

Evidence Base for Policies ENV 1 and ENV 4: the protection of 'Green Space' around Shipston on Stour.

(Documents can be found in the CEF file which accompanies the Consultation Statement Document, available at shipstonnp.org/documents, notably the 'Record of public consultation and actions 2012-16') and in the Appendices below unless otherwise stated)

The concept of a NP for Shipston was first mooted in 2012 and from that date public concern was expressed concerning the rapid expansion of the town towards and up the hills forming the north and north-west margins of the town.

The launch meeting in Nov 2012, attended by about 100 residents, decided that 'Protecting Shipston's unique identity' was a top priority. In January 2013 public feedback identified an 'improved environment': specifically availability of and access to recreational and public open space as a major issue to be addressed by the NP (see Shipston Forum January 2013).

In 2015 public consultation at major public events:-the annual Wool Fair, Xfest and Shipston Primary School Fete, gave strong support to the stated NP Vision and Objectives with particular pleas for the protection of green spaces, provision of play areas and the protection of the lower hill slopes from housing development. (see appendix 1).

Twenty percent of households in Shipston responded to a questionnaire in April 2016 and one hundred percent agreed that they valued "the landscape and setting of Shipston". In answer to "what do you most like about living in Shipston?", "rural landscape and access to the countryside/river" came second only to "community spirit". In contrast "excessive new housing developments" was the chief "dislike". Ninety-two percent were supportive of creating "better and additional recreational walks". A "riverside walk" and "creating more public open space" were rated first and fourth respectively in possible projects for future spending of CIL money. (see shipstonnp.org/documents)

A survey of 419 young people attending Shipston Youth Club and the High School reflected the concerns of the adult population. The young people also highly valued the rural setting of the town and, as with the adult population, opposition to further housing development figured strongly, with support for additional greenspaces and footpaths. (see Appendix two)

In 2015/16 a major Open Day was well attended and gained overall support for all policies. Individual comments noted that Local Green Spaces would help towards flood prevention; more green space was needed and a balance needed between accessibility of green space and harm to the landscape.

Sport England, Historic England and WCC responded to the pre-submission consultation in 2017 variously noting the importance of open space and its role in healthy living, protection against loss of outdoor sporting facilities and protection of the landscape. Individual residents again took the opportunity to comment on the need for a permissive footpath on the western edge of the town, support for a 'green belt' and for the proposed public footpath along the river adjoining the proposed Ridgeway development.

The pre-submission consultation raised objections from a landowner to the west of the town to the proposed footpath and LGS2. The LGS2 was also challenged by Gladman Developments Ltd and by Stansgate Planning on behalf of landowners, with WCC raising concerns about the northern wellbeing zone.

APPENDIX ONE

Summary of main Points: Wool Fair 2015

One third of the 59 respondents at the Wool Fair approved of the 'key inputs shaping the vision and objectives of the NP' (i.e. SDC Core Strategy; public consultation; known issues). Unfortunately the other two thirds did not respond to that question!

Comments on the existing Town Centre were significantly favourable with a reluctance to consider change (56%).

A one way traffic scheme for the Town centre was positively viewed by 25% of respondents. However parking proved a controversial issue, 20% considering it a problem, 22% considering it no problem. 10% highlighted a need for more disabled parking.

Pedestrianisation of the Town Centre was favourably thought of by 14%, but 8% were against.

Housing achieved more of a consensus - 22% considered Shipston's growing too fast/ no more houses and 25% wanted more affordable housing or 'starter and family homes' (8%) in 'small developments' (7%) . Asked about location 8% suggested 'to the west of the Town'.

Infrastructure was a clear concern (20%) without giving detail, but 8% mentioned flooding and 2% school capacity. Other issues mentioned included green spaces and facilities for children,

Summary of Xfest

26 people interviewed. Again there is satisfaction with the centre of the Town, in particular the independent shops (26%) and the High School (35%) and a wish to 'leave Shipston Alone' (8%).

There is some recognition that both schools will have to expand – suggested that the High School link with Bosley Sheldon Hub site and the Primary School to the Turbine Blading site. There is a demand for a 6th form (23%)

Facilities for Youth are regarded as limited - more activities and expansion of Youth Club suggested (20%).

Some concern at stress on infrastructure (12%) and general comment on need to upgrade existing transport (bus and rail); leisure facilities (improved gym/sports hall/swimming pool and especially activities for youth). Converting St. Edmunds graveyard to a public space would seem an achievable objective.

Housing development should avoid the river and hill top locations (12%) with again mention of 'no more houses' and 'affordable houses'.

The economy/employment emerged as a strong concern. 27% considered a business park important with less focus on traditional manufacturing but on provision of a small business park/ high tech. industry plus financial incentives such as lower rates. Need to attract tourists (information centre) also suggested.

