Our Plan Update

Welcome to the latest issue of Our Plan e-newsletters. We hope you have seen our previous e-newsletters, found them informative and have given us your views to help shape Our Plan. This one has been published to update you on the progress we have made so far with Our Plan and includes a revised timetable.

The revised timetable

The District Council has updated its timetable which means we have a revised programme for Our Plan. This timetable is called a Local Development Scheme (LDS) and sets out the different stages – what we are doing and when. We will also be updating our Engagement Strategy timetable.

Did you know?

Although the timetable for Our Plan has been revised the plan period (2011-2031) will stay the same.

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<th>Collect evidence and review existing plans</th>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Work with local communities, stakeholders and partners to explore options for responding to local challenges and generate proposed actions for the plan</th>
<th>Write policies and strategies for Our Plan</th>
<th>Identify our development needs for South Hams</th>
<th>Informal consultation on the development strategy and options for development</th>
<th>Consultation</th>
<th>Consult on the proposed plan</th>
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<td>Regulation 18</td>
<td>Consult on the scope of the plan and gather local knowledge</td>
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Why have we revised the timetable?

We have some difficult issues and challenges to get right in Our Plan. One of the most important parts of the Plan is about understanding how the South Hams is likely to change over the next 15 years. To do this we are continuing to look at the technical aspects of demographic change, such as population projections and changes to household size, house prices and future economic growth.

We need to find an appropriate way to accommodate the changes in our area. We also need to identify enough land to meet the development needs of our communities, including land for housing.

Faced with these complex and long term issues we will need to balance a range of needs and different views. We hope many of you will agree that our revised timetable will allow for adequate time to adopt the right development strategy and planning policies for our area. It will also provide more opportunities for further engagement as we look at different options for achieving the sustainable growth of the South Hams.

We must also consider what is happening in the wider geographical area as this has an impact on how we plan for the South Hams, in particular we need to do some further work with neighbouring authorities (our ‘Duty to Co-operate Partners’).

The revised timetable will also enable us to undertake additional work on our housing needs (our ‘Objectively Assessed Need’) and continue to look at what local infrastructure is needed to support the future development of the district.

Neighbourhood Plans

As work on Our Plan progresses, neighbourhood plan groups and others will have more clarity about the levels of growth proposed for South Hams. Neighbourhood plans have a real opportunity to help shape how this development comes forward in their local areas.

There are currently 14 neighbourhood plan groups with areas designated in the South Hams and others continue to come forward. These groups are at different stages of preparing a neighbourhood plan, such as gathering evidence to understand key local issues, agreeing a community vision and developing planning policies to help bring about that vision. Further information about these can be found on the Council’s website: www.southhams.gov.uk/shneighbourhoodplans

The ‘development plan’ for the South Hams will comprise Our Plan and any adopted neighbourhood plans in the area and there are clear benefits to developing these plans in tandem. These include a greater understanding of development needs and local aspirations, ensuring ‘general conformity’ and co-ordinating work on the development plan for our area.

Neighbourhood plans need to be in ‘general conformity’ with Our Plan. This means that their policies need to be consistent, and not in conflict, with the high level strategic elements of Our Plan which will set out and deliver the overall planning and development strategy for the area.

Neighbourhood Plans

The government gave communities the power to prepare plans for their own area (called Neighbourhood (Development) Plans). They have to be in general conformity with Our Plan (the Local Plan), can positively add local detail to higher level strategic policies and can address those local issues which can be changed by planning policies. More information about neighbourhood plans can be found at http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/neighbourhood-planning/
So, while neigbourhood plans give people the opportunity to develop their views about the right type of development for their community these plans must still meet the needs of the wider area. In most cases, this will mean they have to take account of the District Council’s assessment of housing and other development needs in the area. As the Council agrees the housing growth levels and other development needs for South Hams over the coming months, neighbourhood plans will have more clarity about this.

We wish to encourage local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Plans and take the opportunity to help deliver the housing and other development needs in their area.

**How are we preparing Our Plan?**

We have made good progress in preparing Our Plan. For example, we have:

- Published a consultation document (Regulation 18) in July 2014 ‘Shaping our communities to 2031’ about the scope of Our Plan;
- Held formal discussions with our Members, we have talked with many of you at the community events we visited during the summer, we have held Town and Parish Council workshops and spoken to partners and stakeholders at various meetings and forums, including neighbourhood plan groups;
- Completed a Strategic Housing Market Needs Assessment (SHMNA) which looks at housing needs across the district;
- Carried out a Land Availability Assessment (LAA), including a Call for Sites for land for housing, employment and gypsies and travellers;
- Published a series of e-newsletters to consult and inform you about the key stages and topics of Our Plan; and
- Used social media and other ways to communicate with you about what we are doing and to gather your views.

We are:

- Developing a series of draft high level strategic planning policies to cover different issues such as building sustainable communities, housing and employment, managing development, the historic and natural environment, health and well being and renewable energy;
- Developing a framework to assess the sustainability of the emerging Plan; and
- Continuing to gather and update evidence about our housing needs, look at population projections, consider how we can support economic growth in our area and meet with our infrastructure providers.

**Did you know?**

Neighbourhood plans can include, for example, planning polices to support local businesses and retail frontages, provide new or retain existing employment land, propose community energy schemes and other polices to address climate change, enhance local heritage assets and help promote the health and well being of the community. They can propose housing policies, including sites for new housing, support locations for new offices or adopt design policies so local people have a say in what new development looks like.
We will continue to keep in touch and keep talking with you, and will:

- Publish newsletters to consult and inform you about key stages and topics;
- Use social media and local news bulletins; and
- Produce video diaries about Our Plan which are available on our website.

And we will continue to:

- Encourage neighbourhood planning.

What is the next important stage?

We need to agree a development strategy for our area. This includes looking at the potential levels of new development, where it could go and how to make sure it happens.

We will also continue to talk with our Members, our neighbouring authorities, Town and Parish Council’s, neighbourhood plan groups and others about the most appropriate development strategy to meet our needs and those of future generations in our area.

Our South Hams

We live in a beautiful environment which has many special qualities which we value and which supports our active communities. We are aware there will be debate about the best way to plan for change and we hope you will engage positively in this discussion and help look for the best solutions to provide for this development and enhance the quality and vitality of our settlements.

If you wish to get in touch with us about any of the information contained in this e-Newsletter, please contact us via the contact details provided below.

For more information

Follow us on Twitter and find us on Facebook to keep up to date with progress being made on Our Plan and to find out about events near you.

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