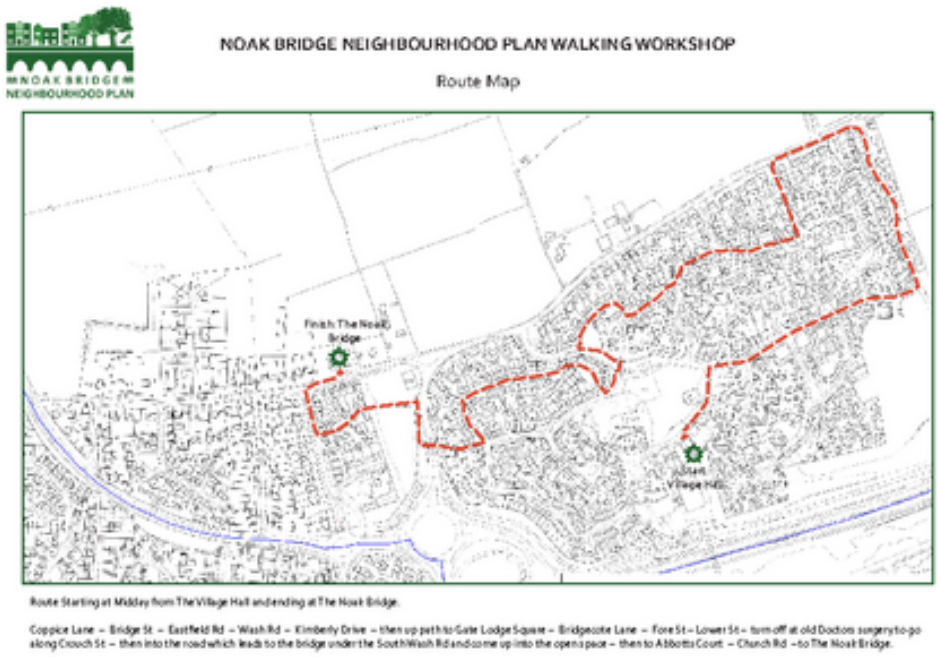
Spring 2021 (PDF - 5MB)

- **Walking Workshop**

A community walking workshop was held on 14 July 2021 which gave residents an opportunity to walk a specific route around the Parish to look at the 5 key themes for inclusion in the plan, take pictures, point out areas of concern, see the unique characteristics of the conservation area and talk about residents future aspirations for the parish. A questionnaire was also undertaken by SurveyMonkey in electronic and paper copy. These activities were advertised in a summer edition of the newsletter with a two page middle spread. These steps would involve gathering evidence to support the emerging draft policies. The steering committee met with Croudace Homes that evening to discuss the NP and issues of concern arising from their proposal to build 400 homes on land East of Noak Bridge.

A grant application to Groundwork UK was awarded to support cost of producing the NP.

Newsletter - Summer 2021 (PDF - 1000 KB)



July 2021 Survey Analysis Data: **NBPC Survey Results July 2021**

The walking workshop consultation and survey analysis provided sufficient information to question service provision in Noak Bridge. A list of local businesses was collated. Questions were produced and sent to stakeholders to help inform emerging policies. Over the coming months the steering committee approached Essex County Council Highways and Education service, Basildon Council Housing service and Noak Bridge primary school

Information was requested for Highway improvements on land East of Noak Bridge; data on traffic counts in the parish; parking survey; accident statistics and Highway improvements in the next 10 years. Essex County Council provided the steering committee with considerable data, links to Highway documents and information on the questions that would feed into the NP. A list of questions to Basildon Council Housing Service which included information on numbers on the housing register;

Information on the choice based lettings system; average waiting times for housing; review of the housing allocation scheme; a breakdown of affordable properties; the number of housing stock in Noak Bridge; the number of NET housing completions; information on the right to buy scheme and temporary housing numbers. The information received was very useful and fed into housing policy.

In November 2021 the steering committee met with Essex County Council Education and questioned where the children will be schooled arising from the planned development site, land East of Noak Bridge. Discussions began with the developer of the site (Croudace Homes) about options for new school sites; Education approached the developer to discuss school capacities and alternative provision: how many temporary classes are on the school site; are there any polices that Education would like to see in the NP. The steering committee were informed that the number of school places would reduce over the next few years, early discussions with Croudace Homes had taken place and the only option they considered was to expand the school, already at capacity. Clearly there is no room to expand the school at floor level and any expansion would have to be above the school. Noak Bridge is a conservation area, a planning application would need to consider the NB conservation area management plan. If this went ahead the school would need to close while it was rebuilt. The idea of building a Forest school on land at the rear of the school was discussed but it was a matter of cost and land ownership that would need investigation.

