



Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036



Consultation Statement

30/1/22

Local people planning for the future of their community



Finchampstead
Parish Council

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Glossary

Term	Meaning
Consultation statement	Product required by Neighbourhood Planning Regs to show what consultation has been undertaken
Finchampstead Future (FF)	Name adopted by volunteer group creating the FNDP
FNDP	Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2036 (proposed)
FPC	Finchampstead Parish Council
Regulation 14 consultation	First of two six-week public consultations required to be undertaken under the Neighbourhood Planning Regs before the FNDP can be approved and adopted
Statutory consultees	Bodies that must be consulted as required by the Neighbourhood Planning Regs (list provided by WBC)
Survey Monkey	Commercial on-line survey platform
WBC	Wokingham Borough Council (the Strategic Authority)

1. Local people planning for the future of their community

1.1. Purpose of this Consultation Statement

This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Section 15(2). Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain:

- (a) contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- (b) explains how they were consulted;
- (c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;
- (d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

2. Our Engagement Strategy

2.1. Setting our strategic approach

Finchampstead Future, the name adopted by the volunteers working to produce a development plan for the parish, intended from the outset that it should be created by and for local people. The team recognised that the foundation of a good neighbourhood plan was effective community engagement and involvement. An early task was to devise and adopt an Engagement Strategy, which was completed in July 2019 [appendix 1].

The consultation aims were set as:

- To engage as many of the people living or working in Finchampstead to obtain their views about their community's future development
- To validate at an early juncture the Vision and Objectives upon which the FNDP is built
- Through a staged, targeted and multi-faceted approach to obtain an understanding of the different needs and wants of different sections of our local population
- To develop an evidence-base for our policies in the FNDP
- Through stakeholder engagement to ensure compatibility with Wokingham Borough Council plans and policies and the national planning framework
- To build trust, confidence and ownership amongst local people leading ultimately to a positive vote for the FNDP in a local referendum

The strategy further specified all engagement activity should seek to:

- Build awareness and encourage local people to get involved in shaping their own future
- Be timely – provide involvement that can make a difference
- Be inclusive – actively reach out to all sections of the community
- Feedback – show how community involvement shapes plans and policies.

2.2. Consultation methods

In line with the strategy a range of methods were identified by which local people could be engaged and informed and have formed parts of our activity:

- Parish Council Website (including a dedicated NDP section)
- Finchampstead Future Facebook page
- Posters/flyers located on community boards
- Banner at California Crossroads (key nexus)
- Hard copy documents (e.g. draft plans)
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Presentations to local societies and clubs
- Drop in sessions
- Parish Magazine
- Parish Council newsletter
- Attendance at Finchampstead Village Fete
- Local Press coverage
- Exhibition stands

Further details of specific activities are shown in section 5.5.

3. Adapting to Covid 19 Constraints

3.1. The effect of Covid 19 on FNDP Activity

The imposition of national lockdown in March of 2020 inevitably had a major effect on FNDP activities and plans. After a period of adjustment project planning meetings moved to a virtual meeting platform and progress resumed. The lockdown began as we were moving into 'phase 2' of our engagement.

Phase 1 was focussed on canvassing the views of local people about our Vision and Objectives and the central part of that was a questionnaire delivered in September 2019 to every home in the parish and also made available on-line. We identified phase 1 as being predominately about getting validation for the strategic direction of travel for our plan, but also to gather some key indications of what local people felt about the benefits and problems they associated with living in Finchampstead. The results of the questionnaire were analysed and written up in the FNDP Consultation Survey 2019 Results (available on www.finchampsteadfuture.com). This was made public in printed form and through the internet in January 2020.

Phase 2 of our engagement plan, the period between the parish-wide survey and the Regulation 14 statutory consultation on a draft plan, was focussed on gathering further information from local people to inform the development of policies and local projects for the FNDP. At the same time our volunteers would be undertaking open source research to build an evidence base and start devising draft policies to meet local needs. During this phase it was envisaged that community stakeholders would be engaged, collectively or individually, through face-to-face meetings and other means such as telephone calls, emails or mail. Meetings of this nature had begun to take place but Covid-19 advice from central and local government in mid-March 2020 necessitated a shift towards the use of technologically enabled communication and open-air events.

4. Finchampstead NDP Website

4.1. Purpose / Format

It was decided from the start that Finchampstead Future needed its own website to serve as a central point of reference for local people and stakeholders who wanted information about the work being undertaken on their behalf. This would be separately identified but hosted by the Finchampstead Parish Council website. The web address is:

<http://www.finchampsteadfuture.com>

The current website went live on 3rd October 2019. Prior to that there was a website in an alternative form which contained relevant information. Changes were made to increase usability and effectiveness. All text on the site is accessible by a screen reader.

