

# Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan

## Community Facilities

### Reference 7

## **Report on Newbold Verdon Primary School**

This document is a summary of the interaction held between members of the Neighbourhood Planning Group and representatives of the Newbold Verdon Primary School. Conversations were also held with PTA members and Hinckley and Bosworth District Council representatives.

These conversations were held over a period of 10 months.

They were used to inform the evidence gathering relating to community facilities and infrastructure issues should further large-scale housing development take place.

## **Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan**

### **Meeting with Headteacher of Newbold Verdon Primary School: 4<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

Attending: Mrs Heather Causon, Headteacher  
Mr Jim Sharman (NVNP)  
Mr Roger King (NVNP)

#### Introduction

The Transport and Infrastructure Group has been tasked with gathering evidence on the services within the village (in this instant the primary school) to understand each service's role in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan.

#### Service Provided

The school currently educates 239 pupils. Twenty-four of these children are educated within a dedicated Autism unit. All pupils are aged between 4 and 11. The school also provides a playgroup which currently accommodates 16 children.

#### Capacity Issues

The school has a yearly intake limit of 30 pupils. This can be exceeded if there are more than 30 pupils living within the catchment area for any one year group whose parents wish them to attend. Other children may also be admitted on other priority criteria.

In the past four years the trend has been an upward increase in pupil numbers to the point where there are a number of year groups exceeding the nominal limit of thirty. The headteacher does not see this reducing in the near future and anticipates that these increases will put pressure on the school's budget as well as the building's capacity to accommodate all the children in 'fit-for-purpose' classrooms.

There is no one explanation for an increase in numbers. Nationally there is something of a baby boom, and Newbold's trend upwards is reflected in county figures. The village has seen 103 houses built in recent years and whilst it has led to more pupils it is not, as yet, a significant number (9), though this may well increase as the younger children in these families reach school age. Social housing within the village can provide significant increases or decreases in pupils as families move into and out of the village.

#### Factors Impacting on Children's well-being

Whilst a neighbourhood plan is primarily about the use of land within its boundaries, this use of land can impact positively or negatively on children. The headteacher outlined what were some of the positive aspects for children living in the village and those that had a potentially negative impact: these to greater or lesser degrees may be influenced by how the parish land is used.

- Many children had strong, extended family support.
- They had good friendship groups and, on the whole, good social lives.
- They were generally quite active and the local parks played a part in their life and they enjoyed these open spaces
- Housing did not appear to be a significant issue (size, state etc) for the children.
- Exposure to drug taking was an issue for some children.
- There were safety issues for children and families moving to and from school (narrow pavements, loss of a crossing patrol)
- Parents parking inconsiderately both within and outside the school boundary.

## Implications for the Neighbourhood Plan

### **Housing Increase**

At present it does not look as though significant rises in house numbers (50+) will necessarily lead to an equally significant rise in pupil numbers. This was a possibility often sited when concern was expressed about an increase in housing by parishioners. The school is, however, functioning at capacity and any increase could place it under pressure both regarding its accommodation but also its budget, when more teachers may be required.

### **Factors Likely to Negatively Affect Pupils**

The Indices of Deprivation for Newbold Verdon for 2015 implies there is some evidence of a small number of families with dependent children living in overcrowded houses. (YL Housing needs Report 2017 p6).

The headteacher also reported her concern that some families were placed in rented accommodation within the village, but who did not have the close family support structure. Some also lacked private transport which meant they would have to pay bus fares to the Sure Start in Desford that some could ill afford. The limited bus service also meant families had to shop locally in the more expensive village shops than being able to access larger, often cheaper, supermarkets.

Some families were vulnerable due to mental health issues and in other cases, substance abuse.

This isolation from family, lack of affordable private transport and limited public transport, placed pressure on already vulnerable families. The headteacher felt it was as though they had been placed in the community and then left to sort out any issues independently.

The safety of pupils when moving to and from school is often compromised. The NP could militate against this by policies that help promote safer routes around the village.

The headteacher was not unduly worried about the physical fitness of the children, remarking on their general levels of activity. Her signalling out of the Dragon Lane Recreation Ground as an area greatly enjoyed and used by the children, reinforces the view that at the minimum this should be maintained and in the future improved.

### Further Exploration

Who decides which families are moved into the village? Can the NP insist on having some say in this in the future, given that local villagers are asking for housing that may well be going to people without any connections?

Can we gather further information from children and parents on what we think they perceive as issues and what they think of our solutions?

## **Questions Asked of the School**

### Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan Questions for Newbold Verdon Primary School

#### **School Capacity**

What is your current pupil number?

How many children does this include from the autistic unit?

What percentage of children live within the parish?

What is the school's capacity?

Have you any room for expansion?

If so, to how many and how would it be funded?

What factors influence pupil numbers?

How many pupils came from the Old Farm Lane development?

Have you any figure for pupil intake for the next 3-5 years?

What would be the likely impact on the school if 50/100/150 houses were built in the next 10 – 15 years

#### **Needs of Children and Families in NV**

What are the major factors (for better or for worse) influencing the life chances of the children in your school?

A neighbourhood plan is essentially about how the land is used within a community to enable it to thrive.

What aspects of the village need to be protected, improved or removed in order for children to thrive?

For example: To be safe – Children will need safe routes to and from school?

To be healthy –

To be secure –

What are the needs of their parents?

How do you know?

How could these needs be met within a NP?

# Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan

## Community Facilities Report: The Primary School. Part 2

13<sup>th</sup> March 2018

Author: Roger King

Present: RK, Heather Causon, Headteacher; Sander Ten Veldhulis, Chair of Governors

### Context

The Parish Council had requested that the school leadership be contacted again to ascertain more clearly what their needs currently are and how they would be affected by the possibility of an increase of 125 houses within the parish.

### Present Circumstances

The school's situation regarding pupil numbers had changed little from our previous conversation in June 2017. The school is at capacity and in some year groups the expected ceiling of 30 pupils was being exceeded – in the current Year 4 it was thirty-eight. Such number may necessitate a move to a 1.5 class entry of forty-four pupils per year. Conversations had been had between the school and Leicestershire County Council (LCC) and the school was described by LCC as being on the 'watch list' for potential Local Education Authority (LEA) support should the situation worsen. The implication for the school are primarily two-fold: the need for additional staff and additional space. The focus of our conversation was on the need for additional space; the neighbourhood plan could not address staffing issues.

Conversations with the LEA have led the school to the conclusion that there was unlikely to be any funding for a building extension. Instead, the expectation would be for existing rooms to be converted into classroom. The Head had identified three possible spaces, (a Community Room, the Nursery and Staff Room). She was very reluctant for any of these spaces to be converted because this would mean the removal of very important teaching and community resource areas.

For example, the school has a Community Room, a converted kitchen, that was paid for by community fundraising some years ago. It is currently used by two playgroups and may well be called upon soon to provide for carers and very young children who currently attend a Sure Start centre in Desford. Should County Council proposals come to fruition, the Centre will close, and carers and children will be supported back in their local community by outreach workers. There is a strong possibility that the school could provide the community room for the outreach work to take place. The school leadership team see the need for high quality early years support as vital, especially for those families living in the more deprived areas of the parish.

Newbold Verdon has two areas of deprivation - see <http://dclgapps.communities.gov.uk/imd/idmap.html> - where the two Lower Super Output Area (LSOA) score as follows.

*The overall Index of Multiple Deprivation Decile (where 1 is most deprived 10% LSOAs) shows this area to be ranked within the 5th decile of the 2015 Index whereas the LSOA to the south of the parish is listed in the 10th decile and displays very low levels of deprivation. On closer inspection of the domain indices, employment, education and skills deprivation is a contributing factor to the overall index score in the north of the parish. P12 NV NP.*

Further analysis of these statistics show the most deprived area in the Parish ranking 10<sup>th</sup> in the District overall and 6<sup>th</sup> in terms of levels of Education, Skills and Training.

High quality, accessible child-care and early learning opportunities help to combat the challenges faced by carers and their children in areas of such deprivation, and the possibility that the school would be asked to convert back either its community room or nursery to provide additional classroom space for school-age children would be short-sighted.

### Additional Housing

The Head and Chair felt the number and type of accommodation planned could possibly lead to a significant increase in pupil numbers, though this would be hard to determine until plans had been finalised. Even a relatively small increase would exasperate an already challenging situation.

The Neighbourhood Plan is asserting a minimum of 40% affordable housing. There is also a recommendation that approximately 75% of the units developed will be provided as social renting housing.

This mix of housing may well add to the need for the school to retain its community room and nursery.

### Recommendation

That the Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges the school's circumstance and tries within its policies to alleviate the pressures likely to be experienced because of the number and type of housing development being promoted.

**Newbold Verdon Neighbourhood Plan**

**Transport and Infrastructure Group**

**Interview with Newbold Verdon Primary School PTA Members**

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017

Purpose: To gain some understanding of the experience of the Parish through the eyes of parents with young children.

**Are you ever public bus users?**

Yes, to Leicester and Hinckley.

I used to use the earlier bus until it was taken off; I am now forced to use the Park-and-Ride from Enderby. A lot of people use the bus service to get to and from work.

**Are there areas of the village not safe for you or your children?**

I can think of three: the corner opposite the Swan with its narrow footpath; outside the school – speeding cars – it needs some form of traffic calming.

There is also the coming out of the school car park gate and trying to see your way around the parked cars. It is very dangerous and I have had to slam my breaks on at the last minute at times.

There is a similar problem coming out of Enson Street on to Mill Lane and coming out of Old Farm lane on to Dragon Lane.

People coming down from the heath need a safer crossing point.

**What about when your children are coming to and from school?**

We see year 5 and 6 children (9 – 11) being able to come to school on their own. The crossing-patrol is invaluable. It is a pity they removed the patrol at the Baptist Chapel.

**Is this a safe village?**

All – ‘Yes’

I have not had any negative experiences.

I came from Barwell and this feels much safer.

The playground on the new estate (Old Farm Lane) is very safe.

There is a corner at the end of Dragon Lane Recreation Ground which backs on to the garages at Preston Drive. Older children and teenagers congregate there.

There are also youths who congregate on Alan’s Way who smoke drugs. We don’t walk our dogs that way at that time.

**What about the amenities in the village?**

The Co-op is brilliant.

The Nisa offers a post office open for much longer hours.

The library is very good.

**Are there many opportunities for children after school?**

There is Youth Bus that visits the village, which is good.

Some children have mentioned the possibility of a skate park. This would be good.

There are a number of other things we can do with the children (especially the young)

I am concerned about letting my child on to both the Recreation Ground and Alan's Way because of the dog poo that is not picked up.

On the whole, the village is family friendly.

**What about education?**

Some classes feel crowded, except for the Reception class

I think class sizes have got bigger.

If you enlarged the school you would disadvantage those children who are already there.

I know of two people who live in the village and who cannot get their children into Newbold.