

Davenham and Whatcroft
Neighbourhood Plan
2015-2030

Consultation Statement

1 Introduction

This consultation statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 in respect of the Davenham and Whatcroft Neighbourhood Plan (DWNP). The legal basis of the Statement is provided by Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which requires that a consultation statement should:

- contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed DWNP
- explain how they were consulted
- summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted
- describe how those issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed DWNP

2 Background

The DWNP has taken many years to come to fruition, against an onslaught of housing development applications within the Parish since changes to Planning regulations in 2010 (National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)). As there was not a current Village Design Statement or Parish Plan, Davenham Parish Council (DPC) considered new Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, following a presentation given by the Spatial Planning Dept at Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC) in March 2012. As a result, the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group (NPWG), a sub-group of Davenham Parish Council, was formed at the next full Parish Council meeting on 26 March 2012. The first NPWG meeting was held on 23 April 2012 to begin the preliminary works and commencement of public consultation, having already approached CWAC for permission to start the NP process. After further research and training on the NP process, Terms of Reference were agreed at the full DPC meeting of 24 Sept 2012. With extensive public participation and consultation, the DWNP and the policies contained within work to provide a planning framework for the Parish.

3 The Consultation Process

Davenham Parish Council has led the Plan preparation process, with the NPWG acting to compile the evidence base, engage with the local community and test the suitability and acceptability of its emerging policies and proposals.

The process of preparing and seeking final adoption of the DWNP is in accordance with the Neighbourhood Plan (General) Regulations 2012 and has been agreed by Davenham Parish Council.

The process up to submission has comprised several stages:

- Collection of baseline evidence and consultations
- Pre-submission DWNP

- Submission DWNP. This document considers the representations received on the Pre-submission Plan and has been amended as necessary before submission to Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC). It is accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal report, Basic Conditions Statement and this Consultation Statement.

If approved by CWAC, the DWNP will then be subject to an Independent Examination. DPC and CWAC will consider any recommendations made by the Examiner and, if appropriate, the Plan will again be amended before being approved for a local referendum. If supported by a majority vote at the referendum, the DWNP will be adopted by CWAC as planning policy for Davenham Parish, which will give it due weight in the planning decision process.

3.1 Initial Consultation

- February 2013 – Notice was provided by CWAC that the Neighbourhood Area application letter had been accepted. Notices were distributed at prime sites around the Parish.
- 18 March 2013 - Davenham British Legion - Public open meeting. The aim of this meeting was to obtain local stakeholder (residents, business owners etc) feedback on 5 key areas.
 - Green Space and wildlife
 - Parking and transport
 - Leisure, amenities and young people
 - Planning, building and heritage
 - Business and commerce

The meeting was publicised on the DPC website, via the DPC e-mail distribution list and with local flyers. The meeting was attended by 28 members of the public and feedback from the night can be found at:

<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809658866/NP+March+2013+Meeting+feedback.pdf>

- July 2013 – Newsletter to residents and business owners to publicise the NP Process and invite volunteers to assist in any way that they felt comfortable with. Response to this was limited with only 1 resident offering to act as an advisor.
- August 2013 – Village Housing Survey distributed to all households and businesses – 167 replies (11.2% of households). This provided background information on the make-up of the Parish and stakeholders aspirations for the village. Paper responses were collated from a drop box, located in the village Post Office, and those posted to the Parish Clerk's address. A copy of the survey can be found here: <http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809751956/DPC+NP+Aug+13+Housing+Survey.pdf> The NPWG analysed the results and produced a summary report, that can be found here:

<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809751961/DPCNP+Aug+13+Village+Survey+Analysis.pdf>

- February 2014 – Notice distributed to residents and businesses identifying sites allocated for development within the Parish, as set out on the CWAC Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). This notice was intended to further raise the profile of the DWNP. A copy of the leaflet can be found here:
http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809658894/Save_Davenham_leaflet_3.pdf

3.2 Working with Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC)

Regular contact with CWAC's Spatial Planning Department, as well as Cheshire Community Action Group (CCAG), has been a vital part of this process. The NPWG have maintained ongoing contact to ensure that the development of the DWNP is in accordance and consistent with CWAC's policies and emerging Local Plan.

3.3 Communications

Throughout the process, events were publicised and progress reported to the community via the DPC Newsletter, shop posters, DPC e-mail distribution list and the DPC website –
<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/home/the-neighbourhood-plan/>

Key events were also advertised in the local newspaper, the Northwich Guardian.

