

Education

We would like to reiterate our comments made on the earlier draft Neighbourhood Plan (Worcestershire County Council's response dated 25th January 2018).

We note the comments in the current draft Neighbourhood Plan. Where planned housing developments have been identified, we will continue to monitor housing growth in and around the local area and respond appropriately to ensure a sufficiency of school places, in line with current published policies.

We will continue to work with schools serving the local area to protect and enhance school assets and playing fields, in line with Government policies on the delivery of statutory education provision.

We would like to make the following comments on the draft Neighbourhood Plan:

- Appendix 2.1: SWDP56 Development at North East Malvern – this site will no longer deliver a primary school on site and instead will provide a S106 contribution towards off-site provision to integrate with the existing development at Malvern Vale.

Ecology

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) places a statutory duty (Schedule 40) towards the conservation of biodiversity on all public bodies, including Town Councils.

The Neighbourhood Plan articulates protection of woodland, trees and hedgerows which is fully supported. The principle of 'no net loss' and 'net gain' of woodlands and trees through compensatory measures is welcomed. However the caveat 'of local significance' appears too open to interpretation. The policy does not address aged trees nor the additional protection afforded

to them through the National Planning Policy Framework¹ (NPPF) paragraph 175.c. Similarly net gain 'to the overall quality of the environment' is equally capable of interpretation in a number of different ways, not necessarily addressing the net reduction in tree canopy cover (nor any associated change to street or townscape character) nor loss of any ecological function.

The Plan also falls short of identifying or prioritising any other biodiversity assets, including Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) Act Section 41² species or habitats which occur within the Plan area.

Sustainable design principles could have included the necessity for schemes of any size to include provision for wildlife such as artificial bird nesting bricks or bat roosting bricks in the same way that sustainable drainage schemes are promoted for all development proposals. The key driver for biodiversity net gain is set out in NPPF paragraph 174.b and the Neighbourhood Plan plays a key role in determining how developments of any scale can deliver locally appropriate net gain opportunities for biodiversity.

Worcestershire County Council provides a Neighbourhood Planning Support Service designed to collate and analyse the key evidence bases and support the preparation of robust Neighbourhood Plan policy. This service could help to inform the Malvern Town Neighbourhood Plan, the area of which includes a number of NERC S.41 biodiversity assets of importance in both their local, county and regional contexts. For example, this Plan area supports a number of roosts of lesser horseshoe bats, a nationally scarce and fully protected species known to occur in the Malvern Hills area in colonies of regional if not national importance. Horseshoe bats are particularly sensitive to light pollution, with a number of these roosts having suffered declines in numbers due to insensitive urban regeneration. There are basic design matters which a Neighbourhood Plan is best placed to play a key role in addressing, for example by defining areas of sensitivity for known biodiversity assets and outlining how development in those areas should be designed to avoid

¹ [National Planning Policy Framework 2018](#)

² [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#)

impact. For horseshoe bats this could include identification of simple 'dark corridors' between roosts and likely foraging sites.

Local development plans pose a number of small scale but cumulatively significant impacts for biodiversity, impacts which are often difficult to address at district or county scale. For example: increases in light pollution, habitat fragmentation and deterioration as gardens become less 'wildlife friendly', increased wildlife predation from household pets, loss of opportunities for wildlife such as ground nesting birds and roosting bats, increases in diffuse air and water pollution and so forth. The Neighbourhood Plan therefore plays a critical role in identifying, prioritising and establishing locally acceptable solutions, but this requires an understanding of the important biodiversity assets and opportunities to enable policy to address local pressures on these assets. In this respect it appears an opportunity has been missed and we would urge the Neighbourhood Planning team to re-evaluate what wider biodiversity opportunities the Neighbourhood Plan should be addressing.

Sustainability

Energy

We are pleased to note that the Neighbourhood Plan refers to SWDP27: Renewable and Low Carbon Energy. We are also supportive of the proposal that 'all developments should demonstrate how they have taken sustainable design, improving energy efficiency and energy generation into consideration' and utilisation of the energy hierarchy. We welcome to see that proposals which include sustainable design above the 10% predicted energy threshold will be encouraged, and that designs should therefore incorporate and maximise energy-efficient methods of construction and design including sustainable heating and lighting and passive ventilation.

We would welcome recognition of the issue of fuel poverty within the Neighbourhood Plan. Fuel poverty is a significant issue for Malvern. The latest figures show that 12.6% of households in Malvern Hills District are considered to be fuel poor, meaning they have high energy costs but a low household income. Malvern has the highest levels of fuel poverty in Worcestershire (N.B.

the County average is 11.5%). Improving the energy efficiency standards of new homes will help to reduce the risk of fuel poverty for new residents.

Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV)

We welcome proposals that all new development, including change of use, should provide an electric vehicle charging point (EVCP), either in an active or passive form, with each car parking space to be provided in line with the adopted parking standards as a result of the development. We are also supportive of proposals for EV chargepoints at Malvern Link Rail Station.

This is in line with the UK Government's 'Road to Zero' Strategy³ which outlines the intention to consult on proposals for all new UK homes to have an electric vehicle charge point, where appropriate.

Water Efficiency

In line with policy SWDP30, the daily non-recycled water use per person for housing proposals should not exceed 110 litres per day. For business and commercial premises water usage must achieve British Research Establishment Environmental Assessment (BREEAM) 'excellent' standard. The Neighbourhood Plan could consider further improvements to water efficiency in new homes, including the provision of water butts for non-potable water.

Climate Change

Climate change mitigation and adaptation are central to the NPPF. The UK Climate Change Act 2008⁴ sets legally binding targets for the UK to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. New developments will be around for a considerable number of years, it is important that they remain fit for purpose over their lifetime as the climate changes. The plan makes reference to both climate change adaptation and mitigation. It could consider further actions to

³ [HM Government \(2018\) The Road to Zero Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy](#)

⁴ [Climate Change Act 2008](#)

improve local resilience to climate change, such as wider guttering, green roofs etc.

The Neighbourhood Plan could also take account of the Worcestershire Partnership Climate Change Strategy⁵.

Waste and Composting

Options for onsite composting for new homes, including provision of compost bins for all new homes could be considered in the Neighbourhood Plan.

Low Carbon Neighbourhood Planning Guidance

For further guidance related to low carbon neighbourhood planning can be found in the Low carbon neighbourhood planning: A guide to creating happier, healthier, greener communities⁶.

⁵ [Worcestershire Partnership \(2012\) Climate Change Strategy 2012-2020](#)

⁶ [TCPA \(2018\) Low-carbon neighbourhood planning A guide to creating happier, healthier, greener communities](#)
