

In 2011 Parishes were informed that they must meet housing targets. However Almeley Parish was given the choice of either letting Hereford Council find development sites or create our own NDP policy where the community had a say in where development would take place. In the Almeley community the figure stands at 33 – we have all known from the outset of this process that we would have to demonstrate that we could accommodate this – as a minimum number

When the current group was formed the previous group handed over a map of potential sites which were small developments dotted about the parish. The new group fully supported this proposal however at our first meeting within Hereford council it was made very clear that the key criteria was for development to be in or immediately adjacent to the settlements of Almeley and Woonton and the proposed sites on the map would not be accepted as they were outside of these areas.

The NDP is a formal process that has to be followed which involves a call for land. 10 sites were presented in time for the public consultation and 1 came in later. These sites have to be assessed by a qualified planning professional who is independent of the community. Neither the NDP steering group or the PC are involved in the initial assessment process as it is based simply on the criteria set by HC. This immediately removed more than half of the sites.

The next stage of the assessment process was for the planning expert to consider the public consultation feedback and previous public responses to include the size and popularity of the site. These were sites not chosen by anyone in the community but presented in the call for land process. We have now been presented with 3 sites – 1 in Woonton and 2 in Almeley. In regards to size the public feedback over the years is for small development and the previous group established a maximum figure of 5.

At the public consultation the overwhelming response was in support of the plan and its set objectives. Only 1 said no. As this had been accepted the final step is now to consider how we meet the mandatory housing targets. The process has now arrived at the point where this must be decided by the PC. Of the 33 we now have a remaining target of 15. 9 of these have come from developments in Woonton the rest from individual windfall. As sites have come forward we do have to consider these and we are informed that windfall alone is not an option.

The community have voted for an NDP and accept the objectives set – if we do not deliver then it has been made quite clear that HC will bring in their own directive on development so overall it is our chance to have a policy document that implements community views.

Our planning expert has presented a choice of 3 sites that will fulfil our housing quota. He has calculated that we do not need to present all 3 sites.

To finalise the draft plan for submission to HC the PC must make a decision on what to propose.

Question 1 – the site in the centre of Almeley– number 2 - should this site be included in the plan?

Question 2 - Looking at the remaining sites –Almeley 3 and Woonton 4 are both for 5 houses

The choice is –

Option 1

to submit 1 site in both Almeley and Woonton and windfall

Option 2

to submit one site in either Woonton or Almeley and rely on larger windfall