The website is accessible from the home screen of the Finchampstead Parish Council website by clicking on the link 'Neighbourhood Development Plan' in the banner at the top of the page.

Between 3rd October 2019 and 4th February 2021, the content on the page was revised 35 times by the site manager. In following 10 months, the site was updated 32 times.

Minutes of all the Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group meetings are accessible from the link.

Important information and documents such as an explanation of what a neighbourhood plan is, newsletters, details of events, links to surveys and a copy of the draft plan and topic papers have been posted on the site. A copy of the findings of the 2019 Consultation Survey was posted in early 2020.

4.2 Reach

The Finchampstead Future website was viewed on 1615 occasions between 3rd October 2019 and 11th February 2021 (the period prior to our first Regulation 14 consultation), which is approximately 23 visits per week. The average time spent on the page is 2.4 minutes. In

the subsequent nine months leading up to our second Regulation 14 consultation, visits to our website averaged 68 per week.

The website was the primary channel used to enable consultation on the Regulation 14 draft of the FNDP, which was undertaken between 1st February and the 19th March 2021. A copy of the Plan, and the Summary of the version of the Plan which was delivered to homes in the Parish, was made available on the site.

4.3 Access

During the four-week period 1st February to 28th February access to the Finchampstead Future website rose steeply; the site being viewed 1,189 times with the average amount of time spent on the page rising to over five minutes.

During the 6 week period of our second Regulation 14 consultation (October/November 2021), our website was visited 1,034 times.

5. Publicity Channels

5.1 Parish Newsletters

The Parish Newsletter, produced monthly with a circulation to over 650 local people/groups, has been used to provide information and promote the work of the Finchampstead Future team. Reference to the work of the Team was made in 14 editions of the Newsletter between March 2019 to January 2021. Longer features were put out to:

- Announce the establishment of a neighbourhood plan project
- Appeal to local people to support the initiative and to get involved
- Share the draft Vision
- Promote the parish-wide questionnaire survey to gather evidence for the Plan in October 2019
- Share ways in which local people could get more information and communicate their views
- Advertise a presentation on the neighbourhood plan work at the Parish Council Annual Gathering meetings
- Promote a series of community engagement roadshows across the Parish in October 2021
- Advertise the Regulation 14 public consultation on a draft Plan at the start of 2021

5.2 Finchampstead Future Newsletters

Needing to respond to Covid19 restrictions, the project team produced Finchampstead Future Newsletters in June 2020 and January 2021 which were made available on the FF website and Facebook page. It was also sent out to individuals/groups on the FF mailing list.

5.3 Facebook / Social Media

Finchampstead Future created a Facebook presence in May 2019 accessible through facebook.com/groups/FinchampsteadFuture. Run as a private group, but visible if searched for, membership has been available readily to Finchampstead residents on request. The group has 387 residents in membership.

This forum has offered an interactive and highly visual means of sharing information and news with local people quickly and effectively. It has been used to circulate newsletters and information leaflets, advertise events, to encourage engagement in the comprehensive survey to all homes in 2019 and the Regulation 14 public consultation in February 2021. Visitors to the site have been able to link to the Finchampstead Future and Finchampstead Parish Council websites, to Survey Monkey for the purpose of participating in online surveys.

The forum was also used to promote community events such as a display at the Village Fete in 2019 and a series of ten open-air 'roadshows' in October 2020 where details about the development of the draft Finchampstead Neighbourhood Plan were provided and local people were given advance notice of a public consultation on the draft Plan.

Content on facebook.com/groups/FinchampsteadFuture has been regularly updated and quality controlled through designated administrators including the Chair of Finchampstead Future's Communication Group. All posts to the website have been vetted and approved by the administrator to ensure it remains relevant and focussed on neighbourhood planning business.

The Finchampstead Future Facebook page is linked to the Finchampstead Parish Council page and the latter has featured regular news about the FNDP project.

