

## Asfordby Neighbourhood Plan Report on Workshop: 29.5.12

### Introduction

Asfordby Parish Council appointed Helen Metcalfe, a specialist in community engagement in planning, to run a workshop for parish councillors, local residents and key statutory bodies to assist in the preparation of Asfordby's Neighbourhood Plan. Colin Wilkinson, also a planning consultant, had already supported the parish in the preparation of the Plan and he presented and helped facilitate discussion on the night. In particular he had supported them in setting up this evening and advising who should be invited. The list of attendees and the organisations they represent is shown at Appendix 1.

The brief for the workshop was to look at the principle issues that the Neighbourhood Plan needed to deal with in an interactive way. These issues included both the key procedural steps required to produce a statutory planning document and what the content of the plan should be. The local issues needed to be turned into policy statements that could be tested with the wider community at Asfordby's Jubilee Day just 5 days later.

The workshop was held at the Parish Hall and ran from 6.30pm - 9.00pm; 9 people attended and the photos of the evening are shown at Appendix 4.

### Format for the Workshop

The agenda for the workshop is shown at Appendix 2 and the slides used over the evening are at Appendix 3. The first half of the workshop provided delegates with facts, about the Neighbourhood Planning process and about the socio economic situation in Asfordby. That part of the plan making that required wider community participation and engagement was highlighted. Colin had already been commissioned to prepare a statistical profile of Asfordby, including population and socio economic projections, to assist the Parish Council in understanding what key issues were facing their community. The key points were:

1. For the Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted it will require a 'yes' vote by more than 50% of the community. The low attendance on the night suggested the wider community were not sufficiently involved and the Parish Council had to address this issue if they were to produce a fully-fledged Neighbourhood Plan.
2. The population of Asfordby will grow by approximately 300 households by 2033.
3. 33% of the population of Asfordby will be over 65 by 2033
4. Despite all the jobs at Asfordby Business Park the vast majority of local people work outside the parish (i.e. most local people are not accessing local jobs)
5. 43% of local residents have no qualifications

## SWOT Analysis

Delegates were asked to consider the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats facing the parish of Asfordby, reflecting principally on the Profile. Delegates were put into 2 groups.

### Group 1

#### Strengths

Doctors surgery  
Pharmacy  
Good local shops  
Good local eateries  
Bradgate Flats  
Warden controlled bungalows  
2 good primary schools

#### Weaknesses

Weak community spirit (evidenced by low turnout)  
No shop at Asfordby Hill

#### Opportunities

To build community spirit

#### Threats

Reductions in bus services  
Elderly population  
Reduced public resources

## Group 2

### Strengths

A rural centre [defined as category 1 by Melton Borough Council]  
Reasonable public transport [despite recent reductions]

### Weaknesses

Low level skills mix in local population  
Roads used to 'rat run' between places are not adequate  
3 separate settlements

### Opportunities

Could we have a children's centre?  
House builder interest linked with Community infrastructure levy funds?  
High speed broad band council policy  
Sustainable transport - could we provide cycle paths?  
Residential home for the elderly desperately needed

### Threats

Flood plain and climate change means more flooding likely  
Lack of resident interest  
Uncontrolled development  
Withdrawal of or pricing out of local bus services

## What is your vision for Asfordby?

Delegates were asked to imagine it is 2026. What is Asfordby like? What has the Neighbourhood Plan achieved?

## Group 1



## Group 2



As part of the wider consultation and to inform the content of the Neighbourhood Plan the children in years 5 and 6 at Asfordby Hill Primary School had been asked what their vision would be. (A separate report is available from the Parish Council). The children's vision was shared with the delegates and it was very similar!

### Action Area Review

Delegates were asked to review those parts of Asfordby Parish they wanted to protect and those areas that could be developed if identified as part of the Neighbourhood Plan. This enabled delegates to start to build up a consensus on policies that could be tested out at the Jubilee Day. (The map exercise was also done at the Jubilee Day event with the wider community and the results are compared in the Jubilee Day report.)

The maps showing which areas the delegates identified for protection (green spots) and development (red spots) are shown overleaf. Without collaboration both groups identified the same areas for development and protection with one exception.

