

Leekfrith Neighbourhood Plan.... Survey Feedback and Progress, August 2016

Over the last three months parishioners have been returning the Leekfrith Parish Neighbourhood plan questionnaire. The percentage return has been 25% which is good for this type of survey. The following points have become evident as the survey was analysed.

1. Support for the vision was very high at an average of 4.5 out of 5.
2. Support for the development of Upper Hulme Mill was again high at 4.2, however there is concern about parking and the suitability of the road to the Mill.
Progress :- Parking will be addressed in the policies governing development ie a certain number of parking spaces per housing unit would be required. Also moving industrial units away from the main thoroughfare would eliminate the issues we have with loading/unloading. The roadway has been assessed by Staffordshire Highways and their judgement is that the increase in traffic will be marginal as the volumes are relatively high, due to tourism, and there has been significant HGV traffic along that road for many years.
3. There was support for the possible affordable housing sites in Meerbrook at 3.8, but there was strong disagreement from within Meerbrook itself.
Progress :- On reflection the parish council have decided not to continue with this policy, instead deciding that it will be better to address the issue of affordable housing as and when a request arises. The sites that we identified, although acceptable to the PDNPA and SMDC, are unlikely to become available in the medium term and there is a much greater likelihood of affordable housing being built on the Upper Hulme Mill site.
4. There is great concern about parking within Meerbrook.
Progress :- The parish council is engaging with Severn Trent and the Lazy Trout to see if an extension to the Lazy Trout car park is possible and also to see if there are any other areas where Severn Trent might help with parking management.
5. The possibility of a holiday cottage owner being able to choose whether or not to offer full time rent had good support at 4.2. There was some concern that the rents would be too high for local people but according to Whittaker and Biggs estate agents the premium would only be of the order of 10% against a similar property in Leek.
The rationale for this policy is that holiday cottages across the Peak Park are occupied for about 25% of the year, which means there is a substantial body of housing stock being under utilised.
Progress :- This idea is being developed along with guidance from PDPNA.
6. The Roaches overspill car park was very well supported at 4.4.
Progress :- This will continue to be pursued by the parish council and Staffs Wildlife as quickly as we can. It will not however form part of the Neighbourhood Plan because it will not require long term planning consent.

As progress continues, we will continue to involve as many parishioners and interested parties as possible. Thank you for your support so far.

Bob Foster (Leekfrith Neighbourhood Plan Co-ordinator)