

**Committee: FULL COUNCIL**

**Date: 19 October 2021**

**Title: Neighbourhood Plan Update**

**Purpose of Report**

To update members on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan

**Recommendation:**

Members to note the report ahead of being provided with a revised copy of the Neighbourhood Plan that incorporates all the changes following the Schedule 14 Public Consultation.

**Report:**

1. Ilminster Town Council have now received the results from the Regulation 14 Public Consultation Neighbourhood Plan which was held during the summer.
2. A copy of the Full Report has been placed on the Town Councils website and people who wish to view a physical copy are being asked to make an appointment to visit the offices to view a copy.
3. In total of 416 online and paper questionnaires were received and the results are summarised here:
4. Vision and Mission - 77.7% of those who responded agree or strongly agree with the vision and mission. Some responders were concerned that the vision did not go far enough to address issues of the environment, sustainability, and landscape however the vast majority agreed.
5. ILM 1 - Conserve and enhance Ilminster's historic landscape setting. Views considered important were from Beacon Hill and across and through Shudrick Lane. Views of Mitchells Hill were not considered as important and scored the lowest.
6. ILM2 - Responders were asked to rank the importance of biodiversity conservation techniques. They were all considered to be very important. However, the majority felt the retention of existing significant hedgerows and trees was the most significant method.

7. ILM3 - Enhance and connect our local green open spaces with a 'Green Chain' discusses the requirements on developments. Although all elements were considered to be important, increasing biodiversity was considered the most important. A few responders felt that uses of green spaces were unimportant however this was greatly outweighed by those that felt it was very important.
8. ILM4 - Enhance recreational facilities for our growing community. Of those that responded 67% or 189 people said that there was a benefit to this, however 24.5% were neutral.
9. ILM 5 - Allocate an Ilminster Environmental Enterprise Zone to the west of Ilminster. A number of proposals that would support this provision such as cycle and walking facilities, parking, cycle hubs and connections to National cycle network. Business hubs for self-employed and small businesses, development to enhance local landscape character, and public access routes to open countryside were all considered important elements of the policy. Large scale sports or leisure facilities and visitor accommodation and eco-tourism facilities had responses which were either only slightly important or not important at all.
10. ILM6 - Enhance Ilminster's economy, tourism and heritage. The top description of Ilminster was as a unique, historic market town at 39.6% as well as a beautiful place in which to live, work, play and learn at 31.1% and that Ilminster connects people to the historic and natural environment at 14.6%. Following this it is an attractive centre for shopping, leisure and recreation as well as a more dynamic place for business, enterprise, creativity and innovation and a visitor destination.
11. ILM7 - Promote high quality design in all new development. The most important was high quality craftsmanship closely followed by strong relationship between the built environment and landscape. The conversion of old buildings and creation of new buildings and improved walking and cycling connections between urban and rural landscapes came out similarly with just over 150 responders stating that it is very important. Diversity of streets, blocks, plots and active street frontages and materials were next most important with those responding stating that they are either very or of medium importance. Adhesive relationship scored the lowest however most responders believed it to be either very important or of medium importance.
12. ILM8 - Encourage shoppers and visitors into Ilminster's town centre. All points were considered to be important by the majority of responders. Car parks and road improvements were considered to be very important as were buses. The vast majority felt that pedestrians and cycle friendly streets were still considered very important however less than cars and buses.
13. ILM9 - Safe, interesting walking and cycling routes policy requires developers to create safe, interesting walking and cycle routes. Over 160 responses felt that safe walking and cycling routes with wide pavements were important. Over 150 felt that CIL money should be used to improve the green chain

through the town. Of less importance but still very important were improvements to the cycle network.

14. ILM10 - Welcome people to Ilminster referred to the six road junctions on the edge of the town as 'gateways' for improvement and to be made safer. 'Bay Hill and Townsend' and 'Ditton Street to East Street and Shudrick' had strong responses for improvement. Responses to 'East Street and Butts', 'North Street and High Street/Butts' and 'New Road, Station Road and West Street' achieved slightly less in agreement. Finally 'Station Road and West Street' was of moderate importance.
15. ILM 11 - Preserve and enhance the historic market town centre. All aspects of this policy were considered to be important. Nearly all responders felt that the amenity spaces had importance as well as suitable access and servicing. Public realm enhancements had more responses with moderate importance although the vast majority still felt that it was very important. The majority, over 180 responses, felt that a shared surface approach was important however 50 responded stating it was not important.
16. ILM12 - Amount and location of new homes allows for the Local Plan target of 839 additional homes to be built between 2016 and 2036. Conflicting written responses were received regarding the allocated sites, the majority are opposed to the Shudrick Valley site as well as others objecting to development on Winterhay Lane. Most of the remaining locations gained support from responders. The Environment Agency state that flood sensitive areas should be avoided. Section 19 Flood investigation report Ilminster should be reviewed when considering allocating sites in Ilminster as several of the allocated sites and the Environmental Enterprise Zone are located within areas of Surface water, fluvial and reservoir flood risk. Sites 15A and 26 in particular which need a sequential test in flood zones 2 and 3. Green Ilminster propose that if developers want to build in the Plan area that they are required to enter into meaningful programme of community consultation that is consistent with the scale of the development.
17. ILM13 - Types of new homes. Almost 150 responders felt that affordable housing was very important and 75 felt it was of medium importance. The vast majority felt that 2/3 bedroom bungalows and 3 bedroom houses were lacking in Ilminster. The 1 bedroom flats and 2 bedroom flats or houses was still considered to be important but not as important. There were fewer who felt that 4 bedroom houses were important however it still attracted 150 votes as being important as opposed to 75 that felt it was not.
18. ILM15 - Design and layout of specific sites. This policy is a specific design policy for the large, strategic development sites, such as the site South West of Canal Way. The results outline that there is a resounding agreement with the requirements of developers in line with this policy.
19. Design Guide - This requires all developments to comply with certain parameters, such as installing certain styles of roofs, windows, and use of traditional building materials and for new homes to have sustainable design

features, such as solar panels. Of the responders 184 strongly agreed and 58 moderately agreed. A total of 87.1% agreed with this requirement.

20. Every element of the design was considered important to control. Very few responders answered don't know or not important to any element. Density, character, appearance and parking received over 200 very important votes. Gardens, size of dwelling and gaps between buildings received over 150 very important votes. Layout was considered the least important in ranking at just shy of 150 very important and 90 medium importance.
21. The next stage of the process is Regulation 15 where South Somerset District Council receive the amended version of the Neighbourhood Plan and give the public another opportunity to comment over a six week period. After that, the plan will go for examination by an inspector to check it follows all of the regulations before being put forward to a Public Referendum in Spring 2022.
22. At the meeting of the Ilminster Neighbourhood Plan Development Group meeting on the 6 October a number of actions were agreed following consideration of the public consultation process.
23. **Removing Housing Site Allocation from the Plan** – it was formally agreed that the “Housing Site Allocation” would be removed from the Neighbourhood plan.
24. It was hoped that the updated report would be made available for this meeting but at the time of the report being written this was not the case.
25. It was agreed by the group that Appendix C of the Plan would now be appropriately updated.
26. It was also proposed that once the amendments had been made to the consultation document, and approved by the ITC, it should go on the website.
27. Members are being asked to note the report ahead of being provided with a revised copy of the Neighbourhood Plan that incorporates all the changes following the Regulation 14 Public Consultation.

**Mark Tredwin**  
**Town clerk**  
**October 2021**