

BREAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

REPORT OF INITIAL PROGRAMME OF PUBLIC MEETINGS

Introduction

This short report sets out the key findings and conclusions from a series of initial public meetings that were held across Breage Parish to explore the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish.

Schedule of Meetings

Public meetings were advertised by posters in key locations and convened by the Parish Council in each of the five principal settlements in the Parish as follows:

- Praa Sands: 26 September 2017, 7.00 to 8.30 pm
- Godolphin Cross: 28 September 2017, 7.00 to 8.30 pm
- Breage: 5 October 2017, 7.00 to 8.30 pm
- Carleen: 7 October 2017, 2.00 to 3.30 pm
- Ashton: 11 October 2017, 7.00 to 8.30 pm

The meetings had four key aims:

- To disseminate information on the purpose of Neighbourhood Plans and the process for their preparation.
- To explore community attitudes towards the opportunity to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Breage.
- To capture initial views from the community in respect of planning issues facing the Parish as a whole and each of its five main villages.
- To identify potential members of a 'Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group' to adopt the lead in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish.

Each meeting followed a similar structure and reporting process:

- A presentation on the purpose of neighbourhood planning and the process to be adopted in preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- An examination of general maps and plans showing the extent of the Parish, key environmental constraints and features, and the general extent of each of the five main villages.
- A 'question and answer' session covering both the neighbourhood planning process and planning issues facing the Parish and its constituent villages, but also extending to cover a range of other issues that were pertinent to the local community.
- A short written report was prepared for each of the meetings and is available as a separate document.

Each meeting was attended by Councillors Woodhams and Ralph from Breage Parish Council, and Councillor Keeling from Cornwall Council. A number of other parish councillors also attended one or more of the meetings.

Attendance at each of the meetings excluding Parish and Cornwall Councillors was as follows:

- Praa Sands: 10 members of the public
- Godolphin Cross: 15 members of the public
- Breage: 13 members of the public
- Carleen: 10 members of the public
- Ashton: 33 members of the public

The general consensus is that the level of attendance at each of the meetings was 'about average' for a public meeting in that village, with the exception of Ashton which secured a relatively high turnout – this may well be reflective of the relatively high level of development pressure on the village.

Preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan

The views expressed by the community on whether a Neighbourhood Development Plan should be prepared were mixed, but tended on the whole to be towards the positive. Specific concerns that were raised included:

- Why prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan if it is not compulsory?
- A Neighbourhood Development Plan will not give Breage Parish Council more authority, as planning applications will just go to appeal?
- How can it be ensured that the planning process will not be taken over high by individual interests?
- Who should decide whether it is worth preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan?
- Will all relevant agencies be consulted?
- Why does evidence have to be provided to prevent development?
- What 'teeth' would a Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group have?
- Should members of a Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group be vetted and what should the membership be?
- What are the barriers/constraints to what Neighbourhood Development Plan can cover?
- Will Cornwall Council be able to help with the formulation of planning proposals and policies?
- Is it too late to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plan now that a number of relatively large planning applications have been approved?
- Will the local community and Parish Council have a stronger voice if a Neighbourhood Development Plan is in place?
- Does a 'balanced view' need to be taken in preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan?

- Can a Neighbourhood Development Plan be ‘revisited’ once in place as it is a long time to 2030?

Planning Issues

Members of the local community expressed a range of helpful views in respect of scoping out potential land use planning issues facing the Parish and its principal villages including:

- Village boundaries need to be defined.
- Beach at Praa Sands needs to be protected from erosion.
- Green spaces need to be identified and preserved.
- Public transport needs to be improved.
- Traffic calming and safer walkways are needed (in Godolphin Cross)
- New developments need to provide adequate car parking provision.
- Land needs to be identified for a play area (in Godolphin Cross).
- Infill on very small sites should be resisted.
- Affordable housing is needed for young people.
- Explore need for a new or ‘super school’.
- Valuable public buildings should be preserved.
- Traffic speeds need to be reduced.
- Conservation Area status (in Breage) needs to be stronger.
- Doctors/dentists surgeries are required.
- Explore a stipulation on second homes.
- Breage field is a special amenity area.
- Affordable housing should have a maximum selling price.
- Infrastructure needs to come before/with development and not after it.
- An appropriate use is needed for the old motel site on the A394.
- Playing fields need to be protected from development.
- Identify an appropriate location for a village hall (in Ashton)

Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group

Some 10 members of the local community came forward as potential members of a Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group – all have subsequently been written too via e-mail thanking them for their interest and explaining the proposed ‘next steps’ in determining whether to proceed with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Conclusions and Recommendation

The following key conclusions can be drawn from the initial round of public meetings:

1. Although views on whether to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan were mixed there was sufficient support to proceed to the next stage – the distribution and analysis of an initial Parish wide house hold survey.

2. A range of initial views were expressed on potential planning issues to be addressed but these are relatively well defined and largely have a focus on conserving and protecting existing assets.
3. A number of local residents have already expressed their interest in forming a Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group.

The initial household survey will add to the evidence base as to whether there is widespread support for the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, the key planning issues that such a plan should focus on, and the potential membership of a Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Group.

It is therefore now recommended that the Parish Council awaits the results of the initial household survey before embarking on further decision making in respect of the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Breage Parish.

Chris Ralph, 03/11/17