

Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan – Background info for Kirkwells

Why Did Oxspring Decide to do NP?

In April 2012 Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) produced a fully revised **Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment** (SHLAA) which provided information on the land available to meet future housing requirements in Barnsley. Subsequently, in the summer of 2012 BMBC, as part of its Local Development Framework Consultation, published a document called **Development Sites and Places**, the purpose of which was to consider the future use of all land within the borough and show potential allocations and designations on proposals maps. It also contained general and site specific policies which would be used to determine planning applications. The consultation period for that document ran from on Monday 23rd July 2012 until the end of September 2012.

It was as a result of this document, which showed areas of land in Oxspring as potential development sites for housing, that the Oxspring Parish Council held a number of public meetings and subsequently opted to begin the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for Oxspring. Residents were concerned that the number of new houses being suggested for Oxspring was unsustainable and that some of the sites in the SHLAA were in the Green Belt. The intention of the Neighbourhood Plan was to have a say in the future development of the village and, hopefully, to limit the size and scale of any future development. A Steering Group and three sub-committees were set up from residents within the village.

The **Development Sites and Places** document had stated that up to 111 executive homes could be built on the two sites identified off Roughbitchworth Lane. The Neighbourhood Plan sought to challenge that. A housing needs survey was commissioned, through Planning Aid England, which was carried out by URS. Their findings are summarised on the NP website (<http://www.oxspringplan.org.uk/about/housing-needs-survey/>) and indicate that approximately 60 new homes might be needed in Oxspring over the next 20 years - not the 111 in BMBC's document. Initially, the Neighbourhood Plan proposed a number of smaller alternative sites in the village which might have been suitable for smaller developments. Some of the members of the Neighbourhood Plan group met with Helen Willows from BMBC Planning Department, to look at various possible alternative sites. This meeting took place in Oxspring on 25th February 2014 and was recorded on video, which is available to view on the homepage of the NP website (www.oxspringplan.org).

First NP Consultation

At a public consultation on 1st March 2014 residents were asked for their opinions on the NP proposals and a questionnaire was also distributed to all households canvassing people's views. None of the alternative sites proposed by the Neighbourhood Plan proved to be viable and following the public response the Neighbourhood Plan amended its proposals.

In the meantime BMBC decided to replace its Core Strategy and the Unitary Development Plan with a **Local Plan**. Barnsley's Local Plan Consultation Draft was published on 10th November 2014 and members of the public were invited to comment on the vision, objectives, policies and proposals set out in the draft document, which will guide development in Barnsley up to the year 2033. Once adopted, this document will be the statutory development plan for Barnsley. It considers the future use of all land within the borough. It establishes policies and proposals up to the year 2033. It will be used when

considering planning applications and to coordinate investment decisions that affect the towns, villages and countryside of Barnsley.

The good news for Oxspring, resulting from this document, is that there are **no sites** listed for development in Oxspring during the Local Plan period, ie **up to 2033**. In summary, the policies proposed in BMBC's Local Plan endorse that large housing developments should take place in towns such as Penistone and Barnsley, not in rural areas and settlements west of the borough, such as Oxspring, which do not have the infrastructure and services to enable sustainable growth. This of course provided a new focus and new opportunities for the evolving Oxspring Neighbourhood Plan.

Second NP Consultation

A document entitled Consultation Draft – Indicative Policy Areas and Proposals was delivered to every household in Oxspring and residents were asked to complete the enclosed questionnaire. Two drop in sessions took place at St Aidan's Church Oxspring on Saturday 24th January 2015 from 10.00am to 2.00pm and on Thursday 29th January 2015 from 7.00pm to 9.30pm to discuss the draft proposals. All comments had to be received by Sunday 15th February 2015.

Whilst there was overwhelming support for the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan for Oxspring it was also recognised that some of the proposals were ambitious and did not conform with BMBC's emerging Local Plan, which Neighbourhood Plans have to do under the legislation governing them.

Where are we now?

In accordance with BMBC's emerging Local Plan there are now no areas of land earmarked for development in Oxspring up to 2033. This means that the Neighbourhood Plan can have a slightly different focus and can concentrate on protecting the village's assets for the future. This is despite the fact that areas of land in Oxspring were initially proposed as possible future development sites in the 2012 SHLAA and that the NP's own commissioned URS housing survey suggested approximately 60 new homes might be required in Oxspring over a 20 year period. This point is made as there are those who seek to focus on those two now out of date points, overlooking the more recent turn of events by BMBC in 2014.

It is possible that applications for development on what are termed "windfall sites" will still be made, if any such small scale sites become available. It is therefore necessary that the NP has policies to determine the type of development that would be acceptable on such sites.

In short a Neighbourhood Plan for Oxspring will emerge but along simpler lines than has previously been proposed. Following a successful bid for additional funding from Locality, a firm of consultants has been engaged to bring the NP to its conclusion. A draft document will go out to further public consultation, hopefully by the autumn of this year.