Superfast broadband an urgent requirement (19%)

Summary of Primary School Fete

14 people responded. The dominant problem with the current Primary School site according to 64% of respondents is parking! Other than this there is a strong feeling that the site is convenient (50%) and that expansion should take place on the other side of Tileman's Lane (36%) eg Turbo Blade site. Some also feel the school should stay where it is (21%) and expand upwards or onto the BT site. Building on the High School site or a new school near the cemetery are other suggestions.

Economic activity should be boosted by additional small business units (43%); high speed broadband (14%) and financial incentives such as reduced rates and rent.

Other themes are a reluctance to change; need for supermarket/ petrol station/affordable houses/riverside walk/green spaces/ improved bus services/a market/a craft village.

Summary in less than 100 words!

Severely restrict future housing development and only on lower slopes, away from river and mainly affordable housing; enlarge the primary school either on present site or on Tileman's lane; High School needs a 6th form. Build a business park for small businesses with High Speed broadband; Change in the Town Centre will be resisted but more disabled parking is needed and one way traffic may have some support; flood prevention; more facilities for Youth. Upgrade connectivity via bus/train services; increase green spaces/riverside walk

Appendix two

Summary of Responses to Questionnaire from Shipston High School (Years 7-11 ages 12 to 16)				
<i>Delivered 9th-20th May 2016. Total responses = 375(76% response rate). 189 resident in Shipston; 186 resident in surrounding areas.</i>				
	YES	NO	YES minus NO	Order of Priority
Shipston's rural setting is important	336	39	297	1
Local markets in the High Street will boost retail trade	294	81	213	4
More car parking spaces to be provided in the town centre area	282	93	189	7
Improve or increase sporting facilities (example – football pitches)	284	91	193	6
A cinema is needed to cater for the younger generation	245	130	115	11
Pedestrianise the High St. to reduce traffic congestion	217	158	59	12
More shops to provide music and teen clothes	271	104	167	8
Smaller shops should be supported	319	56	263	2
Better public transport to be provided – especially in the evening	295	80	215	3
Flood prevention in Shipston is a high priority	287	88	199	5
There are too many new houses planned for Shipston	270	105	165	9
Local services need to be improved	268	107	161	10

(example –new medical centre)				
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The statements in the questionnaire which are listed in the above chart were derived from a workshop that NP members had with the school council and were designed to reflect issues likely to be of interest to the whole school population. This turned out to be the case as there is positive support for all twelve issues.

In addition to the above twelve 'issues' the student population were asked three 'open ended' questions (Qu. 13-15) : what they most liked about Shipston, what they most disliked about Shipston and one thing that would improve Shipston.

From the above chart and also from the additional questions it is clear that the students at the High School in the 12-16 year age range value highly the rural setting of the town, the small independent shops, and the special markets. However, from responses to the additional open ended questions (Nos 13-15) it would seem that retail provision for young people leaves something to be desired – ie young fashion clothes and music shops especially are absent from the town and fast food outlets are limited. An equal problem in the opinion of this group is the town suffers from too much traffic, general congestion and shortage of parking and that the recent rapid growth in housing development will add to these problems.

Commented [PK1]:

Responses to Q.13 (Likes) indicates a significant feeling that Shipston is a safe and friendly place with a strong sense of community.

The existing sports facilities are much appreciated, especially the Sport's Club, Skate Park and Leisure Centre/Swimming Pool. However, there is also a significant demand for additional/improved sport facilities with an astro turf surface, an enlarged/improved skate board park, and improved football pitches being high on the list.

There is a need for a dedicated place for older teenagers to meet, ranging from a request for a simple bench to sit on, to a shelter from weather to a teen café/drop-in centre.

The need for improved transport figures strongly both in the above chart and subsequent open ended questions– probably reflecting the 50% who live in the villages as well as those in Shipston. New bus services to Ettington and Cherington are requested as are later evening buses to and from Shipston.

Although supported by a majority, pedestrianisation of the High St has least support – reflecting adult comments (a one way system might have achieved greater approval). Perhaps surprisingly a cinema is low priority in the chart although there is some support in Qu 13 to 15. Similarly 'local services' have relatively little support – perhaps because the young do not rely on the medical centre quite so much as the elderly!

The overall impression is of a young population who agree with their elders in appreciating the qualities of a small rural town and also its limitations in terms of recent rapid expansion and traffic congestion.parking problems, petrol, supermarket etc There is great emphasis on improved sports facilities which is also recognised in the adult population. Where the young people diverge from their elders is that they identify a lack of retail outlets relevant specifically to teenagers and a sheltered place for them to meet in the town.

Conclusion

In terms of the NP the issues raised, where relevant to a NP, have been covered in the draft policies. There is, however, evidence which should be taken into account when identifying and prioritising local projects by both the NP and the Town Council - for example: an astro turf pitch, improved /extended skate park, additional sports fields, teenage 'drop-in centre, additional parking spaces. These issues have been raised previously but this report gives firm evidence of need by the next generation who will be using these facilities.

PK 15/06/16