There was a desire expressed through the maps for the 3 settlements, Asfordby Village, the Valley and Asfordby Hill to retain their separate identities and to protect the land between them from development, thereby preventing coalescence. There was also a desire to protect the land to the south of Hoby Road. As most of the land to the south of Asfordby

village is in the flood plain it is unlikely that there would be pressure for residential development here anyway.

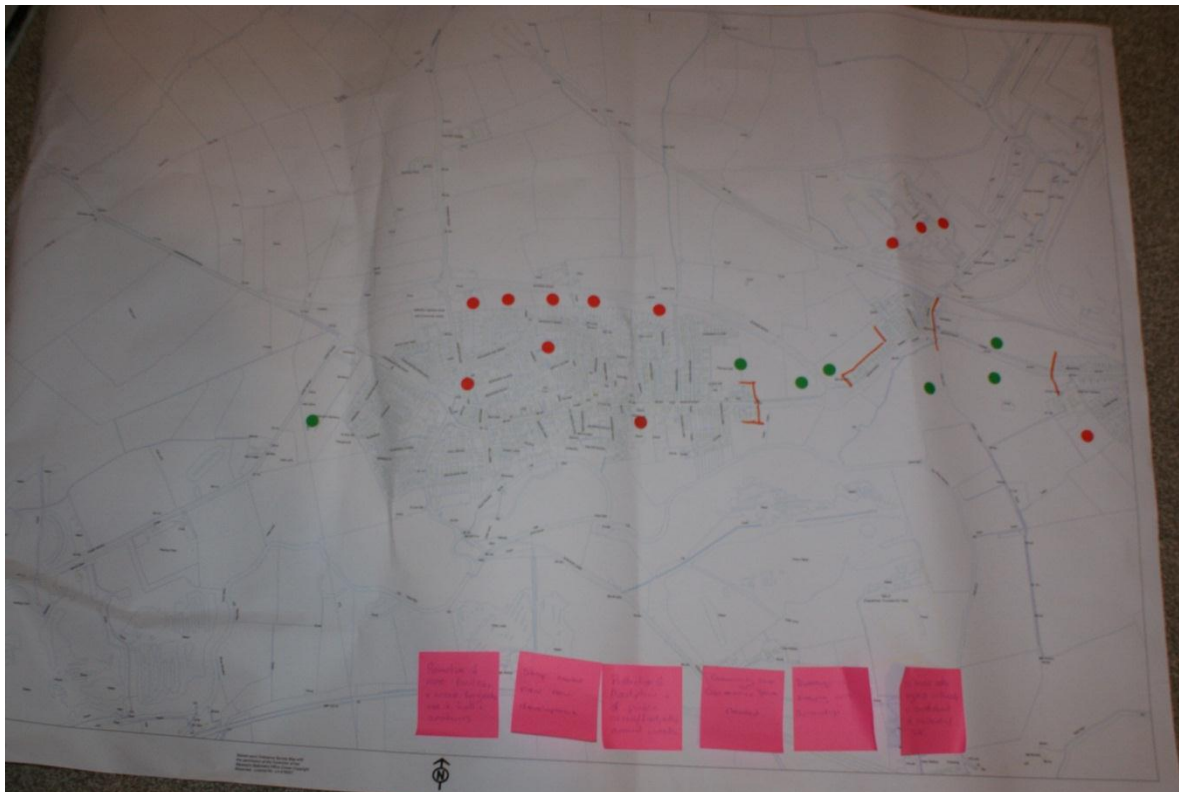
Both groups were keen to redevelop Asfordby Storage Depot for housing (it is a brownfield site and does not provide local employment opportunities anymore). There was a consensus on identifying the strip of land next to the by-pass for possible development and to allow some expansion of Asfordby Hill. One group suggested that the Houghton Road development be extended. It was also suggested that the gun range was a site of potential public interest and that it could be regenerated as part of a tourist/ heritage initiative.

The only area of disagreement was whether the site behind Main Road on the western edge of the Valley could or should be allocated as a housing site. Access was currently the issue but this could be overcome in the long run.

### Group 1 Area Review



## Group 2 Area Review



### The Making of Plan A

The map activity led on to discussion about what else was needed in the Neighbourhood Plan and in what circumstances would development in Asfordby be acceptable. The following general points were made:

- Any new dwellings must be in keeping with their surroundings
- For the strip of land between Regency Road and the by-pass to be developed suitable access must be agreed from the by-pass.
- A shop would be needed near this new development.
- Policies must look to make better use of existing community facilities like the Asfordby Amateurs building and the Parish Hall.
- Public access around the River Wreake must be protected.
- At Asfordby Hill a community shop or convenience store is needed.