5.4 Leaflets

The distribution of leaflets featuring the Finchampstead Future logo and branding (*Local People, Local Decisions, Local Future*) has been used to raise awareness and to promote specific messages as the project has moved through its various phases. Leaflets have been distributed via delivery to households, positioning in community meeting places and at FNDP events. Leaflets were produced to:

- Publicise the creation of the Finchampstead Future project (June 2019) and the start of the work to produce a neighbourhood development plan. Second leaflet provided for people to sign up to get involved or to receive information. Distributed at Village Fete.
- Advertise the Household Survey – August / September 2019. Delivered to all homes and left in meeting places.
- Provide progress reports - Finchampstead Future Newsletters printed on A4 card and distributed twice in 2020.
- Help people get to know the team - Finchampstead Future 'People and Structure' A4 card distributed at Roadshow events in October 2020.
- Promote the first public consultation on the draft Plan – Single sheet A4 document, used at Roadshow events in October 2020.

5.5 Community Events

Plans to use community events and meetings, general and specific, were greatly affected by the imposition of Covid19 restrictions. Ideas about holding public exhibitions, drop-in sessions, presentations and open forums were replaced with greater use of web-based information, social media and open-air displays.

Two public meetings to promote the idea of a neighbourhood planning group were held on the 21st January 2019 in the Ratepayers Hall and on 24th January in the Memorial Hall. 39 people attended these two meetings.

A Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development exhibition stand was set up at the Finchampstead Village Fete on 29th June 2019. Leaflets were handed to over 100 people after engagements to explain the work to develop a neighbourhood plan.

Presentations on the FNDP were given at the Parish Council Annual Gatherings 6th March 2019 [60 residents and 31 representatives from local organisations] and 11th March 2020 [24 residents and 25 representatives from local organisations].

The FNDP promoted its work in the Nine Mile Ride School Virtual Christmas Fayre December 2020 and its Facebook group was visited 170 times.

6. Targeted Engagements

6.1 Reaching stakeholder groups

Our Engagement Strategy specified:

We will seek to use tailored methods to best inform and capture the views of different stakeholder groups. We recognise that it can be harder to obtain the views of some stakeholders than others

Stakeholders will include:

- *Residents*
- *Sub-groups, e.g. young people, families, retired people, minority groups, etc.*
- *Businesses*
- *Landowners*
- *Community groups/clubs/organisations*
- *Schools*
- *Places of worship*
- *Community facility providers*

The task of seeking to engage these stakeholder groups was shared across the sub-groups of the Finchampstead Future Project Team.

An Excel-based Engagement Database was created of community groups and stakeholders and records of contact were logged.

Businesses

Approaches were made to local retail, commercial and industrial stakeholders during the period October 2019 to January 2020 to seek views about demand for commercial property and views about the future development of the Parish. These contacts included:

- Cresswells Garage and Jats Pharmacy in October 2019, both based at California Crossroads, the commercial centre of the Parish
- The Wokingham Borough Council Estates Surveyor about current and future demand for commercial and industrial property
- A local landowner who also owns a number of industrial units on the existing Hogwood Industrial Estate and land allocated for its extension
- A representative of Sharps Commercial about the demand for commercial property and small industrial warehousing
- A representative of Legal and General about the development of small retail outlets on their Finchwood Park development location.

Community Groups

Letters were sent to a number of community groups at the start of the NDP process (Dec 2018) inviting them to get involved: Finchampstead Society, Wokingham Quakers, Woodcray Campaign Group, Keep it Green Group, Finchampstead Gypsies and Travellers.

Other local groups contacted include: Finchampstead Scouts, local Horse Society representative, Finchampstead Bridge Club and Friends of Finchampstead Ridges.

Schools

Local primary schools have been engaged through their headteachers and support obtained with agreement by some to allow leaflets to put up on school notice boards.

FNDP Roadshow events were held outside the school gates of three of the Parish primary schools in October 2020. Further planned engagement has been affected by Covid 19 restrictions.

Churches

Members of the Finchampstead Future team met with Reverend Julie Ramsbottom of St Mary and St John / St James and Reverend Chris Simpkins of Finchampstead Baptist Church in March 2020 to seek views about social needs, planning and community development in the Parish.

Landowners

Engagement was undertaken by meetings with representative landowners.

- Mr & Mrs B – livestock farm owners, March 2020. Issues: viability of agricultural business as supporting infrastructure diminishes, alternative uses for land; misuse of rights of way and fly-tipping.
- GN – cattle farming, poultry, equestrian centre and barn-lets, September 2020. Issues: Security, planning requirements around barn-lets, anti-social behaviour, fly-tipping, misuse of footpaths by cyclists, upgrading of footpath to bridle way.
- NG – equestrian centre, July 2020. Issues: Access to and safety of bridle ways, increasing the number and connectivity of bridle ways (willing to donate land for purpose), safeguarding rights of way, traffic calming on rural roads and agricultural business development.

