

Moving forward with the Neighbourhood Plan

You will be aware the Parish Council is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the whole of Bowers Gifford & North Benfleet working on behalf of the whole community to get the best deal for new development in our area that it can. Working with residents as part of the Steering Group, they are looking at where development can go which will create the vision of "One Village", compliment existing housing and remains separated from Basildon by our Green Belt instead of Basildon Council deciding for us. Saying "No" to development is not an option !

Having fought hard to reduce the numbers of homes for proposed developed in the Parish from 2800 to 1350 Basildon Council's Local Plan now gives the Parish Council and the community, a definite say and control over where these 1350 homes will be built and where infrastructure improvements should be shaped. Over the past months the Group have met on several occasions and have been working hard in order to have the Neighbourhood Plan ready for the Local Plan examination takes place in the spring/summer of 2020.

The Parish Council has met with Basildon Council Planning Officers several time over the last 18 months and more recently with Christine Lyons , Head of Planning, to discuss our proposals and where they fit in with the Local Plan and the vision the Parish Council, Steering Group and our community have.

Following the "Call for Sites" consultation earlier in the year the Parish Council secured some free technical support via Locality, a national government funded organisation, to carry-out independent Site Assessments which came forward. This report reviewed the capability of the sites to meet the new building within the Parish. Currently the Steering Group is working on proposals for infrastructure which include; roads, paths, cycle routes, doctors surgery, a primary school, shops, a community hub and open spaces which can eventually be delivered through the Neighbourhood Plan and link the sites which have come forward via the " Call for Sites" exercise.

Work on the Neighbourhood Plan is progressing well and we anticipate to consult with residents on the various development sites that have come forward and have been vigorously assessed for in the Autumn of 2020.