

## **Progress Report to Catshill and North Marlbrook Parish Council AGM - 23rd May 2019**

Good evening,

I am Chris Fabray, Chair of the Catshill and North Marlbrook Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NP).

As I have made two extensive presentations in previous Parish AGMs, I will give a briefer update this evening.

The aim of the NP is to bring decision making for land use and development down to the local community level, so that planning policies can be agreed and included in the Local District Plan for your benefit as residents of this Parish.

I would like to cover three time periods;

- From the start of the NP to last year's AGM (May 2018)
- What we have achieved in the last 12 months
- What is the ongoing plan to complete the NP.

We started the NP in October 2016. During this initial period we consulted extensively with residents and businesses to find out which issues were important to them using;

- questionnaires
- and holding workshops in May and June 2017.

Based on the results we received from 265 completed questionnaires the Steering Group developed a vision statement from which objectives and policies were identified. We also obtained government funding to undertake a Landscape Character Assessment Study by independent consultants.

I would like to tell you about some of the relevant background during this period. The Local Plan was ratified by Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) in January 2017. The Plan contains a target of 2300 houses to be built between 2023 and 2030 within the six main settlement sites of which the Parish is one. Over 90% of the available land is in the green belt and that is also the position in this Parish.

With all this in mind, we put together a much more detailed questionnaire to gauge support for the vision statement, the objectives and policy options that had been formulated. Based on an initial site assessment covering 25 packets of land, 7 sites were indicated on this questionnaire for potential housing development. These questionnaires were distributed to every household in the Parish in the early summer of 2018.

And now I would like to complete the picture up to this AGM;

- 432 completed questionnaires were analysed and the results can be found on the NP website - [www.catshillandnorthmarlbrookplan.org.uk](http://www.catshillandnorthmarlbrookplan.org.uk). There was broad agreement with the direction in which the NP was progressing.
- A 'Call for Sites' exercise was undertaken in October 2018 involving both developers and landowners, who were identified from the Land Registry. Following two afternoons of presentations,

it became clear that several developers, together with land owners, were actively pursuing housing development in the Parish.

As a result of the increasing scrutiny by all the interested parties including land owners, developers and BDC, of all our work, we have now undertaken a more detailed assessment of potential sites for housing development. Through further government funding, this more detailed assessment will be audited by independent consultants.

Accepting the fact that there will be allocation of houses within the Parish, we will identify sites which we deem suitable and sustainable in the long term. We will not support the use of sites deemed unsuitable, through the assessment system, sites which some developers may wish to build on.

We are also developing a green infrastructure strategy to protect green spaces, footpaths, cycle ways and wildlife habitats.

This is why the NP is so important to protect the long term interests of the Parish. The plan will cover the period up to 2030.

And so what of the future?

- We are working closely with BDC to ensure that as far as possible we can fit in with their planned and ongoing green belt review.
- The independent consultants will complete their audit review of our site assessments.
- We will complete our draft NP by the end of this year.

In the Spring of next year (2020), we will hold a final round of consultations with you and fully explain the reasoning behind the NP. This plan will only be as good as the feedback you give us.

After the final report is agreed by the Parish Council, it will be submitted to BDC for consultation and examination by an independent examiner. Finally you will get the chance to vote on the NP at a referendum planned for the Autumn 2020.

We will continue to give update reports through the Parish magazines and if you have any burning issues you can raise them at the regular Steering group meetings which is advertised on the NP website.