Estate Agents

To assist in the need to understand the levels and characteristics of the demand for housing in Finchampstead over recent years, and to complement our own work to undertake a housing needs analysis, it was decided that it would be helpful to consult a number of local estate agents.

Structured telephone interviews were conducted with four local estate agent companies during April and May 2020: Michael Hardy, Prospects, David Cliff and Richard Worth. The interviews followed a script including 12 set questions. The results of the interviews were analysed and written up for inclusion as appendix to the draft neighbourhood plan (see appendix E of the Draft FNDP, available on www.finchampsteadfuture.com).

7. October 2019 Household Survey

7.1 Strategic Objective

The project team determined that the best way to achieve the aims of our Engagement Strategy (see paragraph 2.1 above) was to devise a questionnaire to test a proposed Vision and Objectives for Finchampstead's future for the period up to 2036 and to obtain a foundational understanding of the views of local people in relation to a range of topics relating to community identity, amenities, housing, environment, transport and economic activity.

7.2 Methodology

Team members, using their considerable knowledge and experience of Finchampstead, drew up a 24-question instrument for completion in paper form or online. This was subjected to a trial run during September 2019 by distribution to a limited number of local residents. Feedback was used to adjust the questionnaire.

Extensive leafleting was used to raise awareness prior to and during the period of this engagement. Leaflets were delivered to every home in the parish by volunteers. Further leaflets were distributed extensively across the Parish in shops, restaurants, meeting halls,

community centres and the local library. A large banner promoting the consultation was put up on the railings by the California Crossroads roundabout, the commercial centre of the Parish. The Wokingham Paper ran a piece about the work to develop the FNDP and to undertake the consultation in its 20th June 2019 edition.

Copies of the survey questionnaire were delivered to every home in the Parish (over 5000) at the start of October 2020. The survey was also made available for online completion using Survey Monkey – details about how to do this being included in the letter delivered to each home. Respondents were not required to identify themselves but were invited to include their postcode in their completed questionnaire – the objective being to track geographical coverage of responses across the Parish. Respondents were also invited to indicate their age group by specifying from a selection of age bands.

A total of 993 completed surveys were returned by the cut-off date, of which 39% were online. Based on the age demographics of the Parish, this represents about 10% of the adult population – a high response rate for a survey of this type and length.

Analysis of the age profile data indicated that all age groups were represented broadly in line with the age distribution profile for the Parish taken from the 2011 Census. Such over-representation as was evident consisted of the older age bands. This was expected.

7.3 Survey Findings

1. The central vision that, while housing was needed to meet a growing population it should not encroach on the semi-rural nature of Finchampstead, received 85% support. Where respondents disagreed, the most frequent reason cited was that there was already too much housing and traffic.
2. The preservation of green space and a wish to maintain green gaps between distinct settlements received 92 and 93% support, with the most important area identified to be preserved being around Sand Martins, the subject of a recent planning application.
3. The single most attractive feature about living in Finchampstead was stated as being the proximity of green spaces and the countryside.
4. As to where future housing should be built, the overwhelmingly preference was for this to be on brownfield sites (73%), while building on greenfield sites was almost totally rejected (4%).
5. A good majority (71%) agreed with the statement: *‘appropriate housing development to meet the needs of a growing population will need to be accommodated in appropriate locations, which does not encroach on the overall vision of a semi-rural environment with green spaces between distinct settlements. Finchampstead will offer an attractive home for all age groups, but we recognise that housing for retired people, young families and first-time buyers may need to be prioritised’*.
6. When asked to choose the single most important thing that would improve the quality of life in Finchampstead, ‘Reducing traffic’ was rated as the most commonly stated (24%).
7. Because of the semi-rural location, it was not surprising that almost everyone (84%) used their car daily. There was little use of public transport, driven in part by people living in semi-rural locations and the infrequent bus services.

8. The objective of encouraging planned economic regeneration was well supported (82%), with the preference being for new enterprise to be located on brownfield sites (65%), and on existing business estates (56%).

The results of the survey were written up in a twenty-two page report and was published on the Finchampstead Future website in early 2020 (www.finchampsteadfuture.com).

8. Regulation 14 Consultations

8.1 Promoting the First Consultation

The period of the first consultation about the draft Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2036 ran between 1st February and 19th March 2021.

To publicise this consultation ten open-air 'Roadshow' events were held at various locations across the Parish between 10th and 24th October 2020. These comprised a stall staffed by two or three volunteers with visual displays, information handouts and promotional merchandise. The objective was to raise awareness of the plan, advertise the forthcoming consultation, engage local people and answer questions. Sites and times were chosen to try to maximise visibility and to engage as many people as possible. As well as distributing literature and promotional items 'Significant engagements' – defined as a conversation with an interested party about the FNDP and the consultation – were recorded. 71 people also signed up to receive email updates about the FNDP.

