

## THE PICKMERE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

### **What's happening?**

Your Council has resolved to develop a Neighbourhood Plan for the village. It's the start of a long process that will engage everyone who lives and works here to help shape a shared vision of how we want Pickmere to look like in future years.

### **What IS a Neighbourhood Plan?**

Unlike the 'old' parish, village or town plans that communities (Pickmere included) prepared, a Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the development plan and sits alongside the local plan prepared by the local planning authority – in our case, Cheshire East Council. This means that decisions on planning applications will be made using both the local plan and the neighbourhood plan, so neighbourhood planning enables communities to play a much stronger role in shaping the areas in which they live and work and in supporting new development proposals.

The issue of neighbourhood planning dates from the 2011 Localism Act, which introduced Neighbourhood Plans as a tool for communities of any size to achieve some statutory influence over development in their local area.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a big undertaking in terms of time and resource and the pros and cons have been discussed many times by your Parish Council. In recent years growing numbers of parishes have created their own Neighbourhood Plans and there is now a body of evidence about their usefulness in planning decisions, hence we believe that the time is right for Pickmere to produce a Neighbourhood Plan that allows us to have a bigger say in the future planning of our community.

Topics covered can include the protection of the countryside, heritage, housing, the local economy, design, tourism and recreation etc. There are 29 adopted Neighbourhood Plans in Cheshire East, with another 28 underway.

### **What's involved?**

The whole process of drawing up the plan is tightly defined and the results must comply with the existing requirements of current national and county plans. The final proposals have to be presented to Cheshire East for their approval, after approval by parishioners and audit by an independent body. Government grants are available and Pickmere Parish Council has submitted an application. We have contracted consultancy advice from Lucy Hughes of Cheshire Community Action, to steer us through the process which can take anything between two to four years. When the plan is finalised and agreed, Cheshire East Council have to conduct a referendum of the inhabitants of Pickmere to see how many agree the Plan and at least 50% must approve it in order for it to be accepted and become official.

### **What's in it for Pickmere?**

We believe that there is a need to protect and conserve the highly rural nature of our Parish and that a Neighbourhood Plan provides the best means to do so. One of the advantages for a village of having a Neighbourhood Plan is that if anyone puts forward a proposal for development in the parish, the local planning authority has to take account of villagers' wishes as set out in the plan. Without the robust local input and robust policies a Neighbourhood Plan is able to provide, there is a real danger that housing development will be the only growth taking place in the village. A Neighbourhood Plan gives us the opportunity to consider our infrastructure, amenities and services and the protection of our natural environment, assets and green spaces that affect the quality of life for current and future residents.

**What a Neighbourhood Plan CANNOT do?**

A Neighbourhood Plan has to conform with national planning policy and the Cheshire East Local Plan. As it will be used by Cheshire East Council to help determine planning applications in our Parish, this means that our plan must be about ‘land use’ and other matters requiring or affecting planning consent. It cannot cover issues such as state of the roads, speed limits, litter, or public transport as these are not planning matters.

Why should you get involved?

The plan must reflect the views of as many inhabitants of the parish as possible, and the Parish Council wants to ensure that all residents are given the opportunity to put forward their ideas for the development and conservation of our parish over the next five-to-twenty years. This is your chance to help protect the characteristics of the landscape and built environment that are most special to the community and make a positive contribution to quality of place in Pickmere.

At the end of the process it will be independently examined and you will be able to vote in a referendum to adopt it.

**Would you like to join our steering group?**

The Parish Council is setting up a small team of villagers to carry out the work of gathering information, consulting the parishioners, forming policies and drawing up a draft plan for the parishioners’ approval. The development of a plan like this takes a lot of time and effort so please do let us know if you are able to contribute in any way.

We would particularly value volunteers with the following skills / experience:

- ADMIN AND OFFICE
- FINANCIAL AND BOOK-KEEPING
- LOCAL KNOWLEDGE AND CONTACTS
- SOCIAL MEDIA AND PUBLICITY
- MARKET RESEARCH
- IT & DATA ANALYSIS
- PROJECT MANAGEMENT
- HOUSING & PLANNING KNOWLEDGE
- URBAN DESIGN/ARCHITECTURE
- ENVIRONMENTAL KNOWLEDGE
- INTERVIEWING
- ART / PHOTOGRAPHY
- OTHER SPECIALISM/SKILL/INTEREST

**Yes please, I’m interested in being part of the Steering Group**

Name..... Email.....

Mobile number..... Address.....

.....

Please return to Jack Steel, Pickmere Parish Council Clerk, 1 Merehaven Close, Pickmere, Knutsford WA16 0LP