

Town & Parish Council 'Planning' Conference

16 April 2013
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INTRODUCTION

Thank you to all who were able to attend this, our ninth conference, which focused on key aspects of 'Planning', a topic which is very important to us all. It was encouraging that so many of you engaged and participated in this important and dynamic agenda.

You told us which planning functions are of greatest interest and relevance to you in helping you to shape your communities. After the last conference, you told us you liked the workshop approach so we used this again to focus on four planning functions:

- Development Strategy
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Planning Applications
- Neighbourhood Planning

There was open and positive discussion in the workshops, including a challenging exercise to test out what decisions you would make when faced with allocating resources for an important piece of local infrastructure, or when determining a planning permission. This is what 'localism' is all about; enabling communities to help shape their neighbourhood.

Overall, feedback from the event has been very positive and you liked the opportunity for dialogue and discussion. I have looked at your suggested topics for future conferences and will consider this to plan the next event in the autumn. Details will follow shortly.

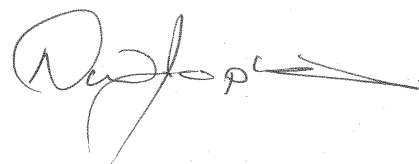
In the meantime, please let us know how we can develop our partnership working to achieve the best outcomes for our residents. You can help by influencing the way services are delivered, or perhaps you are interested in monitoring or taking on the delivery of a service yourselves. Whatever you choose, please get in touch with us and we will work with you to see how we can best realise that ambition together.

We look forward to hearing from you.



Councillor David Hopkin

Deputy Executive Member for
Corporate Resources and
Lead Member for Localism,
Central Bedfordshire Council



WELCOME

Attendees were welcomed by Cllr David Hopkin who gave a brief introduction setting out the background to this event.

Councilor Nigel Young, Executive Member for Sustainable Communities Strategic Planning & Economic Development, highlighted to delegates the significant changes relating to the planning process introduced by the new Coalition Government, such as the new National Planning Framework; abolition of regional planning; the Planning Guarantee; Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Neighbourhood Planning.

He emphasised that the key for Central Bedfordshire was to deliver quality development; “development that you all have had a hand in shaping and that we all can feel proud of”.

Before the workshops began, Cllr Young considered the following issues:

Localism

Localism; putting local decision making back to the local area. Regional plans have been replaced by locally agreed housing and employment targets, enabling the Council to plan carefully and properly for the economic future, quality of life and the housing that the local community needs.

Central Bedfordshire Council, as the Local Planning Authority will continue to take the prime role in planning for the area, but local communities now also have the opportunity to plan for their own town or village, through Neighbourhood Planning - some of our communities have already started to do that.

The Duty to Co-operate

'The Duty to Co-operate' involves neighbouring Councils both planning for and delivering new development in a co-ordinated way across administrative boundaries. This is already the case, but in future it will be rigorously tested by planning inspectors who will take into account our Local Plan. There are examples of issues and positive working with Luton (Busway), Milton Keynes (East-West Rail, City Deal), and Bedford (Wixams new settlement).

Involving Local Communities

Local communities are already involved for example in plan-making to bring forward Neighbourhood Plans. The Council is working with town and parish councils to provide Development Briefs for the major developments taking place in their area.

Quality Development

The priority is to ensure quality development, and achieve the following:

- High quality development - places that will stand the test of time and where people will want to live in 50 years time, not just when they are 'shiny and new'
- Great design
- Sustainable design
- Places that bring new facilities to benefit local people (ie. schools and shops, parks and gardens etc.)
- Places that have enough spaces to park both the car and the bin!

If we do it right, we will have 'award winning development' and we already have some of that. Examples of award winning development include Fairfield Park, and smaller affordable housing developments at Old Warden and Silsoe.

Investment and Rejuvenation

Exciting projects for regeneration are being brought forward, for example in some of our town centres.

Rejuvenation and investment in the area brings confidence and investment from others. Major developers are currently looking to invest in Central Bedfordshire such as the multi-million pound investments at Center Parcs, Biggleswade, and in and around Dunstable, Houghton Regis, and Leighton Buzzard.

Investment is not just in the form of new jobs and housing, but development also brings with it new investment such as Section 106 (S106) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to help to provide local infrastructure and facilities. Local communities will have access to some CIL funds in future.

WORKSHOPS

Peter Fraser, Head of Partnerships and Community Engagement introduced the four workshops. They were:

Workshop	Facilitator
Community Infrastructure Levy	Trevor Saunders Assistant Director Planning Central Bedfordshire Council
Development Strategy	Richard Fox Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy Central Bedfordshire Council
Neighbourhood Planning	Connie Frost-Bryant Principal Planning Officer Central Bedfordshire Council
Planning Applications	Andrew Davie Head of Development Management Central Bedfordshire Council

Workshop 1 – Community Infrastructure Levy

Workshop Summary:

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

The Community Infrastructure Levy is a Government supported initiative for funding the infrastructure that the Council needs to support the well-planned growth of its area and the needs of its residents. It is a development land tax, imposed locally, which is paid on commencement of building works.