Date	Location	Significant Engagements
10/10/20	O/S Post Office, California Crossroads	40
11/10/20	Simons Wood, Wellingtonia Avenue	105
13/10/20	O/S Nine Mile Ride School	34
14/10/20	Gorse Ride School Carpark	19
15/10/20	O/S Finchampstead School	24
16/10/20	O/S Post Office, California Crossroads	41
17/10/20	Moor Green Lakes Carpark	21
18/10/20	Memorial Hall Carpark	21
22/10/20	O/S Finchampstead School	17
24/10/20	California Country Park	40
		Total 362

At the end of January 2021 40 estate-agent type display boards were put up at prominent locations across the Parish advertising the fact that a public consultation was taking place with the message "we need your feedback". The boards provided the links to the appropriate pages on SurveyMonkey, Finchampstead Future website, Finchampstead Future Facebook and the FNDP email address.

8.2 Enabling the First Consultation

Summary Document: A twelve-page summary of the full Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan was prepared for the consultation period (available on www.finchampsteadfuture.com). The document was designed and written to be easier to understand, more visual and engaging. 5,300 copies were printed and distributed by a delivery agent and volunteers to all homes across the Parish with an accompanying explanatory letter during the first two weeks of February 2021.

Both the letter and the summary provided local people with details about how the full Plan could be accessed through the Finchampstead Future website and explained the three methods by which feedback could be given: online survey, email or letter.

The full Plan was posted on the Finchampstead Future website at the end of January, along with two Topic Papers, one on Local Green Spaces and the other on Key Gaps. These two documents were works in progress and are important underpinning evidence papers for the Plan.

Statutory Consultees: Email notification of the Regulation 14 consultation, with an accompanying letter, was sent on 28/1/21 to a list of 130 statutory consultees provided by Wokingham Borough Council. Similar email notification was provided to local residents who had signed up to receive information and to stakeholder groups held on the Finchampstead Parish Council database.

News of the consultation was posted in a timely way on the Finchampstead Future website and Facebook page.

Online Survey: It was decided that a questionnaire type online feedback method would be offered to local residents to give their views as this had worked well in the 2019 consultation. A questionnaire was designed which provided a ready means to make comment on each and every policy proposal in the full Plan. The questionnaire was put out on the Survey Monkey platform.

8.3 Processing and Analysing Responses of the First Consultation

Scale of Responses: 340 responses were received to the public consultation broken down as follows: 278 by SurveyMonkey, 57 emails, 3 letters and 2 Facebook comments. 146 of the SurveyMonkey respondents chose to provide email addresses (optional).

Recording and Processing: A small team of three volunteers received; processed and analysed all the Reg 14 responses. An Excel spreadsheet was used as the means of managing the data.

The majority of the responses were received via SurveyMonkey and respondents replying in this way were able to indicate whether they agreed with policy proposals and explain their reasons with narrative text. The platform also enabled the Finchampstead Future team to gauge relative levels of support quantitatively and qualitatively.

Representations about each policy proposal were grouped and analysed by the Reg 14 consultation team systematically. Where responses raised issues of substance, they were referred back to the Project Management Group and Working Groups for consideration and perspective about how they affected the draft FNDP and whether changes should be made to the plan. This process was iterative and took several months.

Reg 14 Consultation Report: A full description of the process of assessing and responding to the feedback given in the public consultation has been written up in a 65-page report '*Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan: Report on Public Consultation carried out January-February 2021*'. It is a publicly available document and was posted on the Finchampstead Future website.

8.4 Need for a Second Phase Reg 14 Consultation

In the first quarter of 2021, about the time of our Regulation 14 consultation, it was announced that a decision to extend the Burghfield Atomic Weapons Establishment emergency planning zone meant that a plan to develop a new garden village at Grazeley, delivering 15,000 homes, could not proceed. In their Local Plan Update consultation in 2020, Wokingham Borough Council had indicated that it was planning that around 3,750 homes would be sourced from this strategic development during the period up to 2036. With the loss of Grazeley, WBC would find it necessary to locate these homes in other parts of the borough and it was therefore very likely that Finchampstead Parish could be required to provide additional housing. This was confirmed as likely through informal contacts with WBC's planning department.

