

## **Neighbourhood Plan – Surgery Q&A v2**

### **Q1. Why does Cleobury have to have more houses?**

A1. Cleobury Mortimer as a recognised market town was allocated 200 more homes to be built by 2036. The Government together with county councils, allocated the number of houses, not Cleobury Mortimer Town council. This is happening across the UK due to a National housing shortage.

60+ houses out of this allocation have already been built or have planning permission and we are left with 138 more properties to be built in the next 17 years.

### **Q2. Why have a Neighbourhood Plan?**

A2. Without a Neighbourhood Plan, developers would be able to determine the sort of housing they want to build and choose their own development sites with landowners. There would be no community or Town Council input.

**A Neighbourhood Plan allows us as a community to control the type of housing that we need and where is best to build.**

**A Neighbourhood Plan also allows us as a community to protect our green spaces and wildlife corridors.**

### **Q3. What is involved in a Neighbourhood plan?**

A3. Setting up a community group to investigate and analyse what the community want using tools such as The Big Cleobury Survey already done. This group is separate to the Town Council. This group is made up of community volunteers, with support from a small number of councillors.

### **Q4. What happens once the Neighbourhood Plan is completed and adopted by the Council?**

A4. Once this happens, planners and developers MUST by Law abide by the adopted plan using the preferred options for building and consult with the Town Council at the earliest stages of development.

### **Q5. Why haven't I heard of this plan until now? What consultation has taken place so far?**

A5. Consultation began in July 2017 when the process was kicked off formally with Shropshire Local Planning authority. Since then there have been 6 widely advertised and well attended public meetings, starting in January 2018 and 3 newsletters, Two newsletters went door to door, the other was inserted in the Cleobury Clarion as well as regular editorial articles in the Cleobury Clarion over the past 2 years. Updates have been made to the Cleobury Town Council and its Facebook pages and all key meetings and communications have been placed as hard copy in The Library and at the information point at the Market Hall. See full consultation list on [www.cleobury.org.uk](http://www.cleobury.org.uk) (Neighbourhood Plan).

### **Q6. Why wasn't the Tenbury road site included in the Big Cleobury Survey?**

A6. The Survey included all sites that were offered for development at the time. Since the Survey, one site was withdrawn by the landowners (Opposite the cemetery – The second most preferred site).

SLPA then surprised us by calling for more land to be offered for development AFTER the survey had gone out. This was unfortunate and the planning team were very unhappy about this given the cost effort and care that had gone into the survey. We did not feel that we would get a good response by reissuing an amended survey.

**Q7. Why did you choose the sites you chose, instead of taking the next most preferred site from the survey?**

A7. Site Allocation for development by law has to be done objectively based on criteria such as economic viability, access, proximity to town centre, drainage, topography, ecology etc. most of which are supplied in factual information by SLPA. This included a detailed landscape and Character assessment report by an independent consultancy employed by SLPA. We added local preference via the survey as just one of the criteria, it is not allowed to be the sole criteria. We took advice from an independent planning consultant as well as SLPA in our choices and they were happy with our recommendations. Most of the other sites offered were rejected early in the process as unsuitable for development.

**Q8. The cumulative effect of the 91 houses and the expansion of the economic land at Tenbury Road will put huge pressure on traffic on the Tenbury road and in particular on the junction with the High Street. What steps are you taking to reduce the impact of this?**

A8. The team and the Council are concerned about these impacts and so invited Highways planning to a site meeting and armed them with a detailed brief with photographs and diagrams. We also discussed a previous study on traffic lights at the high street crossing. Traffic lights were rejected on the stopping distance from the junction required and on cost grounds. We also discussed a relief road but this was dismissed as too expensive and not viable.

Our conclusions were a preference by the team for a mini roundabout, some road widening just before the crossing and the provision of a wider pavement. Also moving the speed limits back significantly and adding some pavements and street lights, all of which will reduce speeds.

These adjustments to be paid for partly by the developers and partly from contributions from an infrastructure levy which we can bid for to Shropshire Council. However these ideas cannot be considered formally by highways until we have allocated land for housing and outline planning permission is submitted, which is probably at least 2-3 years away. The Town Council will make road and traffic mitigation activities a condition of development.

**Q9. Do we have the infrastructure to support 200 more houses over the next 17 years?**

A9. As a team we have investigated as best we can the impact of this housing, contacting all the relevant authorities and the answer is a qualified yes.

