

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Neighbourhood Plans were created by the Localism Act 2011. The object is to enable local communities to influence the planning of the area in which they live and work. A Neighbourhood Plan once adopted has statutory authority and has to be taken into account on planning matters. Unlike a Local Plan, a Neighbourhood Plan is prepared by the Parish Council. However, although prepared by the Parish Council, it is for the community and as such must reflect the community's aims and objectives.

The Local Authority can provide support and assistance. They must also ensure that the Neighbourhood Plan does not conflict with the strategic elements of the Local Plan and the Neighbourhood Plans of neighbouring parishes. Unlike a Local Plan, which deals with strategy, the Neighbourhood Plan can deal with detail which would not be covered by the Local Plan. For example, designating community assets within a village.

What is in a Neighbourhood Plan?

To identify:

1. strengths and positive features of the neighbourhood that are valued and that the community want to keep, for example:
 - community assets, such as the village pond, car park, pub, Itchenor Memorial Hall, the Common and other open spaces. People may have other suggestions.
 - The importance to the village of being a mixed community comprising both residents and business
2. Things that the village does not have and would like (a village tea rooms?)
3. Local infrastructure and amenities – ditches and footpaths.
4. Negative features of the neighbourhood that people may want to improve (solar panels?)
5. Protection of important buildings and historic assets.

The above are only examples and not exhaustive.

What are the procedures?

1. Decide whether a Neighbourhood Plan is appropriate. If so, establish the best ways of engaging with the community to ensure that there is consultation throughout the process. Draw up a list of people to be co-opted in drafting the Plan. As this is a Plan to cover all aspects of the village it is envisaged that those co-opted will be representatives from the business and farming communities as well as special interest groups such as the Conservancy
2. Draw up a Neighbourhood Map.
Define the Neighbourhood. This will be based on the Parish boundaries.
An application together with the map is submitted to Chichester District Council (CDC) for approval. CDC will publish it on their website for a minimum of six weeks for consultation.
3. If approved, decide on the vision and objectives of the Plan. Consultation with the community is very important.
4. Develop the policies, draft the Plan and submit to CDC for approval. CDC will publish and consult the draft Neighbourhood Plan with the community and stakeholders for a minimum of six weeks.
5. Appointment of an independent examiner and submission of the Neighbourhood Plan. Independent Examiner's report will be published on CDC website. CDC will then consider the report.
6. If CDC approves the Plan, it will organise a referendum of the community. If the referendum indicates a majority (more than 50% of the turnout), the Neighbourhood Plan is adopted by CDC and will have the same weight as other planning policies for the district.

THROUGHOUT THE PROCESS THERE SHOULD BE ENGAGEMENT WITH THE COMMUNITY TO ENABLE THEIR VIEWS AND CONCERNS TO BE HEARD.

What is the difference between a Neighbourhood Plan and a Village Design Statement?

We are fortunate in having a Village Design Statement that is not only up to date but is of a very high standard. The VDS is a material consideration in planning matters as has been noted from the comments made by the Inspector in his recent refusal of the appeal by the owner of the land adjacent to The Oast. However, by its very nature it covers matters of design and applies mainly to the dwellings.

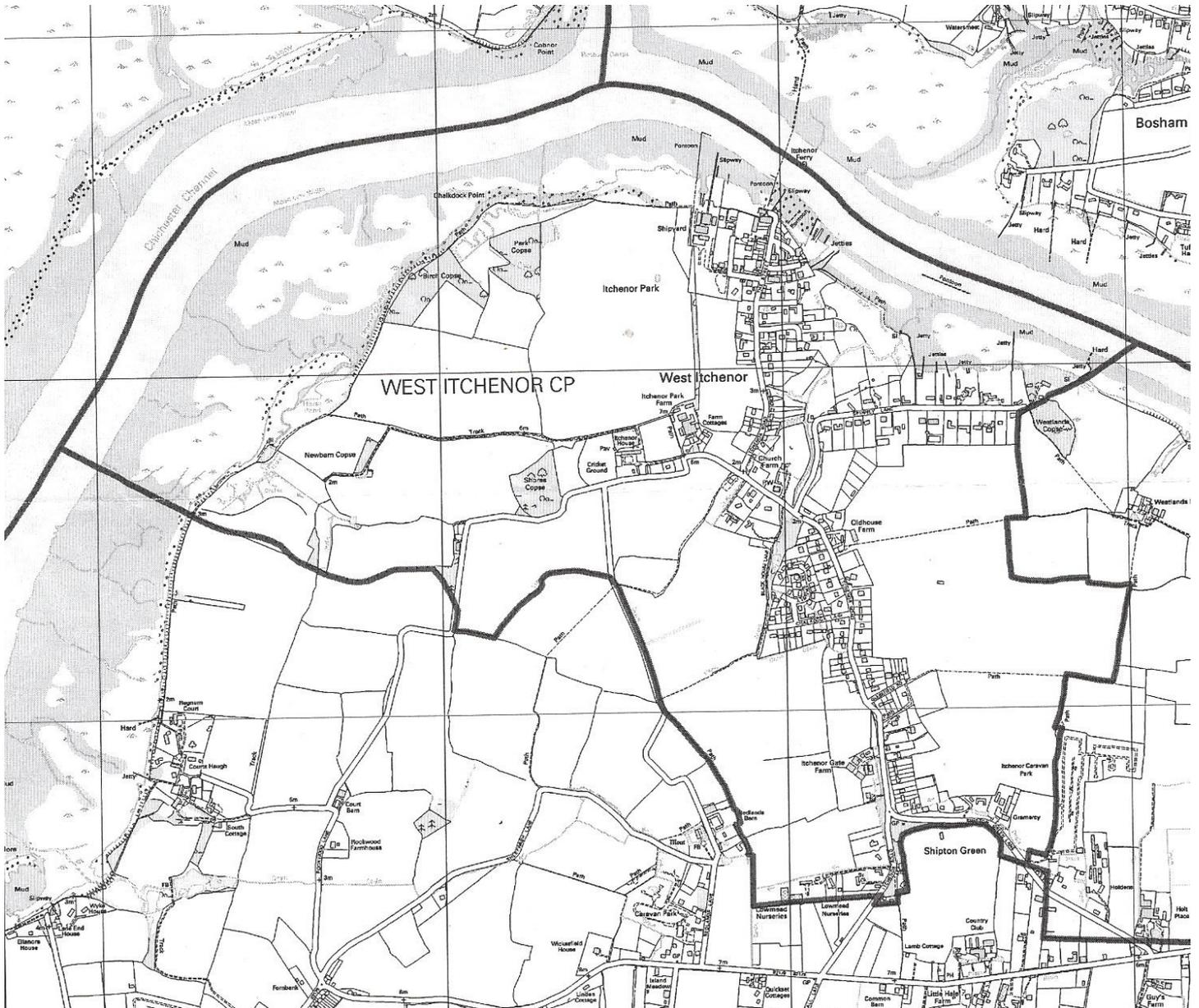
A Neighbourhood Plan covers business and agriculture as well as dwellings. In fact, all the components which make up a village!

Of great value, however, is that it has statutory authority which along with the Local Plan has to be taken into account in any planning decision and therefore is of influence in the planning process.

Conclusion

Although a Neighbourhood Plan is compiled by the Parish Council, it is a VILLAGE DOCUMENT. It should have the participation of all aspects of a village including the leisure, business and landowning interests as well as the residents. If we proceed, it is **your Neighbourhood Plan** which is why consultation is so important.

The map below shows the outline area that would be covered by the Neighbourhood Plan.



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