This substantial change in the strategic planning context prompted a review of strategy by the FNDP team. A request for 'an indicative housing' requirement was made of WBC under paragraph 66 of the National Planning Policy Framework, which resulted in an indicative figure within the range of an additional 250 to 500 homes in the period up to 2036. To mitigate the risk of being out of kilter with a revised WBC Local Plan Update, the FNDP team decided to revisit and reappraise the list of 'promoted sites' within the parish with a view to specify its own preferred locations for additional housing.

An Open Letter to residents explaining this was put out by the Chair of Finchampstead Future in June 2021 (appendix 2).

It was recognised, with professional advice, that this was a significant development which was not included in the Regulation 14 Consultation Draft and that it would be necessary to undertake a second period of 'focussed' consultation. This would be on additional sites supported and designated by the FNDP for housing based on its understanding of local needs priorities and in conformity with its own policies and would be informed by an explanatory Topic Paper entitled 'Proposed Sites for Additional Housing'. It was agreed that this second phase consultation would follow the same format as the first.

8.5 Principal Changes to the Draft FNDP Pursuant to the Reg 14 Consultation and Reported in the Second Consultation

A fuller description of the changes made to the Regulation 14 draft of the FNDP is set out in '*Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan: Report on Public Consultation carried out January-February 2021*' (available on www.finchampsteadfuture.com). The more substantive changes are detailed below.

- Nomination of 5 sites as 'acceptable for development' within the plan to deliver in the region of 179 additional units of housing
- Policy ADH3 Green Space and Landscaping adapted for major applications for development to include a survey of local rights of way
- Policy GS1 Key Gaps Between Settlements: Number of Key Gaps reduced from 5 to 4; purpose of Key Gaps amended to remove any ambiguity as to purpose; clear explanation provided as to hierarchy of planning priorities
- Policy IRS1 Protection and Enhancement of Local Green Spaces: Number reduced from 20 to 14

8.6 Promoting the Second Consultation

The period of the second consultation about the draft Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan 2018-2036 ran between 18th October and 29th November 2021. This was intended to be an additional focussed consultation about identification of five sites assessed as being suitable and capable of delivering around 200 additional homes during the period of the plan.

The consultation was promoted through the following means:

- Open letter to residents of Finchampstead in June 2021 (appendix 2) explaining the effect of the loss of the planned Grazeley Strategic Development Location on Wokingham Borough Council's Local Plan Update. The letter was also posted on the Finchampstead Future website and on our Facebook page. It was sent to interested parties in our mailing lists and referenced in the electronic Parish Council Newsletter.
- Letter, with a booklet 'FNDP Topic Paper – Additional Housing' delivered to every home in the parish during the first week of October 2021. Notification was also sent out via email to interested parties and an updated list of 164 statutory consultees provided by WBC. Documents were posted on the Finchampstead Future website and news posted on our Facebook page. The Additional Housing Topic Paper is available on www.finchampsteadfuture.com.

8.7 Enabling the Second Consultation

Topic Paper: This was used as the basis of the second consultation. Written in layman's terms, it explained why it was necessary to undertake a second phase of consultation and described the process by which potential sites in the parish for housing were assessed and

five identified as potentially being suitable. The document reported that most of the original plan, consulted on previously, remained unchanged.

The priorities used to inform decisions on which sites for housing to support were set out, referencing the policies of the FNDP.

For continuity, respondents were invited to provide their views on Topic Paper through the same three methods used previously: email, by letter or through completion of an online survey.

The online survey was deliberately short, asking two questions: one about the priorities used to assess and propose the suitability of potential sites for housing and a second asking whether the respondent supported each of the five sites identified.

8.8 Processing and Analysing Responses of the Second Consultation

Responses to, and analysis of, the second round of consultation were logged and analysed using an Excel database by the same team as phase 1. In line with expectation, a lower number of responses were received: 203 via Survey Monkey and 53 by email.

A small subgroup of the Project Management Group and Steering Group was convened to consider the submissions received and what response to them would be required.

The online questionnaire was generally preferred by individuals, whilst developers and landowners preferred to make email submissions.

The priorities used to assess and propose sites for additional housing were supported by 64% of online respondents, with a further 24% indicating support to some degree. The sites themselves were supported by 46% of online respondents with a further 22% saying they supported them to some degree (i.e. they did not support all five).

