

RADLEY PARISH COUNCIL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

POSITION STATEMENT: 22 AUGUST 2016

The Parish Council has reviewed its stance on key policy issues for the Neighbourhood Plan in the light of the responses to the May household questionnaire and of the Inspector's Interim Findings published in June. This note sets out our current position.

Development in the parish

We were disappointed that the Inspector found that the Vale's proposals for large scale housing development on 3 sites in the parish were 'sound' – see map for their size and location. This means that they will be included in the Local Plan Part 1 when it is adopted early next year. Planning applications from all 3 developers are likely to follow soon after that.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan policies will be revised to reflect residents' views on the design, housing mix and infrastructure needed for the south Kennington and White's Lane sites. We will also be commenting on the developers' proposals for the North Abingdon site (which is not within our Neighbourhood Plan area), and participating in the Vale's developer forum.

We welcome the fact that the Inspector did not endorse the Local Plan proposal to remove the Gooseacre playing field and approx 10 hectares of land to the south from the Green Belt. The Parish Council will strongly oppose any further proposals to allow housing development on this site should they re-emerge under the Local Plan Part 2 next year.

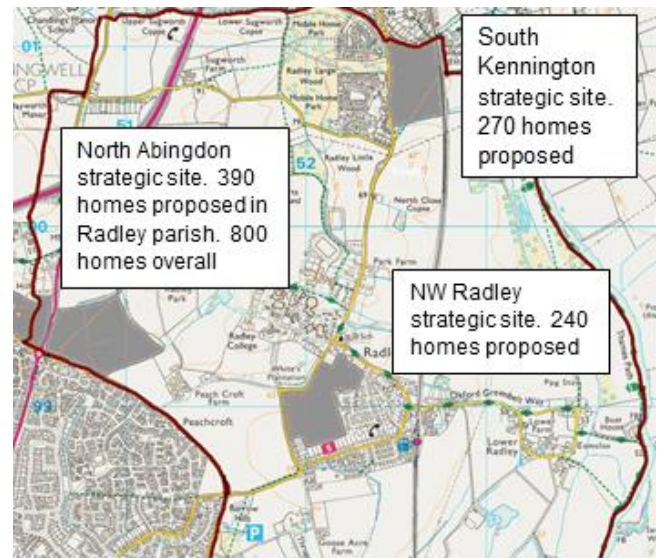
We also welcome the Inspector's rejection of the Vale's proposal to remove the mobile home sites and surrounding land to the south of Kennington from the Green Belt. We are not expecting the issue to be revisited under Part 2.

Moving the village hall and playing fields

37% of households who completed the questionnaire favoured Radley College's proposal to move the village hall and playing fields to a site north of Church Road next to the primary school. 32% of responding households were opposed to this suggestion. 31% had no strong view either way. Those living near to the existing village hall and playing field were the most likely to be opposed to moving them.

Many of those in favour expressed enthusiasm for the prospect of improved and expanded facilities. Some saw the relocation as an opportunity to create a new heart to the village. Among those opposed to the move, a major concern was that the proposed new site would not be in easy walking distance for many families. There was also a lot of opposition to building houses on the existing site, and to the loss of open countryside at the north end of the village.

In the light of this response, the Parish Council has concluded that we should not support the proposed relocation. We felt that this was too big a change to be made with only 37% of households in favour, even though this was the largest single group of votes. We were also conscious that, without overwhelming local support, planning permission for development in the proposed new location might well not be forthcoming given that it would be in breach of Green Belt rules.



We are now hoping to see the village unite behind a new plan to upgrade our community facilities. To that end, the Parish Council hopes to work with the Village Hall committee to explore the possibilities to improve or replace the facilities within the current playing field and village hall area boundaries, and will be inviting Radley College to extend the current leases (due to expire in 2037). We would expect to meet at least a part of the costs of improved facilities from the development levy which will be payable to the parish council from the White's Lane development.

The village shop and the allotment site

90% of our questionnaire respondents supported the community shop. Many people want to see it expanded but there are also concerns about moving it away from its current very central location.

The Parish Council is therefore working with the shop management committee to see whether there are practicable options for building a bigger shop in the immediate vicinity. One possibility is to develop the allotment site, an idea for which our questionnaire responses revealed considerable support. We have invited tenders for a site survey to measure levels and explore vehicle access issues. Should development of the site prove practicable – and there are still big questions about that – we will be approaching local land owners to identify a good alternative location for the allotments. There is no question of the existing allotments being developed without a satisfactory alternative site being identified first.

Thrupp Lane and the Old Coal Yard

The very large majority of questionnaire respondents supported the proposed strategy for the area around Thrupp Lane and the Radley lakes, where we are proposing to promote nature conservation and quiet recreation alongside some continuing industrial use. At the core of the strategy is the proposal to provide alternative access to Thrupp Lane from Audlett Drive, removing heavy lorries from the Radley end of Thrupp Lane and freeing it up for use by walkers and cyclists and access by local residents. The Neighbourhood Plan will include policies to promote this strategy.

65% of respondents were also in favour of developing the Old Coal Yard for housing. The Neighbourhood Plan will include policies supporting this development subject to conditions to protect the site's setting and progress on our policy to remove heavy lorry traffic from Thrupp Lane.

Development south of Kennington

A majority of survey respondents living in the vicinity of the proposed housing development south of Kennington said they would use a shop if it were provided on the site. Subject to views from Kennington PC, it is therefore proposed to include in the Neighbourhood Plan a policy requiring the developers to set aside a plot within the site for shop premises.

A checklist of proposals

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has produced a checklist of all the proposals and suggestions that were made in the responses to the May questionnaire and is considering each of them. The checklist can be viewed on the Radley's Future website under the 'May consultation' heading.

Timing of next steps

We are planning to consult everyone on a fully developed draft Neighbourhood Plan in the late Autumn. This document will then be revised to take account of views expressed before being submitted for Independent Examination early in the New Year. Once the Examination is complete, there will be a local referendum before the Plan can be adopted.

We are pressing to get through all these hurdles as quickly as possible so the Neighbourhood Plan is in place to influence the response to planning applications for the strategic housing sites, expected early in 2017.