CIL can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure including:

- transport such as road improvements, bus prioritisation and cycling facilities;
- local schools, education facilities and community buildings;
- parks, play areas, leisure and cultural centres; and
- community safety, health and social care.

To introduce a CIL the Council must:

- identify a current infrastructure funding gap;
- have in place an adopted and up to date Local Plan;
- demonstrate that its proposed CIL Charge Rates will not unduly affect the viability of development across its area;
- produce a draft list of CIL projects to be funded; and
- publicise its approach to discretionary charitable relief and phased installment policies.

The adoption of a CIL charge has important implications for the existing process of seeking Section 106 payments under the Planning Acts, but at the same time presents a unique opportunity for local communities to participate in planned growth through Neighbourhood Planning funding.

The process of CIL Charge Setting involves two specific consultation periods the first of which the Council has recently completed. Anyone who wishes to can request to be heard by the Examiner when the Council's proposed Charge is heard at an Examination in Public.

Charge Setting Process

Preliminary Draft Charge Consultation		Winter 2012/13
Review of Consultation responses		Spring 2013
Draft CIL Charge Consultation		Autumn 2013
Charge Schedule Submission		Winter 2013
Examination in Public		Early 2014
Examiner's Report		Spring 2014
CIL Charge adopted by CBC		Summer 2014

What will the Council spend its CIL revenue on?

- The focus is on supporting new infrastructure.
- Existing facilities may be expanded and improved.
- If necessary for growth, failing infrastructure can be repaired.
- A "neighbourhood planning proportion" must be made available to parish and town councils.
- Up to 5% will pay for the administration of the tax.
- It must agree and publish a current list of infrastructure projects to be financed.
- It must produce an annual monitoring report on CIL receipts and spend.

How much could CIL raise?

CIL has the potential to raise significant sums to assist in infrastructure funding once adopted, although this will depend on the rate of new development locally, which is in itself a reflection of national economic conditions.

Summary of discussion

The workshops began with a presentation by Trevor Saunders, Assistant Director Planning who introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and its place in the planning framework. Trevor described how it will impact on the current use of Section 106 negotiations, how CIL is calculated, what the Council may seek to spend CIL receipts on and how CIL will benefit parished areas, particularly those with a Neighbourhood Plan in place.

Delegates engaged in a discussion throughout the presentations, expressing views and concerns as well as seeking clarification on a number of key points with regard to prospective charges and potential revenues.

CIL charging – all new dwellings would be eligible to pay a charge but only large extensions over 100m² would attract a charge. There is no local charge currently proposed on commercial properties other than certain types of retail.

CIL revenue – The Council estimates that between £5m and £10m per year gross may be generated by CIL when it is fully established.

Impact on Section 106 – Section 106 will continue but in a reduced form largely for on site mitigation, but such contributions may be harder to negotiate in addition to CIL charges. Section 106 contributions already agreed would not be affected by the introduction of CIL.

Infrastructure - Concern was expressed regarding the impact of new houses generally and the associated need for more infrastructure further impacting on Council finances.

CIL and Neighbourhood Plans – A view was expressed that Neighbourhood Plans (NP) were better suited to parishes than towns. When a NP is being developed it could cover just one parish area or could be cross boundary. This might affect who benefits from CIL monies when a development adjoins a parish boundary and could have a degree of impact on both.

CIL income for towns and parishes – New legislation came into effect on 25 April 2013 supported by new statutory guidance. Neighbourhood funding is the name for CIL revenue received by the charging authority (CBC) which is to be passed directly to parish and town councils. This is leveled at 25% of CIL generated by new development in that area for those with a Neighbourhood Plan and provides direct financial resources to be spent on local priorities. In areas without a Neighbourhood Plan, the town/parish council would receive 15% of the CIL charge collected in that area.

Trevor emphasised the need for CBC and towns and parishes to work together to optimise the impact of CIL revenue and posed the question as to whether a town/parish would be prepared to contribute their CIL receipts to a priority project identified by CBC such as a new school. Less than 50% of the delegates said they would.

Following the discussion delegates participated in an exercise and were asked to prioritise their CIL spending using the Top Gear “Cool Wall” model.

The results are in the tables below:

Group 1

	Seriously Un-cool	Un-Cool	Cool	Sub Zero
Easy				New primary school Pre School play group Dual use school playing fields Village improvements
Can Do Tomorrow				
Hard	Indoor Sports hall Off road cycle way Waste recycling facility			Health Centre Secondary school extension Local park Support for libraries Safer routes for schools
Not a Chance				Traffic controlled parking zones Police support.

