

(BPC Logo)
February 2015

This newsletter has been produced by Blockley Parish Council and is being delivered to every home in the Parish. It aims to update every resident on the planning challenges currently facing Blockley.

Cotswold District Council's draft local plan

CDC's long - awaited draft local plan is currently out for public consultation until 27 February. The main proposals affecting Blockley are:

- A total of 59 dwellings over the period April 2011- March 2031, including housing already built and outstanding permissions. This means 51 new dwellings, on the following 3 proposed sites in Blockley:

Land north of Sheafhouse Farm (Little Shoe Broad), Draycott Road :
22 dwellings (CDC ref: BK5)

Land at Sheafhouse Farm : 13 dwellings (CDC ref: BK8)

The Limes, Station Road : 16 dwellings (CDC ref: BK14A)

This figure of 51 dwellings is subject to review by CDC over the plan period, so is not a final, maximum number. Furthermore, this figure is calculated on the basis of 10 dwellings per hectare – half the density that could reasonably be expected of house builders. So the number of new dwellings could in reality be twice the number proposed by CDC.

The plan asserts (para. 8.89) that “ ... In general terms this represents a reasonable level of house building for a village of Blockley's size and taking account of environmental sensibility. The resultant growth in the community's population will help to address local affordable housing needs, sustain existing facilities, and maintain Blockley's role as a local service centre.”

- Allotments site: this site now has Community Asset status and is a proposed Local Green Space, thanks to a hard-working team that included parish councillors. However the draft CDC plan states that this site is “potentially deliverable” as a housing site, and therefore its boundaries will be “further refined during the local plan process.” (para. 10.5) So at least part of the allotments site could still be developed for housing. An application for a change of use of land at the site has been withdrawn, but that is not the end of the matter, and further planning applications are likely.

“Open season” for developers

CDC's draft local plan still has a long way to go before it is finalised, formally adopted and therefore able to offer some protection from unwanted development. CDC continues to find it very difficult if not impossible to resist applications for new housing, even in settlements not earmarked for future

development. For example, planning permission has recently been granted for 16 new homes (8 of them affordable) in Ebrington, despite local opposition including from the District Councillor.

The threat to Blockley

Blockley faces enormous challenges as a result of this situation. CDC have emphasized that it is not enough simply to say no to the proposed housing sites in the draft local plan – you need to put forward evidence to support your views. The Parish Council has submitted to CDC the review of the Blockley Conservation Area that it commissioned from RPS Environmental Consultants. The Parish Council will continue to press for CDC support in carrying this Review forward – right to the end of the local plan process if need be. The Parish Council does not regard the Conservation Area Review as a negative, short-term means of obstructing all development, but rather as a positive, long-term legacy for Blockley. In addition, the housing needs survey has been updated, and this new evidence will also be submitted to CDC (and published on the Parish Council website). Further representations and comments will also be made before the 27th February deadline.

There is no certainty that any of these initiatives will save Blockley from unwanted new housing development, but the Parish Council's approach to date has been to try every possible way of challenging CDC's proposals for large housing sites. In the past, Blockley has accommodated 60 dwellings over a 20 year period, but appropriate scale and phasing of development proposals are crucial. BPC wishes to consult further with the community. It is not felt that it is possible to achieve this before 27th February. The intention is to complete this and to submit the results to CDC as soon as possible.

This newsletter is being distributed to **the whole of Blockley Parish** so that everyone is aware of the situation. CDC 's current position is that its housing proposals are confined to Blockley village only, and that sites elsewhere in the Parish will not be considered. However, Ebrington's recent experience shows that nowhere is safe from planning applications for new housing.

Have your say

You can submit comments to CDC before the **27 February deadline.** This can be done by :

- 1. Post : to Local Plan Consultation, Forward Planning Team, Cotswold District Council, Trinity Road, Cirencester G7 1PX
- 2. Email: to Localplan@cotswold.gov.uk
- 3. Online: at <http://consult.cotswold.gov.uk>

You need to say which section of the local plan (eg. the paragraph number) you are referring to, and give your name, address and contact details. Hard copies of the plan are available to look at or buy from the Moreton Area Office. There will be a further consultation on the local plan later this year.

If you would like to receive email updates from BPC, please contact blockleyparishcouncil@gmail.com