

# 'NEW' Milton

## New Milton Neighbourhood Plan

### Vision Workshop Note

October 2016 (REV A - DEC 2016)

#### Introduction

This note summarises the discussions of the Vision Workshop held with the Project Steering Group and other invited stakeholders at New Milton Town Council offices on 11<sup>th</sup> October 2016. It also adds further analysis and reflections based on the future 'brand' that were discussed at the meeting. Finally, it identifies a series of follow-up actions for the Group to consider.

#### The Discussions

We discussed the role of the neighbourhood plan and the range of influences that push and pull the plan in various directions including the critical influence of community opinion on the shape of the plan. The New Milton (NM) group place particular importance on the early and continuing engagement with the community throughout the development of the plan, so that the Plan is firmly rooted and tested against the community's views.

We also explained the role and relationship of the adopted Core Strategy and emerging Local Plan. The New Forest Core Strategy defines New Milton as a "larger town and service centre" and describes New Milton and Barton-on-Sea in the following terms - *"New Milton is a relatively modern sub-urban settlement that has developed around the main line railway to the south of the New Forest. Barton-on-Sea extends the town to the coast of Christchurch Bay. It is [the area as a whole] an important shopping and employment centre"*.

#### Part One

We gave examples of development pressures on infrastructure e.g. about 1,000 homes will normally generate additional demand for a 1FE primary school, pressures on secondary school places and additional requirements for other services.

A specific pressure to New Milton and the surrounding area is the high proportion of older people (about 1/3 of NM residents are aged over 65) which will continue to place pressures on health and social care services.

We then moved onto discuss the groups vision of NM in 2036...

- The High Street is defined by a different offer than today – much greener with shared space and a pleasant café ('hipster') culture

- Everyone has a home, and whilst there are no homeless there are no longer far too many on the housing waiting list.
- Building density has increased and the Old Milton Road area is like Portobello market, suited to the increased number of younger people now living locally.
- The town has taken advantage of the successful Bournemouth/Poole digital economy and is now competing with it because houses in the NM are much cheaper and benefit from the 'Forest' on the doorstep. Young professionals who would once have headed to Brighton or similar places now see NM as the 'place to be'.
- The Stem Lane employment area is much expanded and servicing the digital economy
- The heritage of NM is retained as it's seen as part of the attractor for young people, and the heritage buildings which once housed SP Furnishers and Lloyds Bank, now form a nucleus for this burgeoning sector and the focus for the night time economy.
- This area includes the Memorial Hall off Whitefield Road (the area developed in the 1960's) the Recreation Ground and the other heritage buildings in close proximity.
- The Sorting Office (122-124 Station Rd) and 'the row of ten' (36 to 46 Station Rd) have been transformed as the focal point of regeneration around the rail station – this area having been the target for regeneration over the last 20 years - and contains the Science College (STEM) as a satellite campus to Bournemouth University providing the foundation courses for its Media/Digital courses.
- Currently Brockenhurst College and Peter Symonds College Winchester in competition and the latter seen as the 'place to go'
- A large proportion of people educated in New Milton now remain as property is affordable and the town attractive for families and particularly those under 40.
- NM has become the 'capital of the New Forest'
- NM has expanded its sports grounds and sports facilities (Fawcetts Field and Ashley Recreation Ground) including the New Forest Leisure Centre
- The Local Plan 2 allocations including land east of Fernhill Lane (NMT7) have helped in delivering the vision
- Youngsters want a cinema – the New Forest Arts Centre shows films but not mainstream
- Train service is excellent (see capacity improvements later in note)
- Need to be careful what you attract – addiction problems which arrive by train. So important to get the demographic balance right to reduce crime.
- North Milton and Davis Field Estate contain the highest proportion of social housing and several generations of local families.
- Important to plan for young people in the local area. Ashley has a better demographic mix and less crime.
- The Police support positive change in areas of the town and have supported the regeneration investment in the North Milton and Davis Estates over recent years. [Post meeting note - £5.8M invested in the North Milton estate regeneration project (2016) which includes 21 new council homes for rent for local people on the 'Homeseach' register and major environmental

improvements including a new park, several local play areas, new landscaping and improved pedestrian and vehicle access].

- The potential to combine Site K, N, W, North Milton and Davis Estate as a regeneration opportunity area
- Where does the coastal area fit? Barton has few opportunities to accommodate significant change.
- Town Council policy is to resist subdivision of plots in Barton Gardens character area
- Principle residence policy mentioned to reduce 2nd home pressure – does this pressure exist?
- Concluded that, little change expected in Barton, aside from some redevelopment of individual plots, and the ongoing management of coastal erosion.