Group 2

	Seriously Un-cool	Un-Cool	Cool	Sub Zero
Easy	Off road cycle way		Safer routes for schools Secondary school extension	Safer routes to schools Health Centre
Can Do Tomorrow		Traffic controlled parking zones	New primary school Dual use school playing fields	Village Hall improvements
Hard	Road schemes Waste recycling facility Schools		Play group Police	Indoor Sports facilities
Not a Chance			Local Park	

Workshop 2 – Development Strategy

Workshop Summary:

The workshop was led by Richard Fox, Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy, and Simon Andrews, Strategic Planning and Housing Team Leader. It enabled town and parish councillors to gain a deeper understanding of the development plan process and of development planned across Central Bedfordshire to 2031, and took delegates through the need for spatial planning, the Government's policy context and what this means for Central Bedfordshire. Most importantly it described the Development Strategy, which is the key planning document for Central Bedfordshire.

Why do we need spatial planning

Spatial planning is an important process to provide the long term strategy and the broad vision for development over the medium to long term. Without spatial planning the risk of the loss of control over decision making, leading to planning by appeal and key development decisions being made by others outside the area is high. Having a plan for the whole area and identifying locations for growth is key to liaising with partners and statutory bodies to deliver required infrastructure.

Government policy context

The Government's policy is set out in the National Planning Policy framework and recent budget statements determining:

- Economic growth and house building are national priorities
- Local housing needs must be met – including migration
- Emphasis on co-operation with neighbouring authorities

Government encourages local authorities not to make development unviable and to acknowledge Green Belt is important, but development needs still have to be met.

The Development Strategy

The Development Strategy will be the main planning document for Central Bedfordshire and will bring together existing policy for the north and south of the area. It will set out the overarching spatial strategy and development principles, together with more detailed policies to help determine planning applications.

The Development Strategy sets out the broad vision for development up to 2031, which is a 15 year + time horizon from plan adoption (which is anticipated to be in February 2014).

The main elements of the Development Strategy are to provide:

- strategic objectives for the area;
- an overarching strategy for the location of new development;
- the scale of new employment, housing and retail provision;
- identification of new strategic scale development sites;
- the extent of new infrastructure required;
- key environmental constraints and opportunities; and
- a set of detailed policies to guide consideration of new development proposals.

Specifically it makes provision for 28,700 new homes, which will account for local need from within Central Bedfordshire, migration in and out of the area and unmet need from Luton. 15,700 homes are already built; 13,000 new allocations are proposed.

For employment, it proposes an aspirational but achievable target of 27,000 new jobs based on a good supply of existing sites including 139 hectares of new employment land primarily in the south.

Summary of discussion

The Development Strategy workshops enabled town and parish councillors to gain a deeper understanding of the development planned across Central Bedfordshire up to 2031. Key issues raised were level of affordable housing, impact of immigration and transport implications.

Delegates understood the need to be in control of planning and future development and reflected on Cllr Young's introduction; without a sound plan the pursuit of quality development in the right place was in jeopardy.

Delegates felt that greater migration increased the need for new homes and therefore put pressure on the greenbelt, which itself is threatened due to government pressure to build houses.

Discussion took place regarding provision for affordable housing, and concerns were expressed that there was little guarantee that it would be allocated to local people. It was explained that there were in place a range of products to deliver affordable housing, including housing for rent and housing with shared equity. The Council requires that 30% of all new housing is affordable; this is in addition to rural housing exception schemes. In terms of allocation there are links to the Tenancy Strategy to determine how affordable homes are allocated.

Whilst concerns were expressed regarding the viability of Dunstable town centre and competition from Milton Keynes, officers explained that new development could help attract new investment and activity in the town centre. New development was also key to providing funding for new road projects such as the Woodside Link and A5 – M1 Link roads, which will help the town centre.

Officers confirmed that most brownfield sites have been used and that greenfield sites would be needed to meet future housing requirements.

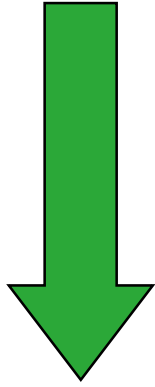
Views were expressed that development needs to be spread around a lot more; indeed Neighbourhood Planning should help to bring this forward.

The Skills Strategy and University Technical College (UTC) were in place to ensure there was capacity in the construction industry to deliver the targets.

Workshop 3 – Neighbourhood Planning

Workshop Summary:
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS IN CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE
Neighbourhood Planning is a new way for communities to decide the future of places where they live and work.
Communities will be able to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• choose where they want new homes, shops and offices to be built;• have their say on what those new buildings should look like; and• grant planning permission for new buildings they want to see go ahead.
What a Neighbourhood Plan can and cannot do
A Neighbourhood Plan can...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Decide where and what type of development should happen in the neighbourhood.• Promote more development than is set out in the Local Plan.• Include policies, for example regarding design standards that take precedence over existing policies in the Local Plan for the neighbourhood.
A Neighbourhood Plan cannot...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Conflict with the strategic policies in the Local Plan prepared by Central Bedfordshire Council.• Be used to prevent development that is included in the Local Plan.• Be prepared by a body other than a town or parish council.