Effect of Commencement of Wokingham Borough Council's Local Plan Update Consultation:

The last week of our consultation overlapped the first week of a consultation by WBC on a new draft Local Plan Update (22/11/21 to 24/1/22). The draft LPU revealed that WBC had rejected 8 FNDP/Parish Council proposed local green spaces and were proposing a site at Rooks Nest Farm, Barkham Road, Finchampstead (but within the Barkham Parish boundary) for 270 homes, the largest proposed site for housing not within a 'strategic development location'. The Rooks Nest Farm site is on the opposite side of the Barkham Road to a site proposed within the FNDP Additional Housing Topic Paper.

As the Rooks Nest Farm site was described within the published draft LPU and in the Wokingham Post local newspaper as Finchampstead, it naturally caused local people to ask questions about it and why it was not mentioned in the Finchampstead Future consultation.

The FNDP Team were not provided with details of WBC's plan (particularly its scale) for Rooks Nest in advance when doing its own assessment for sites, other than a passing verbal reference in a meeting to the fact that it was a site under consideration.

The FNDP team responded to this development by putting a statement on its website covering the fact that the site was not within the FNDP area, plans for it had not been revealed and that it was not supported. The Wokingham Post were contacted and a correction to their article was put out by the editor. Contact was made with WBC to make known concerns about the lack of inclusion about the sustainability of their plans for Rooks Nest Farm, making the point that it was material to our own Phase 2 consultation.

The FNDP team also responded to the WBC rejection of 8 local green spaces by revising the topic paper and providing a detailed rebuttal and enhanced evidence base to support the inclusion of 13 local green space sites.

8.9 FNDP Response to the Second Consultation

Greenacres Farm Site: Based on the responses suggesting that this site comprised two distinct parts - one being green and the other brownfield industrial, the FNDP proposal will be adapted. The brownfield area, to the east of the north-south footpath running through the site, will be supported whilst the green area to the west not supported for development.

31-33 Barkham Ride in the Context of the Rooks Nest Farm Proposal: Strong concerns about the effect of a large housing development on the Rooks Nest Farm site were expressed both during and after the period of consultation. Development of the 31-33 Barkham Ride site has been underway for some time and the FNDP Team continues to believe that it would be sustainable for this site to be enlarged to provide 70 additional homes.

However, the FNDP Team agree with concerns expressed by respondents about the sustainability of the much larger proposed site at Rooks Nest Farm and do not support this. The draft Plan and Additional Housing Topic Paper will be amended to make this clear.

Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan

Consultation Strategy

Introduction

The Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP) is a community-led framework for guiding the future development, regeneration and conservation Finchampstead Parish. The foundation of a good neighbourhood plan is a robust programme of consultation and engagement. It will create a well-informed plan and a sense of ownership. Getting the recognition, views, assistance and support of a whole range of other, interested bodies and parties is also essential if the plan is to have authority and credibility.

This **Consultation Strategy** sits alongside our **Communications Strategy**.

Communication refers to passing information local people and stakeholders, which may be two-way in its interaction, but it contains no commitment to make use of what comes back.

Consultation refers to a process by which local people and stakeholders are engaged to gain feedback to influence policies and to shape the FNDP. Consultation is a legal requirement under the Locality Act 2011 for NDPs and the ultimate consultation will be that local people get to vote on the final plan in a local referendum for it take effect.

Aims

The aims of the Consultation Strategy are:

- To engage as many of the people living or working in Finchampstead to obtain their views about the community's future development
- To validate at an early juncture the Vision and Objectives upon which the FNDP is built
- Through an iterative, targeted and multi-faceted approach to obtain an understanding of the different needs and wants of different sections of our local population
- To develop an evidence-base for our policies in the FNDP
- Through stakeholder engagement to ensure compatibility with Wokingham Borough Council plans and policies and the national planning framework
- To build trust, confidence and ownership amongst local people leading ultimately to a positive vote for the FNDP in a local referendum

Approach

This Consultation Strategy seeks to maximise local participation and engagement through planning a phased and multi-faceted programme of ways to communicate with and hear the views of different sections of the local community. Each activity and approach will seek to:

- Build awareness and encourage local people to get involved in shaping their own future;
- Be timely – provide involvement that can make a difference;
- Be inclusive – actively reach out to all sections of the community;
- Feedback – show how community involvement shapes plans and policies.

Stakeholder Groups

We want to reach everyone with a stake in the future of the area including people living, working or doing business here, those who deliver services to the local communities and people who have influence over the future of the area.