### Suggested policy statements for wider consultation

The discussion, visioning and map work enabled 9 policy statements to be drafted that would be put to the vote by the wider community on 3<sup>rd</sup> June at Asfordby's Jubilee Day. Those statements were:

1. Local facilities like shops, schools, pubs, community halls are important and need maintaining in Asfordby.
2. Asfordby needs to allow some housing development to keep local services, like schools, pubs, shops and doctors going in the future.
3. Housing could be acceptable on the north of the village next to the by-pass.
4. The open fields between Asfordby Village, the Valley and Asfordby Hill need protecting to stop the settlements merging.
5. Land should be allocated for housing around Asfordby Hill to expand its population to support the school and other services (e.g. community buildings, a shop).
6. The redevelopment of Asfordby Storage Depot for housing would be OK.
7. New housing should link with existing areas via footpath and road networks.
8. Development should be built to high energy efficiency standards.
9. Asfordby needs to plan for more businesses so that there are more jobs for local people

The community's response to these statements are analysed in a separate report that is also available from the Parish Council by the end of June.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The workshop was well received. There were a number of other meetings on on the same night that reduced attendance from the borough and parish councillors but it was disappointing that more people did not take up the invitation to participate.

Experience from other parishes who are preparing neighbourhood plans suggests that a more proactive approach to getting people along would have made a difference. The invitations could have been followed up with reminder e-mails or phone calls and direct approaches to those active residents who run mother and toddlers, guides, church clubs may well have produced a higher number of people on the night.

2 separate consultation sessions in the local primary schools will directly engage 55 10 and 11 year olds and their comments will feed into the evidence of community aspirations in the preparation of this Plan. However, for Asfordby Parish Council to secure a resounding 'yes' to its Plan at a referendum they must get the input of a diverse spread of local people and

businesses. For the business community, it is suggested that the parish hosts a separate event when the Neighbourhood Plan is at the draft stage.

Certainly the profile of the Neighbourhood Plan has been raised since the Jubilee Day and it is a credit to the Parish that there was agreement on taking policy statements formulated on the back of this workshop to the wider community just a few days later. This did enable local people to have a real influence in the shape of the Plan from the start.

Helen Metcalfe

June 2012



## **Appendix 1**

### **Attendance List: 29<sup>th</sup> May 2012**

John Phertan - Rural Community Council  
Pru Chandler – Melton Borough Councillor  
David Wright - Melton Borough Councillor  
Trevor Moncrieff – Asfordby Parish Councillor and Melton Borough Councillor  
Mal Sheldon – Asfordby Parish Councillor (chair)  
Mary Graham – Connexions Leicestershire  
Mary Fenton – Grimston Parish Council  
B. Turner – resident  
Rachel Cousen – resident  
Colin Wilkinson - planning consultant

## Appendix 2

# The Making of Plan A

- 6.30 Coffee and sign in**
- 6.40 Who's who**
- 6.45 Introductions and aims of the workshop- HM**
- 7.00 Asfordby Profile: what do the stats say? - CW**  
Colin to summarise the work done so far with regard to Asfordby profile
- 7.15 Feedback/reflect/discuss – group discussion**
- 7.25 SWOT analysis of Asfordby**  
Small groups; flipchart paper
- 7.35 Action: what do you want Asfordby to be like in 2026? -**  
Working in small groups: record on flip chart paper. What is your vision for Asfordby?
- 7.50 Get real about the key issues; get excited by the potential;** let's look at the SWOT analysis, what land use issues do you need to take address to achieve your vision for 2026?
- 8.00 Action: area review - HM**  
Group work, one map per group. What areas must be protected? What areas could be developed and for what
- 8.20 The beginnings of Plan A**  
Group work: can you start to turn these ideas into policy suggestions for consultation on Jubilee Day?
- 8.35 Feedback/discussion on your policies for Plan A**  
There needs to be general agreement on what policies will be road tested, disagreements need thrashing out now!
- 8.55 Pulling Plan A together**  
What ideas does everyone like? What ideas need more work (and who will do it?) What policies should be road tested on Sunday? I will finish with what the Asfordby Hill kids wanted Asfordby to be like in 2026.
- 9.05 What next?- CW**
- 9.15 Close**

## Appendix 3

# The Making of Plan A



Helen Metcalfe

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## Who's who



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## What are we here for?