Neighbourhood Planning Process

Process instigated by parish council	
Plan prepared by local community with CBC support and advice	
Community engagement	
Independent check	
Examination	
Referendum	
Plan adopted by CBC	

How are Neighbourhood Plans developed?

- It is a 'neighbourhood' led process.
- The community decide on the content.
- It is produced by the town or parish council, with minimal involvement from CBC, on behalf of the community.
- It needs to be flexible to address different needs and expectations.
- They are tailored to the neighbourhood so no two plans will be the same.

Who should be involved?

The parish or town council will lead the process, usually through a steering group. The wider community should be involved, including:

- residents;
- community organisations;
- businesses; and
- landowners.

If the wider community is on board from the start, then it will be easier to achieve the support that is needed to adopt a Neighbourhood Plan at the referendum stage.

What happens once the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted?

- The Neighbourhood Plan is a planning document and carries real legal weight.
- Planning applications will be assessed against them.
- Appeals will take them into account.

Summary of discussion

Questions raised during the presentation:

Q: Policy 29 - the allocation of 1,500 new homes through windfalls: query as to whether this figure was for the whole of Central Bedfordshire and included housing coming forward from Neighbourhood Planning?

A: Confirmed that the 1,500 new homes were from windfalls across Central Bedfordshire and included any housing that may come forward through Neighbourhood Planning.

Q: Green Belt villages – is there any merit in villages located in the Green Belt undertaking a Neighbourhood Plan?

A: The policy in the emerging Development Strategy that will allow development in the Green Belt through Neighbourhood Plans, Policy 5, is still to be tested through the Development Strategy Examination. For those parishes that are not surrounded by Green Belt and have Settlement Envelopes then it is correct that sites may be proposed outside of this boundary. There is also the option to provide affordable housing through the Development Strategy Rural Exception Sites Policy.

Q: Merit of Neighbourhood Plans for large towns – is there any merit in the larger towns undertaking Neighbourhood Plans, especially now with the incentive of receiving more CIL monies should there be a Neighbourhood Plan in place?

A: Neighbourhood Plans are not suitable to all towns and villages particularly where a lot of strategies have already been developed (e.g. Big Plan in Leighton Buzzard) and where large allocations have already been made in the Development Strategy. There are also other options available, for example Area Action Plans, Development Briefs and Town and Parish Plans, that could be used as appropriate to guide development, improve facilities or regenerate town centres. It is also clear that although receiving a greater share of CIL funding is a significant incentive, the value of this would be dependent on the amount of housing that is delivered and in towns this may be further limited by the lack of developable land.

Q: It was queried as to the merit in drafting policy when there is already policy established at a strategic level in the Development Strategy. An example was given of policies dealing with transport issues.

A: Development Strategy policies may set out high levels principles which in some instances may be usefully supplemented by additional detail from locally specific policies generated by local consultation and knowledge.

Q: Referendum – was there a minimum turn-out required for a referendum to go ahead?

A: There was no minimum turn-out for a referendum. However, for the plan to be 'approved' of those that voted, more than 50% needed to support the plan.

Q: Funding of Neighbourhood Plans – where was the funding for the front-runners coming from and what funding was available?

A: The front-runners had received funding from Central Government but this was being kept by CBC for the Examination and Referendum. To date the three front-runners had self-financed their Neighbourhood Plans. There are funding opportunities available through Central Government and support and advice from Planning Aid and Locality and that provided by Central Bedfordshire.

Q: Costs – what are the main costs involved in preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and the resources required?

A: The three front-runners in Central Bedfordshire are all still in the early stages of plan preparation. Costs had included minute-taking, printing and venue hire for events. It was suggested to look at what resources were available within the community and try to use these resources wisely. Other costs may include commissioning evidence studies that are needed to support the Plan.

Q: Content of a Neighbourhood Plan – what should be included within a Neighbourhood Plan?

A: This would be up to the parish to determine and would depend on the issues that have been identified in the vision and objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan. However all content should be related to development and wider issues like crime prevention for example should be left to a Parish Plan.

Q: Allocated sites – could the Neighbourhood Plan overturn these?

A: Neighbourhood Plans cannot overturn sites that have been allocated through the Core Strategy or emerging Development Strategy.

Q: What are the benefits for Central Bedfordshire Council if Neighbourhood Plans are prepared?