We will seek to use tailored methods to best capture the views of different stakeholder groups. We recognise that it can be harder to obtain the views of some stakeholders than others. Stakeholder groups for this purpose include:

- Residents
- Sub-groups, e.g. young people, families, retired people, minority groups, etc.
- Businesses
- Landowners
- Community groups/clubs/organisations
- Schools
- Places of worship
- Community facility providers

Consultation Platforms

We shall use a variety of methods based on what reaches people most effectively and has most credibility. Importantly, where methods of communications and consultation that achieve this already exist, we will look to these first as a means to meet our aims. The boundary between consultation and communications is often blurred. Communications which provide ways to respond with opinion or questions offer a useful means of initiating engagement.

These include:

- Parish Council Website (including a dedicated NDP section)
- Social Media - Facebook
- Opt-in Email lists
- Hard copy documents (e.g. draft plans)
- Surveys and questionnaires
- Presentations to local societies and clubs
- Drop in sessions
- Parish Magazine
- Parish Council newsletter
- Competition – local schools
- Attendance at Finchampstead Village Fete

- Press releases
- Exhibition stands

Resources

We shall make best use of the resources we have and strive to increase resources commensurate with the task. Our current resources, those that we have access to and can be applied to the task, are:

List of Available Local Resources:
NDP Steering Group (including Central Government grant funding and funding from Parish Council)
Group members
Local councillors
Parish Council notice board
Community notice boards
Community networks
Parish newsletters
Local newspaper
Website
Facebook

Timescales

Preparing a neighbourhood plan is a sequential process based upon an agreed project plan. The project plan identifies the following

Key consultation points and the dates in which they should be carried out:

Key Consultation Point:	Target Date(s)
Approve questionnaire to test vision and objectives	09/07/19
Sign off initial consultation strategy	30/09/19
1 st Phase Consultation on Vision and Objectives	30/10/19
Assess and share results of 1 st Phase consultation	30/12/19
Decide 2 nd Phase Consultation Questionnaire	30/01/20
Undertake 2 nd Phase Consultation	
Assess and share results of 2 nd Phase consultation	
Consult on completed draft plan	
Review results of feedback about completed draft	
Draw up plans for referendum	
Hold referendum	

Open Letter from the Chair of Finchampstead Future June 2021

Dear Resident,

Update on the Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan (FNDP)

Earlier this year we consulted residents about the draft Finchampstead Neighbourhood Development Plan. We provided summaries of the plan and asked for feedback on policies we are suggesting to guide development in the Parish in the period up to 2036. We were pleased to receive 350 responses and high levels of support, averaging about 85%, for the majority of our policy proposals.

It was our intention to adapt the plan in light of the consultation responses and then pass it to Wokingham Borough Council (WBC), our strategic planning authority, for it to progress through the next stages of the process for getting it approved and adopted. However, the world has changed!

What has changed? The FNDP was crafted in the context of WBC's own wider Local Plan Update, for which they consulted on a Draft Plan in 2020. Central to WBC's plan was the development of a new 'garden village' near Grazeley, intended to deliver some 15,000 new homes to meet needs in the Borough over the long term. Around 3,750 of these were expected to be delivered in the period to 2036. Earlier this year a decision to extend the Burghfield AWE emergency planning zone caused the withdrawal of plans to develop Grazeley.

WBC therefore, to meet central government targets, need to find alternative locations for these homes and whilst they anticipate that most will be in the form of large developments elsewhere in the Borough, they have given us a formal early indication that additional housing will need to be spread across the borough, including an increased need for additional housing in Finchampstead.

Throughout the FNDP process we have worked closely with WBC and followed their guidance. We are frustrated by the Grazeley decision and lament the lack of contingency options. We have made our views known to WBC, but we also pragmatically recognise the new reality. The bitter truth is that whether we like it or not, some extra homes will come to Finchampstead beyond the numbers previously given in the FNDP. It is also the case that the FNDP will not be approved by WBC or the Independent Examiner unless it is amended to fit with the WBC's strategic plan.

We have a choice: ignore these facts and accept that the FNDP will be of little value in the future or accept reality and continue to work with WBC. By doing the latter, we will be able to ensure that new houses are in locations which protect the most important parts of our countryside and are consistent with the objectives and policies of the FNDP.

Finchampstead Future, and the Parish Council, believe the FNDP remains the most important thing we can do to exert influence over the future of our community. This means working with WBC to amend the FNDP, creating a joint plan which although containing more housing than originally envisaged, will help to protect our area from future speculative development.

This is not the news which we wanted to share, but we believe it to be the best option in the circumstances. Ultimately, the 'plan' only becomes the Plan after you have voted for it, so you still have the final say on what we propose.

We will bring you further and more detailed updates as soon as we can. Continuing to work on your behalf for our neighbourhood,

Allan Gibson
Chair, Finchampstead Future