

Ickleford Neighbourhood Plan - Annual Parish Meeting Update 23rd May 2023

The last Annual Meeting update was in May 2021 so this report will briefly review progress since then.

Questionnaire results

May 2021 onwards saw the completion of the household questionnaire results analysis and write up. Both a summary presentation and full results report were created. These were shared online in August 2021. A well-attended information session in November 2021 allowed all residents to see hard copies of the results and learn more about the project.

Housing Needs Assessment

The infrastructure consulting firm AECOM completed their Housing Needs Assessment report in October 2021. This highlighted a significant need for affordable home ownership in the Parish and suggested the likely need for different types and sizes of homes in the future.

Design Codes

The first draft of AECOM's second report, the Ickleford Design Codes, was completed in December 2021. This substantial document provided a character assessment of the Parish, a set of design codes to guide future development and example masterplans for the potential development sites. These examples suggested possible ways the codes could be applied.

Feedback was sought from Herts County Council on highways and educational matters. The Design Codes were reviewed by the steering group and parish councillors, and amendments made.

Development of the plan

Once the first draft of the Design Codes was complete, Sally Chapman, our planning consultant started writing the Plan. She followed a structure previously developed with the steering group. The first draft was received in January 2022.

The Plan was also reviewed by the steering group and parish councillors and developed further. It was sent to North Herts for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment screening. The Pre-submission version signed off by the Parish Council in September 2022.

Pre-Submission Consultation

The Regulation 14 Consultation ran from September 2022 to November 2022. This formal consultation on the draft Plan and Design Codes allowed everyone with an interest in the future of the Parish to review the plan and suggest amendments. The consultation was widely publicised, online, through posters and with a leaflet drop to every household in the Parish. Statutory consultees were also invited to respond.

Copies of the consultation documents were made available at the telephone box book exchange on Upper Green, on request by telephone and at an information session at the Village Hall. Feedback could be given online via a Survey Monkey form or by paper feedback forms to a drop box in the village shop.

Responses were collated and reviewed, and changes made to the Plan and Design Codes documents. The changes were documented in the Consultation Statement. The revised documents were signed off by the Parish Council in early March

Submission

The Plan and supporting documents were submitted to North Herts Council in late March.

Regulation 16 Consultation

North Herts Council is required to consult on whether the Neighbourhood Plan meets certain basic conditions and other legal requirements (Regulation 16 Consultation). This consultation is currently taking place and finishes on Tuesday 27th June.

Next steps

After the Regulation 16 Consultation, the Plan, along with any feedback, will be passed to an independent examiner. The examiner will review these and decide whether the Plan can be offered for referendum. It is likely that the examiner will request some modifications at this point. If these can be successfully made, North Herts will then offer the Plan to residents to accept or reject. The Parish Council and steering group are allowed to publicise the referendum, but there are rules about providing balanced information.

Finances

In 2022, following a successful application on behalf of Ickleford Parish Council, the steering group received a Locality grant of £3830. We have also received non-financial technical support from them provided by AECOM, who produced the housing needs assessment, design codes and masterplans referred to above.

Our expenditure was as follows:

Hire of village hall - £62

Parish Online subscription (to produce maps for the plan) - £144

Website platform costs - £108

Printing - £460

Consultant costs (Planning) - £2345

The remaining £711 was returned to Locality as per their grant conditions in April and, as ever, we thank our clerk, Judith, for facilitating this.

The steering group retains a budget of £183.50. At time of writing the grant application process for the next financial year has not yet opened, but it is expected soon. We will

be applying for a final grant of approximately £1000 (the minimum allowed) to complete work on the plan. Any expenses arising before receipt of the grant, such as £44.38 due for domain name renewal, can be covered by the existing budget - which is the balance of a Hertfordshire County Council locality budget grant kindly awarded by county councillor David Barnard in 2018.