A: There is certainly no direct financial benefit for Central Bedfordshire Council. The Council is not promoting Neighbourhood Planning for all parishes, but it is simply providing all the options so that parish councils are suitably informed. The Council however welcomes the notion of parishes becoming involved in planning for their future needs and greater collaboration is of benefit to Central Bedfordshire in creating better places to live and work.

Q: CIL incentive – if there is no Neighbourhood Plan in place, the parish will receive less of CIL funding therefore this would be an incentive for parishes to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan.

A: It is correct that a lesser amount of CIL monies will be available to those parishes that do not have Neighbourhood Plans in place. This incentive has been provided by the Government to offer a tangible benefit and encourage more Neighbourhood Plans to come forward. S106 funding will still run alongside CIL and furthermore if there is no development taking place within a parish area there would be no CIL funding generated in any case.

Q: If a Neighbourhood Plan does not propose any change, can the Neighbourhood Plan still be 'adopted'?

A: A Neighbourhood Plan must have a vision and objectives that go beyond the development set out in the Development Strategy or it will be found unsound. In addition a lot of resources are required to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan so if there is no need for one, then it would be a waste of time and money to pursue one.

Questions/Issues raised in workshop:

- It was important to prioritise development on brownfield land.
- Ways should be sought to get derelict housing back in use before additional housing is developed.
- Central Bedfordshire Parking Strategy – it was explained that the status of this document was technical guidance and that the standards provided in this document were adhered to where appropriate with reference to the need to achieve high quality design and overall viability.
- Density – There is no longer a minimum density of 35 dwellings per hectare so densities can vary depending on what is appropriate to the character of the area in which a development is proposed.

Workshop 4 – Planning Applications

Workshop Summary:

The workshops were lead by Andrew Davie, Head of Development Management, and Sam Holder, Team Leader - Building Control and Flood Risk Management. They covered the policy background to planning, what happens at pre application stage, the planning application process, external influences and current trends. The workshop also included an exercise in identifying what needs to be considered when determining a planning application.

Pre application advice

Prior to a planning application being submitted the Government encourages the Council to engage in giving pre application advice, indeed CBC also places emphasis on engaging in early discussion.

Pre application advice is resource intensive so the Council has introduced a charging regime to cover the resources required to engage in this activity. Since February 2012, 250 pre application responses have been issued.

Planning Application stage

The workshop covered the several types of planning application: a Full Application; Outline application; Reserve Matters Application; Development Consent; Listed Building consent and Conservation consent; and also what is taken into consideration prior to a recommendation.

Until the Development Strategy is adopted, various plans are considered including: the Northern Core Strategy; South Beds Local Plan; and the emerging Development Strategy. Section 38 requires the proposed development to be in accordance with the Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Material Consideration

In principle, any consideration which relates to the use and development of land is capable of being a planning consideration, ie: they must be genuine planning considerations; they must be related to the development and the use of the land; and be in the public interest.

Determining a planning application

This means making a decision on an application for planning permission.

In Central Bedfordshire an application can be determined in two ways; by the Development Management Committee, or by delegated powers. Both processes are governed by the Council's Constitution.

The process is also influenced by other factors such as the Planning Guarantee (should it be introduced) which will require the planning authority to determine an application within 26 weeks and for any appeal to be considered by the Secretary of State within 26 weeks, thereby setting an overall target of 52 weeks.

Local targets require CBC to determine 75% of smaller applications within 8 weeks and 60% of major applications within 13 weeks.

Post decision

An appeal process is allowed if an application is refused or against the conditions imposed on an approval. There are a variety of processes for an appeal: a written representation process; a hearing; or an inquiry. Some decisions or appeals might go to judicial review, which is a legal process to establish whether the decision was lawfully reached.

The current trend is to reduce bureaucracy where possible, with proposals to reduce the content of design and access statements. There is a priority on the delivery of major applications.

Building Control

Sam Holder, Team Leader, Building Control and Flood Risk Management, gave a brief presentation on Building Regulations (minimum standards of safety, energy efficiency, access etc). He outlined the recently introduced Floods and Water Management Act where CBC have many new duties and responsibilities and are starting by preparing a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy.

Building Regulations are essential and are there to ensure 'safe, sustainable and accessible' buildings. They cover:

- foundations and substructure;
- fire safety, structural stability;
- contaminants, drainage;
- sound reduction, energy efficiency;
- ventilation, water efficiency, water safety, heating and hot water, stoves, boilers, chimneys, staircases, glazing;
- electrical safety; and
- materials and workmanship.

Flood Risk Management

New legislation is expected in Oct 2014 - developers will need to use Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS).

Town and parish councils have recently been consulted to collate flood data collection to inform the strategy for future flood risk management.

CBC will be the SuDS Approval Body and will have the responsibility for approval, adoption and maintenance of SuDS.

Street naming and numbering

The service also covers the allocation of new street names, the allocation of new property numbers and the replacement, repair and maintenance of street name plates.