A meeting with the Noak Bridge primary school Head did not bring forward any other options. The school has been working with the parish council on consulting with the children to get their ideas for the NP and they produced a number of competitors for the Art competition with lots of ideas.

In January 2022 the steering committee wrote to Basildon Council planning seeking the viability of a Forest school idea. Planning services clarified the position with Essex Education that the school was not capable of expansion and a Forest school concept is not something that operates in Essex

3. EMERGING POLICIES

January 2022, with results from the consultation, draft documents were produced: Key Themes and Objectives, Policy Options, Community Facility Assets and a Local Green Space Assessment

Over the coming months the steering committee considered all draft documents. Gaps in the community facility assets were identified as needing additional work and a Public Rights of Way survey was required. Members of the steering committee visited a number of the businesses to fill in the gaps and completed a survey on the Public Rights of Way. The next steps were considered and agreed by the steering committee, to start work on a Design Guide and to consider the draft emerging policies. This was reported to residents in the Jubilee newsletter

Newsletter - Jubilee 2022 (PDF - 850 KB)

- **Grant applications**

A grant application had been made to Groundwork UK in July 2021 to help fund NP consultation activities and emerging policies, a grant of £10k was awarded which was a great financial help. Another grant application was made in September 2022 to specifically fund the preparation of the pre-submission draft NP, detailed policies, plans and diagrams, a grant of £8k was awarded and welcome.

- **Policy Documents**

In November 2022 the steering group met with Basildon Council to discuss: planning policy update; the new local plan; an update on the draft neighbourhood plan and supporting documents; the conservation area appraisal; emerging issues on Article 4 direction and the next steps

December 2022 a draft of the Neighbourhood Plan was underway based on the outcome of the meeting with Basildon Council and ongoing work undertaken by the steering committee

March 2023 the steering committee met with Croudace Homes to discuss their proposal to build 400 homes on Green Belt Land east of Noak Bridge. The purpose was to set out the parish key issues from consultation informing the emerging Neighbourhood Plan prior to a planning application. A list of comments was given to Croudace Homes setting out those issue.

Comments on Croudace Proposal (PDF 104 KB)

In April 2023 the draft Policy Options, Vision, Themes and Objectives and a SurveyMonkey consultation were posted on the PC website Neighbourhood Plan page. All documents were consulted on at the residents Annual Parish meeting on 26 April 2023

Newsletter - Spring Newsletter April 2023 (PDF 2 MB)

- **Survey and results**



Policies and Options April 2023

Vision Themes Objectives April 2023

SurveyMonkey Consultation Results: https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NoakBridge2023

Survey Results June 2023

The steering committee met to discuss the outcome of the survey results, the outcome produced some excellent results on the vision and theme objectives.

THE VISION

'To preserve and enhance the special character and appearance of Noak Bridge, maintaining the openness of the Green Belt that surrounds the settlement whilst protecting important views, the natural environment and green spaces throughout the Plan area. New development will meet the needs of the local community in delivering sustainable low energy and low carbon, good quality appropriate housing as well as improving existing community, health, education and retail facilities. Highway safety, public transport and improved parking provision'.

Housing; to identify local community need, appropriate development, specialist housing
Environment; to conserve rural landscape, enhance character, views, green belt openness
Design/Conservation; to conserve the distinctive look and style of the village, enhance conservation area
Education; schooling is kept local and avoid any expansion pressure on the existing local school
Healthcare; facilities to be improved and expanded to meet the local community need
Community Facilities; to improve and maintain the condition of existing parks and open spaces
Transport and Roads; to improve highway safety, the volume and speed of traffic to be managed
Improve public transport provision and mitigate the impact of new development on local road networks

This information would be fed into the draft NP and supporting documents

The steering committee and consultants met informally with Basildon Council in August 2023 to discuss the draft Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents before pre-submission. They went through the draft plan section by section and fed back comments on various matters which were then taken forward as amendments to the emerging NP.

4. REGULATION 14 PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

In September 2023 the draft Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents were agreed by the steering committee and approved at the parish council. It was agreed the Regulation 14 consultation would commence on 25 September for 8 weeks to 20 November. A Neighbourhood Plan edition of the Autumn Newsletter was hand delivered to every household publicising the consultation dates. Links to all electronic documents were published on the website including a SurveyMonkey link, paper copies were also made available. A Neighbourhood Plan drop-in event took place in the village hall on 9 October 2023 for residents to view all documents and poster boards, ask questions and give feedback. Children from the local school came along to a special early session. All documents were made available to organisations residents, stakeholders and interested parties in both digital and paper format.

