



15th December 2023

PRESS RELEASE: IMMEDIATE

The Future of Alton

Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has issued the following Press Release:

We are very grateful to the members of the public who have contributed to our work so far and hope that we can have constructive and copious feedback when we go to the next consultation period in April. This is your town and your opinions count, so please get involved in the consultations.

Alton's Neighbourhood Development Plan: Making Good Progress

The task of the Alton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is to replace the current Neighbourhood Plan to cover the period out to 2040. The Steering Group sponsored by Alton Town Council is made up of volunteers, specialist planning consultants and Town and District Councillors.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a highly influential document that is a key part of the East Hampshire District planning process, giving residents of Alton the opportunity to express their views on both residential and infrastructure development within their town. By definition, the scope of the plan is limited to all wards in the Alton Parish. This is critical work as Alton and the surrounding area will need to take its share of housing and employment area development, as part of East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) local plan allocation from the present out to 2040.

What is in a Neighbourhood Plan?

A good Neighbourhood Plan will attempt to include many aspects of development that affect local residents, such as locations of any large developments, the type of design and architecture used, the potential impact on public services and amenities, an assessment of the local housing need and a future vision of what we want our town to look and feel like. Our new Neighbourhood Plan will contain all these elements.

How much progress has been made so far?

The Steering Group, which includes members experienced in developing such plans as well as members of the public, have been working on this for many months. Key elements of progress so far have been:

- **Initial Public Engagement (May 2023)**

Highlighting possible development sites, potential town centre regeneration and general information on housing needs.

- **Second Public Engagement (September 2023).**

Inviting comment on more detailed proposed development scenarios for the town and surrounding area.

- **Engagement Report & Conclusions (December 2023)**

Creation of a detailed report capturing and analysing the views and opinions from the two public engagements, which can be viewed or downloaded here:

<https://www.alton.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/Consultation-Summary-1.5.pdf>

What are the Next Steps?

- **Housing Site Allocation Workshop – (January 2024)**

The Steering Group working with the assistance of specialist planning consultants will be undertaking a final housing site allocation workshop after the Christmas break. This process will take into consideration the evidence gathered so far including the feedback received from the two public engagements to inform the development of the draft.

- **Creation of a Draft Neighbourhood Plan – (January 2024)**

This draft will be presented to Alton Town Council, and as well as planning policies, it will include guidance in specific development areas for which they have responsibility or influence. If content, the Council will authorise the Plan to go forward for formal public consultation

- **Formal Public Consultation – (April 2024)**

The publication of the draft Alton Neighbourhood Plan marks the start of a six-week consultation period, known as ‘Regulation 14’ that is required by planning law. This process will be widely publicised and there will be a drop-in event held in the Town Centre, when members of the public can view and comment on the proposals. East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) will be consulting for 6 weeks on their ‘Local Plan’ for the District in early 2024 and so ‘Regulation 14’ consultation will not begin until April 2024 to avoid confusion.

All comments from the public will then be analysed and considered with any required changes to the draft plan being made before it is submitted to the Town Council for final approval and then submitted to EHDC.

Further information can be found at Alton Town Council website:

<https://www.alton.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan/>

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