Historic Environment Record (HER)

The service that the Council's Historic Environment Record (HER) provides was described briefly, and flyers were made available to explain the web resources and services that can be provided. The service is frequently consulted by planners, developers, consultants, schoolchildren, students and the public and includes records of:

- archaeological sites;
- historic buildings;
- historic landscape features; and
- details of over 11,000 sites.

Summary of discussion

Clarification was sought about consultation responses to planning applications and how CBC give weight to the views submitted. Delegates were informed that all views received on a planning application were considered, but it was the role of the planning officer to consider which views constituted material planning considerations and then attribute the correct weight to those views in the process of arriving at a decision or recommendation.

While it was acknowledged that local views could be very strong about particular development proposals, they could not in every case be given sufficient weight to override a favourable policy position or other factor that weighed contrary to those views.

The relationship between outline and full application was discussed and it was clarified that an outline application created an in principal decision upon which an applicant would be required to submit further details for approval. The details had to relate to the framework created by the outline application.

Some concern was expressed regarding discussions at pre application stage with developers. Officers explained that this is actively encouraged by Government and added value to the decision making process providing an opportunity to iron out potential issues. It was emphasised that this is done on 'a without' prejudice basis.

Delegates also sought clarification as to the proposed amendments to the 'permitted development regime; further information was provided.

Officers also explained the use of the Councillors' call in procedure which is set out in the Council's Constitution.

Regarding Building Control matters, questions from the first workshop related to energy efficient lighting which is covered by Building Regulations, and the nuisance of low/high levels of external lighting, which isn't covered by Building Regulations. The online portal resource is available for those wishing to research the historic environment and street naming service which includes town and parish councils as consultees.

Questions from the second workshop related to party wall and neighbour boundary disputes which Building Regulations don't cover. These are a civil matter between adjoining owners. Foundation depths and clay subsoils where trees are present can mean that deep foundations are necessary.

Disability access and Lifetime Homes standards (which are not covered by Building regulations) where only simple and low cost alterations to traditional building practices of new houses are needed, can give access benefits to end users.

SUBMITTED QUESTIONS

Cllr Terry Colbourne, Dunstable Town Council

Q: Does Dunstable have to produce a Neighbourhood Plan in order to receive 25% CIL?

A: Yes. In England, where there is a post-referendum neighbourhood development plan in place; the charging authority (Central Bedfordshire Council) must pass 25% of Community Infrastructure Levy funds to the parish councils in whose area the chargeable development takes place.

Q: Much of the larger town development is included in various CBC plans. Does this not effectively become a Neighbourhood Plan or can the Masterplan be a substitute?

A: A Masterplan cannot be rebranded as a Neighbourhood Plan in order to receive 25% of CIL income. This is because a Neighbourhood Plan must allocate over and above the quantum of development proposed in the local development plan in order to meet the requirements of the regulations. A masterplan would just be adding further detail to an existing allocation policy within the development plan and so would not constitute additional development.

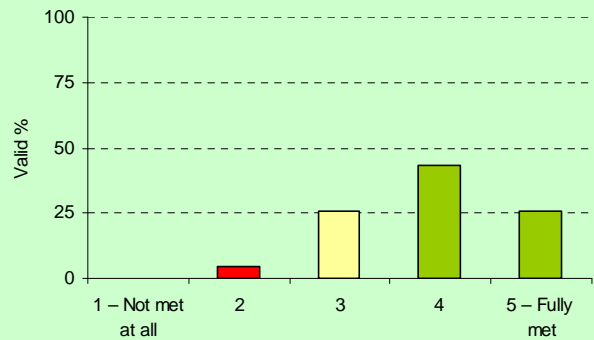
FEEDBACK ON THE CONFERENCE

A conference feedback form was provided in the delegate packs, and below are the results from the 23 completed forms received.

Usefulness of following aspects of the event

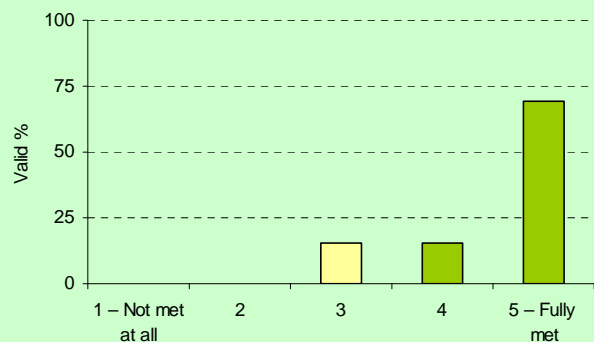
Introduction

	Count	%
1 – Not met at all	0	0
2	1	4
3	6	26
4	10	43
5 – Fully met	6	26
Total	23	100
Missing	0	0
Total	23	100
Mean score	3.91	



