

Carlton Colville Neighbourhood Plan - Update

As previously reported, in 2019 Waveney District Council/East Suffolk District Council approved and adopted a Local Development Plan for the period 2020-2035. In this Plan they proposed sites for housing developments around the District. Although we cannot now overturn the proposed development sites already identified for Carlton Colville we can have a say on what those new developments should look like and what facilities should be provided and grant planning permission for the new buildings we want to see go ahead.

Many will recall that East Suffolk's master plan for us in Carlton Colville includes an allocation of up to 900 homes with other services including primary school, shops, older persons care facilities and country park in the land to the south of Bell Farm and West of the Dales Development in Carlton Colville. They also identified a site for multi-sports use known as the Oakes Farm Development to the south of The Crown Pub and West of The Transport Museum. At the moment, as far as we are aware, no formal development plans have been submitted for approval for these sites and, if and when they are, they will be subject to a formal planning process.

However, to ensure we maximise the benefits to the community of any developments that are put forward and try to minimise the worst aspects of building larger developments, we are drafting a Neighbourhood Plan. This is a document that contains policies on what any development might look and feel like to our residents and when finalised and approved will have equal authority as Council Planning regulations. To shape our Plan a small group of Carlton Colville Town Councillors plus members of the community meets regularly to update on actions and agree next steps. We are nearing completion of a draft which people in Carlton Colville will have a chance to comment on and help shape the final version which will need formal approval by the Government. Building on a survey completed on 2018/19 plus regular input and feedback received by Councillors the people of Carlton Colville say they want:

1. Better designed houses: setting high standards for layout and design to ensure new developments are in keeping with the best designs locally and nationally. Consequently, as part of the Neighbourhood Plan we have used planning and design experts to complete a 'Design Code' that will guide and advise any prospective developers of the sort of housing we want built in our area
2. A stronger sense of community: adequate infrastructure provision in terms of drainage, schooling, surgeries, shops and other community facilities. It is worth noting that the NHS commissioning body will be responsible for ensuring surgery and pharmacy provision is adequate for the community. It is not something we can directly influence through our Plan. The approved Local Development Plan already identifies that shops, play areas, sports and social facilities, allotments, school and care home will be required. However, in our Neighbourhood Plan we can suggest where all these community facilities might be located and also provide ideas and suggestions for the potential Country Park that features in the Development Plan.
3. Better movement through and across our area: linking old and new housing, employment and services and developments concentrated within walking distance of facilities, with improved cycling and pedestrian facilities too – improving access and minimising traffic congestion. Although Highway and transport routes are not something we can address in the Neighbourhood Plan, as these already form part of the District and County Council's responsibilities, we can and have suggested how movement around our community might be improved by identifying cycle and walking routes plus new and improved crossing points at major junctions.
4. A greener town: integrated into its countryside and with community projects to encourage green energy, conservation of existing habitats, creating new wildlife habitats, minimising flooding risks and environmental impact of new developments. Consequently, as part of the Neighbourhood Plan, we asked Suffolk Wildlife Trust to undertake an Environmental Study of our area and this has just been completed for review.

We are at the stage of completing the first draft for community review – we think this will take a couple of months. The next stage will be to post the draft on our website for community review and comment. In the meantime, whilst we have a small group of people who have volunteered to help shape the plan, we are keen to ensure widest engagement. If anyone else feels they would like to be part of the team helping develop the Plan for the whole of Carlton Colville do get in touch with the Town Council Clerk.