

PROGRESS STATEMENT ON THE REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION ON THE LATEST DRAFT OF THE HIGH LEGH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Thank you to all those who have so far responded to the High Legh Draft Neighbourhood Plan consultation. As we approach the end of the consultation period, we would continue to encourage all individuals or businesses in High Legh to let us have your views submitted on the feedback form.

We have become aware of some views on the draft Plan being circulated anonymously to some residents. These contain inaccurate statements which have the potential to mislead potential respondents. It is not our intention now to respond to those points here. All comments need to be formally received via the feedback form (either in hard copy or on-line) so that they can be analysed and responded to prior to the next stage of consultation.

We do, however, want to emphasise a number of important points about the current consultation:

- This is the latest step in the clearly defined and regulated process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan. It will not become a formally adopted Neighbourhood Plan before it has been through this consultation, a subsequent consultation by Cheshire East, an independent public examination and finally a vote by all High Legh residents aged 18 or over. At each stage the Plan can be amended.
- Having agreed policies captured in a formally adopted Neighbourhood Plan is critical for High Legh, being the only way we can have statutory influence on future developments in High Legh.
- These policies are designed to ensure that any developments proposed in the future meet the agreed needs and wishes of the people of High Legh, and also to ensure that future developments which do not respect the policies can be rejected.
- The policies must clarify what could be allowed and what would not be allowed in each and all of the policy areas included, from Housing through Environment to Business etc. All these areas are equally important and necessary to give the community a say on future development plans.
- The Steering Group, a small group of volunteers, have given their time and expertise over a 6 year period to work on the development of a Neighbourhood Plan. Much of this time has been dedicated, through three questionnaires and a number of public meetings, to distil a consensual view of the community's needs and wishes around each of the policy themes. The emphasis has been to reflect the views of a majority (obviously not always >50% where multiple options are possible) on a myriad of issues.
- It is important to re-emphasise that this consultation is a step in the development of a NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN. **It is NOT in any way a planning application.** For example, in the area of Housing, this is NOT a planning application for the development of the former golf practice area. Rather it proposes the policies of what is needed and may be acceptable, and what would not be acceptable which any subsequent planning application would have to address relating to maximum housing numbers, position, access, design, environmental standards, density, etc.
- If any planning applications were submitted after we have a formally adopted Neighbourhood Plan we will then, and only then, be able to accept, reshape or reject them by using the policies in place in both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Cheshire East Local Plan. This community influence can only be formally recognised through having such a formally adopted Neighbourhood Plan.
- The regulated process we are following will mean that anonymous representations cannot be captured and evaluated in the continuation of the Plan's development and thus we urge all individuals and businesses to give us their responses to the Draft Plan now being consulted on, whether you are in favour of certain policies or not, or if you want specific issues to be addressed which you do not think are covered adequately.
- It is then incumbent on us, as part of the rigorous and regulated process for producing a Neighbourhood Plan, to consider, evaluate and react to all of the genuine (i.e. from an identifiable High Legh resident or business) responses. This will lead to an updated draft of the Neighbourhood Plan, correcting any errors, clarifying, amending, strengthening or loosening policies where needed; and trying to establish if a consensual majority view has changed in any area.

- This next draft will also have to undergo further consultation with High Legh residents and businesses. As in all previous rounds a Consultation Statement will form part of the Plan. All of this is critically necessary to give us a Plan capable of passing an independent external examination which must be undertaken before we can reach the final consultation stage that is a Referendum. Only after a Referendum can a Neighbourhood Plan be formally adopted and start to provide the guidance necessary to support the developments that meet the community's needs and wishes and protect against those that do not.

Please note that no Neighbourhood Plan is legally allowed to have any real influence against national infrastructure plans such as Northern Powerhouse Rail & HS2 on which outdated, thus incorrect and misleading information has been anonymously circulated round the village in recent days.

Finally, please support your community to help to give it the protection and direction it needs by giving us your responses to the Draft Neighbourhood Plan by 30th May.

Thank you

High Legh Parish Council