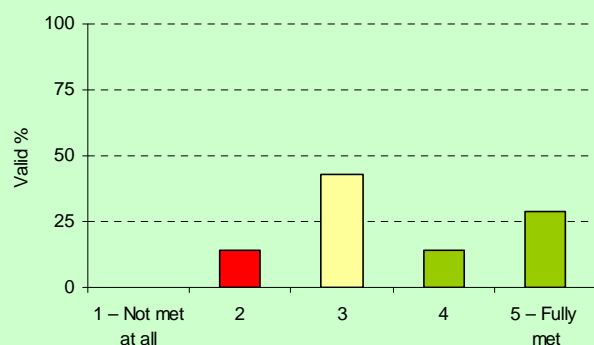
Community Infrastructure Levy workshop

	Count	%
1 – Not met at all	0	0
2	0	0
3	2	9
4	2	9
5 – Fully met	9	39
Total	13	57
Missing	10	43
Total	23	100
Mean score	4.54	



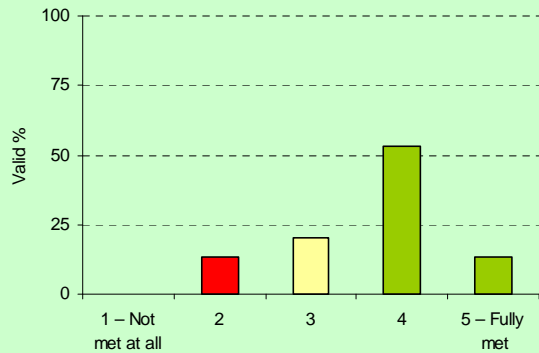
Development Strategy workshop

	Count	%
1 – Not met at all	0	0
2	1	4
3	3	13
4	1	4
5 – Fully met	2	9
Total	7	30
Missing	16	70
Total	23	100
Mean score	3.57	



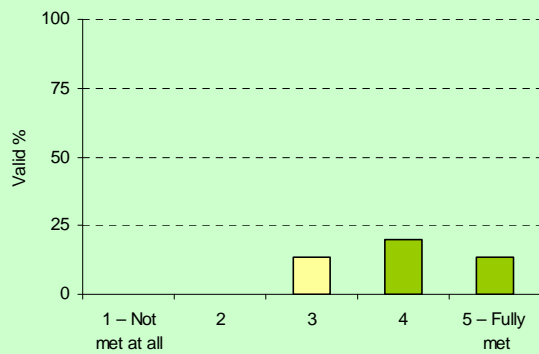
Neighbourhood Planning workshop

	Count	%
1 – Not met at all	0	0
2	2	9
3	3	13
4	8	35
5 – Fully met	2	9
Total	15	65
Missing	8	35
Total	23	100
Mean score	3.67	



Planning Applications workshop

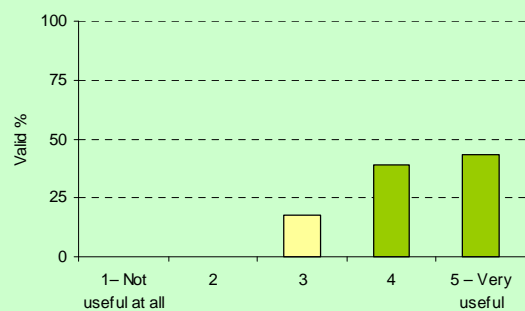
	Count	%
1 – Not met at all	0	0
2	0	0
3	2	9
4	3	13
5 – Fully met	2	9
Total	7	30
Missing	16	70
Total	23	100
Mean score	4.00	



Organisation of the event

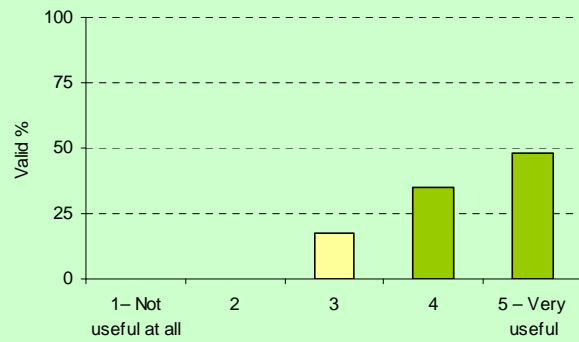
Information sent to you before event

	Count	%
1 – Not useful at all	0	0
2	0	0
3	4	17
4	9	39
5 – Very useful	10	43
Total	23	100
Missing	0	0
Total	23	100
Mean score	4.26	