- Clarify what is a Neighbourhood Plan?
- What do we need to do to make it legal?
- What are the local issues?
- What is your vision for Asfordby?
- What policies need to be in the NP to achieve the vision?
- How will you find out what the wider community think?



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## During the group work...

- Write all your comments down
- Everything written can be properly recorded and considered
- Keep your discussion focused on the task
- This is your chance to have your say at the start



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## Localism Act

- Understand the ethos:
- Communities given more power across a range of functions
- Top down targets are why we haven't built enough houses
- Give communities more say and more financial incentives and they will want more growth



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## Neighbourhood Plans

- Parish led
- Must propose same or more development
- Must be in conformity with Local Plan
- Can change where development goes
- Replaces part of Local Plan
- Content not prescribed
- needs to suit local circumstance
- Process is prescribed



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# Neighbourhood Plans

1. Define the Neighbourhood
2. Prepare the Plan
3. Independent Check
4. Community Referendum
5. Legal Force



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## Prepare the Plan

1. A plan can be a single policy or many policies
2. It must be in line with strategic policies in the Local Plan
3. Good relationship with your District Council crucial



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## Publicise

1. You must publicise your draft plan to people who live, work or carry out business in the area
2. Minimum 6 week for comments
3. You must consult statutory bodies where they could be affected by proposals



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## Supporting docs

1. Plan/statement showing area
2. Title of Plan
3. Consultation statement detailing who was consulted, how, summary of main issues and concerns, how you have addressed these



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## Independent Check

1. Independent examiner will check plan to see if it meets basic conditions
2. Examiner = appointed by LPA with consent of parish; be independent from both; have no interest in the land; be suitably qualified
3. Examiner submits report to SSE recommending either proposals OK, proposals refused, or changes needed (to meet basic conditions not content)

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## Community Referendum

1. Organised and funded by LPA
2. Shows importance of having wider community support
3. Examiner can extend scope of referendum if proposal has wider affects beyond plan area
4. Need +50% majority
5. If successful LPA must make plan



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## Legal Force

1. Carries real legal weight
2. Planning implications assessed against law
3. Appeals determined against them
4. Gives more certainty to development as it is supported by the community



**WITH POWER,  
COMES  
RESPONSIBILITY**

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## Asfordby Profile

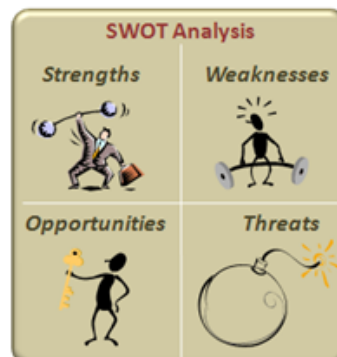
The story so far ...



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## SWOT Analysis

- Using your local knowledge
- Using your professional expertise
- SWOT analysis of Asfordby
- 10 mins; record on flip chart paper



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## What is your vision?

- What do you want Asfordby to be like in 2026?
- What are you striving for?



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## Area Review

- What do you want Asfordby to be like in 2026?
- What are you striving for?



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## The children at Asfordby Hill said ..

- A safe environment
- Peaceful but not boring
- Lots of things to do, something for everyone of all ages
- More trees to climb
- More playing fields
- More shops in Asfordby so there is more choice
- Space around me not all crammed in



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## Area Review

- What parts of Asfordby do you want to protect? = **Green spots**
- What areas of the parish could be developed (if part of a managed land release through the Neighbourhood Plan?) = **Red spots**
- Explain with post it notes
- What would you need to see (design, land use etc) for development to be acceptable?



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## The beginnings of Plan A

- Can you turn these ideas into policy suggestions for consultation on Jubilee Day?
- Discuss in your group statements that could be road tested on Sunday



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## Do we have the beginnings of Plan A?

- Can we agree some statements?
- What will you do with them?
- What will I do with them?
- What next?



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## Appendix 4

### Participants in action





