



Steyping, Wiston, Ashurst and Bramber (SWAB)
Neighbourhood Plan

Email: SWABNEIGHBOURHOODPLAN@gmail.com
Website: www.swabneighbourhoodplan.org
Tel: 01903 812042

An update from the Steering Group

Work continues on the production of a Neighbourhood Plan for our four parishes, with almost 100 local residents now directly involved. We are making excellent progress but still have much work to do.

We aim to produce a document that will recognise and reflect the needs of our communities over the next twenty years. We must recognise the balance between the need to preserve and protect our local area and the controls and pressures for necessary growth and development.

The Residents' Questionnaire

The final tally for responses to the SWAB Neighbourhood Plan Residents' Questionnaire was **844**, of which 664 were paper-based and 180 online Survey-Monkey responses. This represents an overall response rate of over **25%**, which is excellent and higher than we all expected. **Many thanks to everyone who took time to complete the survey.**

Our consultants, Action in rural Sussex (AirS), have now collated all data and produced a draft results report. This took longer than originally anticipated due to the volume of data involved. The Steering Group and each of the Focus Groups are now meeting to analyse and discuss the views and opinions put forward by local residents on a variety of different issues.

The headline results show that a very significant number of residents responding were in the 65+ yrs age group, many others were in the age range of 45 - 64yrs and only 12% of respondents were 44yrs or younger. We will need to consider how representative that distribution is in relation to our communities. We are researching ways of contacting residents in the 25 - 44 age group who are often busy with the responsibilities of work and young families and may not feel that they have the time to complete a survey. It is essential that their voices are heard and their current and future needs are identified.

Many respondents of the survey do appear to feel that we already have enough housing in the SWAB area. This view may conflict with one of the primary aims of producing a Neighbourhood Plan which is to ensure that our communities remain viable and sustainable into the future by providing housing and local facilities needed by the community on a measured and planned basis. This is in contrast to the current arrangements where the development of land is based primarily on national and local planning policy and law, along with proposals from property developers.

This underlines the major challenge ahead for the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Focus Groups. We must build a plan that will be seen as acceptable to the majority of residents and the four Parish Councils and comply with Neighbourhood Planning criteria.

Our next tasks in the Neighbourhood Plan process include -

A Youth Survey

Steering Group members are currently liaising with our Community Youth Worker to draft a survey that will be accessible and relevant to the younger people of Steyning, Wiston, Ashurst and Bramber. We must remember that during the life of the plan, they will be requiring homes and facilities within the community. We will also be working closely with local schools and involving students in the production and collection of the survey information.

A 'Call for sites'

We need to identify and determine the suitability of areas of land within our four parishes for future housing development. Adverts have been placed and notices displayed inviting land-owners, or those in control of land, to provide details of sites for consideration. Letters have also been sent to owners of land in areas that have been identified by Horsham District Council to be suitable for potential future development. In order to produce an informed and effective Neighbourhood Plan, we need to be aware of any future intentions of local landowners. When we have determined the extent of the need for new housing, we will be able to specify within the Plan where it should and where it should not be built. This will affect the outcome of every new planning application for local housing in our parishes over the next twenty years.

Production of the Stage One Report (formerly called the 'State of the Parish' report)

This is the next document to be produced, with much of the information being prepared by our consultants. The report will include data yielded from the recent residents' survey along with all other data and information available regarding the four parishes. Focus Groups are currently working to provide a 'community view' section for the report.

Bramber Housing Needs Survey

A questionnaire will be delivered to all households in Bramber parish, in order to identify current housing available and the future needs of Bramber residents. Residents in Steyning, Wiston and Ashurst have already completed this survey.

Focus Groups

Our six Focus Groups are working hard and meeting regularly. Unfortunately, much of the information they are collecting will not be directly relevant to the Neighbourhood Plan and we are now engaging with other local groups and organisations who may be able to use this information and help meet the needs of our local communities.

We believe that we are now about half way through the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Please remember that although this Neighbourhood Plan is a Parish Council initiative, it is important for it to be led by the local residents in our communities. Your involvement is invited and would be very much appreciated. We would particularly appreciate a better representation of younger adults (18 – 44yrs).

If you would like to become involved please email us at swabneighbourhoodplan@gmail.com in the first instance or visit the Parish Clerks at the Steyning Centre, Fletcher's Croft, Steyning.

Finally, please do look at our new purpose-built website www.swabneighbourhoodplan.org The website includes explanations of our aims, work stages and progress, as well as uploaded Neighbourhood Plan documents.

Kind regards

The Steyning, Wiston, Ashurst and Bramber Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

May 2015