3.4 April 2014 - Davenham Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire

A questionnaire issued to all households and businesses within the Parish, inviting them to attend the Open Public Meeting on 30 April. Aiming to gather opinion on:

- What matters most to you about our village
- What aspects of our community need our support and protection
- What changes would you like to see

Questionnaire could be completed on-line (freeonlinesurveys.com) or in paper form collected from a drop box located within the village Post Office. To be returned by 16 May 2014. A copy of the questionnaire can be found at:

<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809658879/NP+May+2014+Questionnaire.pdf>

3.5 April 2014 - Public Meeting - Davenham Methodist Church Hall.

Due to the significant increase in Planning applications within the Parish, resulting from the SHLAA, this public meeting was called to further highlight the importance of NP Process and update stakeholders of progress to date. A detailed presentation was given on the following:

- What is a Neighbourhood Plan
- CWAC Local Plan
- Neighbourhood Plan Stages
- The role of the Parish Council (NPWG)
- Current challenges
- How residents can help

This meeting was attended by over 300 people, made up of residents and business owners.

The main concern raised was 'what can we do to prevent the current large scale developments proposed for Davenham Parish' & 'Why is Davenham being classed as a suburb of Northwich, not a rural village, in the Local Plan'

A copy of the presentation can be found here:

<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809658882/NP+Public+Meeting+30+April.pdf>

3.6 May 2014 – Questionnaire Replies returned

A total of 355 questionnaires were returned. Those that were received in paper form were input onto the freeonlinesurveys.com site by members of the NPWG, to enable the results to be recorded and reported in 1 place. All paper copies have been retained.

The questionnaire gained vital resident opinion on the following areas:

- a) Important characteristics
- b) Housing needs
- c) Local amenities and businesses
- d) Aspirations and concerns

A full report analysing the results can be found at:

<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809658819/DPCNPWG+May+2014+onlinesurvey+results.pdf>

The responses enabled the NPWG to refine the policies in line with local requirements.

3.7 June 2014 – Youth Survey.

Opinions of younger members of the community were sought during our village carnival via a teen survey. This aimed to gather opinion from the younger members of our community on:

- Amenities and recreation facilities
- Travel and transport, including cycle paths
- Safety

- Housing styles
- School places

A copy of the survey and the results can be found at:

<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809658890/NP+Young+People+Survey.pdf>

An assembly and drawing competition was also held at the local Primary School to engage younger children. The children were asked to focus on their 'Vision for Davenham'. The winning drawings can be seen within the Neighbourhood Plan document.

3.8 March 2015 – Public Drop-in Event - Davenham Primary School

To enable residents and business owners to review draft policies, drawn up from previous consultation, before Regulation 14 submission.

The event was advertised through the DPC Newsletter, website, press release as well as via e-mail for those registered on the DPC distribution list.

Draft policies were wall-mounted around the room, along with the Neighbourhood Area Map and members of the NPWG were on hand to answer any questions throughout the event.

27 feedback forms were completed, asking attendees to say if each policy addressed the issues at hand. 95% of responses were in favour of the drafted policies. The majority of concerns noted on the feedback forms related to the lack of a village facility for youth groups, which falls outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process.

The comments resulting from this event were passed back to the NPWG, working alongside CWAC and CCAG for consideration.

3.9 March 2016 - Pre-submission Consultation

As required under Part 5, Section 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, Davenham Parish Council completed a 6-week Pre-submission Consultation on the draft DWNP from 24th March 2016. This consultation included:

- Publication of the DWNP to all who live or work within the Parish. This could be accessed on-line or paper copies could be collected from several places within the Parish
- Survey Monkey questionnaire published on the DPC website for all stakeholders to comment on each of the policies. A copy of the questionnaire can be seen at: <http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809658898/Survey+Monkey+Reg+14+paper+questionnaire.pdf>
- A report of responses can be found at: <http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809658885/NP+Reg+14+Survey+Monkey+results+anon.pdf>

- Communication with any statutory body (referred to in paragraph 1, Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012) whose interests may be affected by the proposals within the draft DWNP
- A review of the pre-submission DWNP sent to CWAC Senior Planning Officer – Planning Policy

90% of all survey monkey responses were in support of the overall plan. All responses were considered by the NPWG in conjunction with CCAG and amendments were made to the plan as necessary

4.0 March 2016 – Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS)

As part of the consultation process, the NPWG decided to undertake an independent 'health check' on the draft DWNP to ensure that the document was fit for purpose. The examiner commended the efforts of the NPWG and the extent of public consultation, saying the plan was 'set out well and easy to read with good use of plain English'.

There were some areas that needed greater clarity, which the examiner reported in detail. A copy of the report can be seen at:

<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809683949/Davenham+NPIERS+health+check.pdf>

<http://www.davenhampc.org.uk/app/download/5809683953/Davenham+Health+Check+Extra+Sheet.pdf>

Amendments were made to the plan as necessary.

5.0 Conclusion

The publicity, engagement and consultation completed throughout the production of the Davenham and Whatcroft Neighbourhood Plan has been open and transparent, with many opportunities provided for those that live, work and do business within the Neighbourhood Area to feed into the process, make comment and to raise issues and concerns.

All statutory requirements have been met and a significant level of additional consultation, engagement and research has been completed throughout the process.

This Consultation Statement and the supporting reports have been produced to document the consultation and engagement process undertaken and are considered to comply with Part 5, section 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning (general) Regulations 2012.