

Aims and Objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan.

Draft 2.RevA (31 Oct 2024)

(Based on surveys from 2022-2024)

Colour Code

Aaaaa Aspirational - Neighbourhood Plan cannot deliver but village action called for

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Aim 1: To support the provision of housing where it meets the needs of the community.

Objectives:

- To support new housing developments that offer a mix of housing types and sizes that reflect the needs of those wishing to downsize within the village, local young people seeking to stay in the community and those unable to afford full market prices.
- To support the provision within any development for an appropriate proportion of social and discounted open market housing that is retained in perpetuity to meet local needs.

Aim 2: To encourage developments in the village at a pace and of a scale that reflects the size of the community and its rural context

Objectives:

- To prioritise small scale developments that reflect the size of the existing settlement and the character areas within it
- To support incremental growth that enables new developments to be assimilated with the existing community

Aim 3: To encourage new developments to apply best practice to improve pedestrian safety and sustainability.

Objectives:

- In addition to local plan requirements (renewable energy / EV charging / cycle storage, SUDS)_ all development should install solar pv panels on roofs and be orientated to best effect
- Safe pedestrian access along the A371 and from the development to the core of the village should be demonstrated
- Cycle access to multi user park routes should be made available in all new development

- The scope of Surface water and SUDS proposals need to consider wider context than local plan requirements by taking account of existing high risk areas in the village.

HIGHWAY PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Aim 1: To bring improvement in safer access to all areas of Westbury and neighbouring villages for pedestrians, non-motorised transport and vehicles.

Objectives:

- To leverage significant improvements in safe pedestrian to the core of the village using existing local plan policy WM1 and expecting similar commitments from future development.
- Develop proposals for better pedestrian links within the village leveraging funding from new development
- Support work to provide off-road links between Westbury sub Mendip and neighbouring villages.
- Encourage measures to slow down vehicles travelling through Westbury sub Mendip and the improvement of sight lines for vehicles and pedestrians on the A371

Aim 2: Increase the provision of parking spaces for public use (off road)

- Given the rural location of Westbury sub Mendip and the lack of sufficient public transport to require 20% increase in parking allocations on all new developments over and above the Somerset Standards for Parking in order to ensure reduced demand for street parking
- To lobby for contributions or land from developers to increase dedicated off road parking provision in locations that service access to village facilities (church, shop, hall etc).

Aim 3: Improve public transport to reflect the needs of a small rural village and members of the community with restricted mobility.

Objectives:

- Lobby for improved levels of service (frequency and reliability) of buses to ensure connectivity to adjacent villages, towns and cities and onward to railway stations and other transport hubs.
- Promote that the timing of services should allow villagers to get to and from school, work, appointments and entertainment.

SETTLEMENT CHARACTER (within settlement boundary)

Aim 1: To place as a priority for all development within the settlement boundary the need to protect and enhance the special characteristics of Westbury sub Mendip village as described in the Village Character Assessment.

Objectives:

- All development to demonstrate how they have applied recommendations set out in published Village Character Assessment (VCA)
- To safeguard glimpses of notable features such as the church, village cross and views of the surrounding landscape.
- To safeguard specific green spaces (tbc) considered to be of particular value to the community.
- To maintain the presence of the countryside where it is inserted into the settlement as identified in the 'green wedges' described in the VCA.
- Protect against introduction of urban features into a rural setting e.g. urban layouts, intrusive street lighting, unnecessarily wide pavements on minor roads.
- Uphold the importance of boundary treatments in new development where design maintains and enhances the existing mix of hedges, stone walls, stiles and gates as identified in the VCA

Aim 2: To require that the layout and design of any new housing development demonstrates how it enhances the settlement character of the village as identified in the published Village Character Assessment (VCA).

Objectives:

- Proposed **layouts** of new development should align with the village character areas identified in the VCA.
- Road widths, boundary hedges and stone walls should be in keeping with the character of the village whilst allowing safe movement of pedestrians and non-motorised users.
- Scale, design and use of materials for new housing, whilst making use of modern materials, should demonstrate how the design guidance within design guides the VCA has been followed.

LANDSCAPE & ENVIRONMENT

Aim 1. To support development where it helps maintain or enhance the special qualities of both the Mendip Hills and the Levels & Moors National Landscape that are evident in the parish.

Objectives:

- To seek a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment for all development outside of the settlement boundary that shows how it will be compatible with the two National Character Areas within which the parish is situated.
- To recognise the importance of maintaining the 'views in' and 'views out' of and from the National Landscape when assessing development proposals
- **To encourage** the maintenance and restoration of drystone walls and traditional native hedges
- **To support the viability** of traditional and restorative agricultural practices to help manage unimproved limestone grassland and the traditional landscape of the levels and moors

Aim 2. To welcome opportunities to enhance public access to and engagement with the natural environment in order to promote physical and mental health and the appreciation of nature.

Objectives:

- To maintain and where possible expand the network of footpaths, shared use paths and bridleways throughout the parish.
- To encourage the designation of areas of special wildlife interest as local nature reserves
- To provide opportunities for local people to become actively involved in managing local wildlife sites

Aim 3. To promote the restoration of natural ecosystem processes in order to improve biodiversity and the resilience of the natural environment

Objectives:

- To support developments where they help deliver aspects of the Mendip Hills National Landscape Nature Recovery Plan, 2020
- To ensure that decisions on development support the key features of the newly designated Kings National Nature Reserve in and adjacent to the parish.
- To encourage the installation of wildlife friendly features in new developments including dark skies, bat and swift boxes, ponds, sustainable systems for managing surface water drainage, wildlife corridors and enhanced tree cover.
- To advocate that land use outside the settlement boundary be protected for agriculture and local ecology.

SUSTAINABILITY

Aim: Encourage sustainable practice across all NP policies – traffic, design, environment and to encourage progress in the following:

Objectives:

- To promote and lobby for better public transport, broadband and mobile connectivity.
- Increase the generation of renewable energy in the village by way of encouraging installation of solar PV on roofs
- Advocate for ways to reduce car use including support for completion of the strawberry way multi-user path
- Identify and promote opportunities to reduce waste and recycle.

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Aim: To improve the range of community facilities to reflect the needs of groups within Westbury sub Mendip.

Objectives:

- In partnership with Church Commissioners to allocate the old Court House Farm buildings as a site to host a new community hub where village facilities such as the hall, post office and shop can be co-located in a central location.
- **To promote, seek funding** and progress subsequent development of a new community hub to meet the needs of village services, recreation, leisure for all age groups.
- To protect and enhance existing leisure and recreational facilities to better accommodate the needs of all groups, including younger people and those with restricted mobility.

EMPLOYMENT

Aim: Support the growth of small businesses and rural local economy whilst ensuring physical development is compatible with a rural and residential village location.

- **Promote improvements** in the range of infrastructure needed by small and micro businesses and those who work from home.
- **Work with existing and new employment uses** to balance business need with other neighbourhood plan objectives requiring minimal impact on the environment and specifically limiting light pollution.
- Employment uses for general or heavy industrial (B2 or B8 uses) will be resisted as not compatible with the rural location.