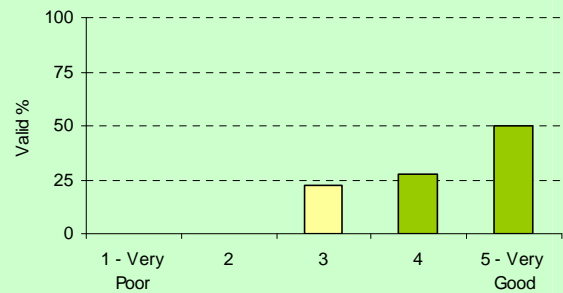
Venue

	Count	%
1- Not useful at all	0	0
2	0	0
3	4	17
4	8	35
5 - Very useful	11	48
Total	23	100
Missing	0	0
Total	23	100
Mean score	4.30	



Catering

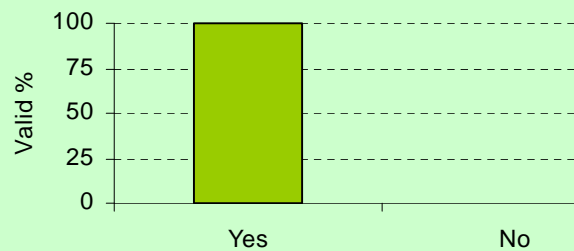
	Count	%
1 - Very Poor	0	0
2	0	0
3	5	22
4	6	26
5 - Very Good	11	48
Total	22	96
Missing	1	4
Total	23	100
Mean score	4.27	



Views of the event overall

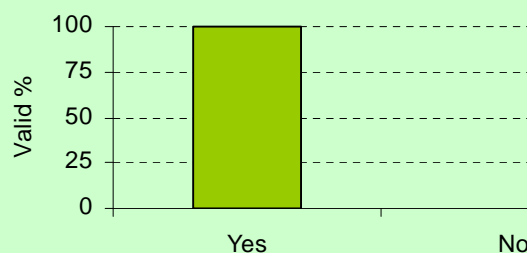
Did you find this conference useful?

	Count	%
Yes	18	78
No	0	0
Total	18	78
Missing	5	22
Total	23	100



Would you recommend attendance at future conferences?

	Count	%
Yes	21	91
No	0	0
Total	21	91
Missing	2	9
Total	23	100



Feedback from delegates

What topics would you like addressed at future events?

- Roadside maintenance, ie flytipping, rural damage, litter and undergrowth.
- The range and role of powers of small parishes.
- Gypsy and traveller.
- Highways, traffic, repairs, footpaths, leisure.
- Update on neighbourhood planning.
- Future of green belt.
- Highways - repairs, traffic schemes etc.
- Transport strategy.
- Just want to be kept up to date with national and local plans/changes/requirements.
- Sustainable transport.
- Broadband infrastructure improvements.
- With many schools becoming academies, what now is the role of CBC.
- Leisure strategy.
- Welfare reform.
- Repeat of Community Infrastructure Levy - as we could only cover two events.

What other individuals, groups or organisations would you like to see at future events?

- Police re enforcement traffic/road restrictions.
- Amey.
- Traffic management.
- Emergency services.
- Welfare Reform Team.

Any other comments

- Well organised. Good timings. Useful discussion.
- Perhaps more training in planning for councillors.
- Well done! But rushed.
- Much improved on previous workshop.
- Less high level presentation. Concentrate on specific controversial points with documentation, ie LDF, infrastructure plan etc.
- Much improved organisation and timings from previous conferences. Thank you.

Catering not necessary.

Neighbourhood planning - too rushed, too few questions allowed. Suggest separate events for larger towns as different requirements to small parish councils.

Much better organised this time - well done. However the people presenting the Development Strategy had a problem with people asking questions not relevant - should have been raised in the Planning Workshop. All about Leighton Buzzard. Not relevant to the rest of the group.

Development Strategy workshop rather taken over by Leighton Buzzard/Linslade extension.

Still don't know if we should do this. Not enough time. Workshops - purpose? Rushed. Neighbourhood Planning.

Development Planning: better session.

Brilliantly organised, very professional and polished. Very interesting.

Some speakers need to restrict their presentations to allow time for discussion.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Overall, your feedback indicates that you liked the workshops and felt the event was useful; particularly enabling you to explore planning issues in some depth as well as learning about the introduction of new policies such as the Community Infrastructure Levy. The workshop exercises also helped you to explore what decisions you would make, for example in response to a planning application or how CIL allocation might be spent.

We acknowledge the need to send you more information in advance and to enable more time for discussion. We will bear these things in mind when planning future events.

You have also told us you would like some of these workshops to be repeated and suggested a number of topics for future events.

We will contact you as soon as possible with details of the next event. In the meantime, please contact Peter Fraser or me if you have any further comments or suggestions: peter.fraser@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Councillor David Hopkin

Deputy Executive Member for
Corporate Resources and
Lead Member for Localism,
Central Bedfordshire Council

A full copy of this report and the workshop presentations can be found on the Council's website: <http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/local-government-in-central-bedfordshire/town-parish-councils.aspx>