Newsletter - Autumn Newsletter 2023 (PDF 4 MB)

- **Consultation documents and consultee list**

Draft Regulation 14 Pre-Submission Neighbourhood Plan (PDF 8 MB)

Design Code (PDF 11 MB)

Character Appraisal (14 MB)



Local Green Space Assessment (PDF 7 MB)

Regulation 14 Feedback Form (PDF 119 KB

surveymonkey.co.uk/r/NoakBridgeNP

NBPC NP Consultee List (PDF 137 KB)

5. SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- **Statutory, non statutory and stakeholder response**

NBNP Non Statutory Responses (PDF 211 KB)

Once the responses to the pre-submission documents were recorded the steering committee met with the consultants to review the comments.

The feedback on the non statutory responses was expected, resident were against the building of 400 new homes on land East of Noak Bridge. They lacked confidence that the required road infrastructure needed to support 400 new homes will be forthcoming, local education and health services are already stretched to the limit, parking and flooding is a big issue in 'Wash Road'.

The local road network is very busy, many community facilities at Barleylands Farm brings lots of weekend visitors to the area bringing additional traffic, congestion and pollution. As there are no pathways to these facilities local residents have to drive or walk along a very busy road. Constant traffic along Wash Road means residents have to queue to get in and out of their homes, proving more homes will only add to existing road problems, make matters worse and have a detrimental effect on their quality of life.

Pavement parking has become the norm, is problematic and affects wheelchair, disability scooters and buggy users.

Community Facilities received good feedback, village hall, school, pre-school, shop, post office, chemist, pub and bus service. Environmentally, lots of green open spaces, park, picnic areas, multi use sport area, nature reserve and ponds. Plenty of facilities and lots to do locally encourages good community relations as well as promoting health and wellbeing.

The design features of Noak Bridge village are unique and should be maintained and matched. If the proposed new homes go ahead they must duplicate the existing buildings and materials.

Stakeholders felt the Neighbourhood Plan a worthy exercise, the key themes and policies reflected their issues, views and aspirations that will hopefully enhance and improve their quality of life in the future.

NBNP Statutory Responses (PDF 1 MB)

A high number of comments from Essex County Council and Basildon Council were discussed, considered and changed as necessary. All responses were well received as an essential element of the Neighbourhood Plan. This comment from Basildon Council summed up the work and effort that has gone into producing the NP which was very welcome:

'There are a total of 26 policies proposed in the Neighbourhood Plan and they cover the five thematic areas set out in the Objectives. The Neighbourhood Plan provides justifications for the proposed policies from its Evidence Base work'.

Increased walking and cycling was expected and noted as essential activities. Investment to improve street lighting, roads and pathways is needed. Interesting comments on the design guide that provided crucial information to be followed when building new homes.

Protection of the environment is fundamental to any plan and understandably received many comments as it affects everyone. Maintenance of parks and open spaces is equally as important to everyday outdoor life to aid healthy living and keeping fit

In relation to housing development, the steering group are aware of the nimbyism surrounding house building and the importance of building new homes. But new homes must have the required infrastructure and finance to provide sustainable development, otherwise the issues raised will inevitably end with poor quality homes and bad outcomes long after the developer has gone.

It is very difficult to summarise the many technical comments received but heartening to read that a Neighbourhood Plan is a vital tool for a community like Noak Bridge. It may be ambitious and aspirational, it is intended to be. The whole point of developing the NP is to try and future proof the parish of Noak Bridge and its residents. The plan will be periodically reviewed to keep it up to date and in line with new policies.

The steering committee recognise the hard work of Rebecca Neil Planning and Bluestone Planning consultants in assisting and advising throughout the Neighbourhood Development Plan process.

6. NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- **Designated Noak Bridge Neighbourhood Area Map**



- **Documents for submission**

1. **Neighbourhood Plan Submission Draft June 2024 (PDF 9 Mb)**
2. **Design Code V2.2 June 2024 (PDF 10 Mb)**
3. **Character Appraisal V1.8 June 2024 (PDF 18 Mb)**
4. **Local Green Space Assessment V2 March 2022 (PDF 7 Mb)**
5. **Community Facilities Assessment July 2024 (PDF 4 Mb)**
6. **Basic Conditions Statement June 2024 (PDF 5 mb)**
7. **Consultation Statement V2 July 2024 (PDF 21 Mb)**
8. **SEA / HRA Screening Request dated 20th June 2024 (PDF 1 Mb)**

8a. SEA/HRA Screening Opinion dated 20th June 2024 (PDF 151 Kb)

9. **Map of Proposed Neighbourhood Area (PDF 4 Mb)**


Welcome to
NOAK BRIDGE
VILLAGE
Please drive carefully














NOAK BRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL




REVIVING THE ART OF VILLAGE
by NORMAN SCARFE