We may need more waste water capacity at some point but this is already identified with SLPA and Severn Trent as a high strategic priority within the local plan. Houses will not be built without sufficient capacity in place.

Electricity supply is well within existing requirements and within the extra housing capacity and business park expansion plans. A huge increase in electric cars could affect this within 5-10 years, however this is a UK wide issue and

when this plan is refreshed in 5 years time this will be reviewed with more up to date information.

**Schools Capacity:** We asked specifically about capacity with the Head of Shropshire Education at a public meeting for the Local Plan. He stated that there was ample capacity in school places at Lacon Childe Senior School and Cleobury Primary to accommodate 200 more houses over the next 20 years. Both schools have a wide catchment area and as Cleobury increases its population it can reduce its geographical catchment area to within its capacity. There is plenty of capacity in the wider county area where there are falling school roles with an ageing population. This was confirmed in our meeting with the Lacon School Head. The Primary School is tighter for capacity. Re-locating or co-locating the schools was discussed but rejected as unnecessary nor affordable at this point.

**Q10. Why have you chosen to build on sloping land on Tenbury Road? Will the buildings cause flooding?**

A10. We live in the Shropshire Hills and Cleobury is built within a glacial valley so pretty much everywhere we choose to build will have some sort of slope. It does present some building challenges but we already have some successful housing built on slopes.

Current planning legislation forces developers to mitigate against flood risks. If you build on a green field then the steps you have to take must ensure that the drainage is similar after the building to a green field. How?

- By keeping as many porous surfaces as possible
- By providing extra trees and hedges to soak up and slow down the water flow. We are mandating at least 20% tree canopy cover within 15 years.
- Where necessary (As on the current construction site on Tenbury Road)
  - To build underground water tanks that collect, hold and release surplus water to avoid flash flooding.

Note: Whitcombe's Orchard was not subject to these rules and probably did cause flooding in the early years. This is less so now as the number of trees have matured.

Note: Pudding Brook has been dry or a near trickle for the last two May-September periods and floods have been rare in the last 3 years+.

**Q11 How will the new residents and especially their school children get to the town and shops and to school from the proposed new development site on the Tenbury Road.**

A11. The map shows a new footpath to the North linking the site across Pudding Brook to Larks Rise and on to the main Ludlow to Cleobury road. To the south the footpath joins the Tenbury Road with intermittent pavements and a narrow pavement at the junction to the High Street. Neither of these routes are satisfactory as they involve crossing the two busy main roads and with a walk along them into town. At this early stage the Neighbourhood Team are looking for other solutions and routes that are both safer and more direct.

**Q12. Why can't we build on plot CM0009 to the west of Catherton Road adjoining CM0003, with a link road or road through to the main A4117?**

Q12. This site was considered but rejected primarily on the grounds that:

- Building here would interfere with key site lines from the town as identified in the Landscape and Character Assessment document which ruled out part of CM0009 as well as CM0005 on the other side of the Catherton road.
- Catherton Road could not sustain any further traffic. Building all the housing with only one road outlet through would also cause congestion.
- There is a pond and wildlife corridor that needs infill and rebuilding along the Lee View side of the field which would further restrict the land available for housing.
- If we wanted a Community Hub and it had to be sited within CM0009 or more likely CM0003 next to the Cemetery, it would be right on the edge of Town which is not suitable.

**Q13. Will you be building the mix of housing that the people of Cleobury need or just what makes developers money...Lots of bigger more expensive homes?**

A13. The mix of housing proposed is based on the results of The Big Cleobury Survey which was robust with a good representative sample of residents from across the age and socio-economic spectrum.

It includes up to 30% Social Housing integrated across both sites and uncommonly, market priced bungalows which were specifically requested and under served currently. Without a Neighbourhood Plan we would have very limited input on these requirements. See the Newsletter for further details.

**Q14. Won't all this building around our wildlife corridors weaken and destroy them – Pudding Brook for example?**

A14. Perhaps the strongest part of our plan is our aim to obtain habitat and wildlife gain from these developments by:

- Preserving, enhancing and expanding existing wildlife corridors, all of which have been carefully mapped and surveyed.
- Restoring banks of pudding brook where we are developing.
- Restoring a pond just off Catherton Road and adding trees, hedges, bird boxes to the affected wildlife corridors. Adding some new footpaths
- Insisting on 20% tree canopy cover within 15 years on plots where we are building
- planning to extend the western wildlife corridor along the road to Hollywaste by infilling with an oak avenue by public subscription