## Part Two

- Recognising that NM doesn't operate in isolation, we discussed the impact of housing growth taking place in adjacent areas, traffic in Bashley and the role of green infrastructure and smaller opportunity sites within the existing built up area.
- A number of tourism facilities lie within the parish including Hoburne Naish and Hoburne Bashley Holiday Parks and Shorefields Country Park located on the NM/Milton on Sea boundary at Downton Lane.
- We also discussed the more rural parts of the area - Bashley & Ossemsley - where NFNPA apply the 30% rule to replacement dwellings or extensions<sup>1</sup>. These small settlements lie within the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA) area and hence fall under a different planning regime. So do we exclude these areas from the Plan? (Post meeting note - The NFNPA Housing Topic Paper (Oct 2016) Site Assessment Outcomes, rejects all 8 housing sites within the neighbourhood area in the NFNP, principally on the basis of the limited services available).
- Bashley is a ribbon development and THE B3058 Bashley Common Road is a busy commuter route to the A35 and Southampton. The City receives the largest proportion of out commuter flows from across the District (map 3.3 NFDC Planning Strategy)
- is there a pattern of movement that would not make this matter worse such as promoting non-car based travel and supporting self-containment?
- The group discussed the impact of traffic on the town centre (the Spencer Road traffic lights) and the traffic implications of one or two of the proposed sites. The 2012 Town Plan and NM Town Centre Strategy Study (2006) discusses this topic and identifies the challenge of accessibility around the town particularly for older people.

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<sup>1</sup> See New Forest National Park Local Plan Review: Interim Topic Paper Housing Consultation draft (Oct 2016)

- 3000 new homes) could fund transport improvements, but its currently unclear if NFDC intend to commission a transport study to assess the implications of the growth options in the South Coastal Towns sub area.
- What opportunities are there for increasing self-containment, and if so by what proportion. The New Forest area already has a relatively high self-contained C70%?
- Walking and cycling critically important so work to do on transport issues and movement and connectivity
- Tim Thurston's issues not debated (Health and Planning) nor was the town's character.
- Include policy ideas on all the above and outline the working groups necessary.

### Part Three

The NEW Milton vision is a huge task about rebranding the future of the town.

The plan will need to cover traffic, flood risk, green infrastructure, health and well-being and other policy directions included within the New Forest Local Plan document but which there was insufficient time to discuss in detail.

NFDC have agreed to put together a site pack for each strategic site, and the group need to obtain land interest representations as soon as possible. They also need to understand the implications of infrastructure in relation to this much bigger picture and the extent of the settlement capacity to accommodate.

In assessing capacity, there will be a need to separate work on strategic sites from existing sites and the potential for vacant or previously developed land to be developed at a higher density. NFDC have commenced a 'call for Brownfield sites'.

### **Analysis and Further Reflections on A Vision of 2036**

Shaking off the reality of the 'Old' Milton brand...

We think it possible over the 20-year period of the neighbourhood plan to plan for demographic change in the town that will change its purpose in life.

Such an approach reflects the Spatial Strategy to 2026 as described in the New Forest Core Strategy<sup>2</sup> and earlier conclusions<sup>3</sup> which highlighted the need for a rebalancing of the New Forest economy to retain or attract the 16 to 44 age group 'through the development of niche sectors including creative and media industries based on an unparalleled quality of life'

But...

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<sup>2</sup> NFDC Core Strategy Paras 9.35 and 9.36

<sup>3</sup> New Forest: An Economic Profile 2006 (Executive Summary)

<http://www.newforest.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=24819&p=0>

For this to happen will require a series of mutually independent changes to follow the same path. The key components to support change are:

- The quantum and mix of homes on the proposed strategic sites (c. 1000 homes)
- The quantum and mix of homes and jobs on the unimplemented site allocations in LP2 (circa 225 homes)
- The quantum and mix of homes and retail/leisure offer in and around the Town Centre
- The development of land around the Station
- The nurturing and expansion of the Old Milton commercial and living 'district'
- The quantum and mix of homes and jobs resulting from developing other brownfield sites
- The connectivity between new homes and the station
- Delivering new, distinct secondary and tertiary education facilities
- Leaving Barton (south of A337) and the rural area (north of B3055) as they are but improving connectivity from NM to the Forest and seafront at Barton

The focus of the plan is therefore unequivocally 'NEW' Milton; the town centre area and Old Milton. Barton on Sea, effectively a suburb of the town, and Bashley will remain largely untouched other than benefiting from the change that results. So the Plan will avoid intervention to the south of the A337 (the Christchurch and Lymington Roads) and to the North of the B3055 (the Bashley Cross and Sway Roads) which in any case is largely within the National Park and Green Belt.

These reflections provide the key to unlocking the vision and the basis of the tasks necessary to inform the scope and policies in the plan.

### THE LAND USE CHALLENGE

Total households all of New Milton = 12300 (2011 Census).

Assuming the number of dwellings south of the A337 equals all of Barton ward (2652) plus approximately half of Becton ward ( $2324/2=1160$ ) which equals 3812. Hence the housing stock less areas to remain untouched equals approximately 8500 homes.

To bring the NM demographic profile into line with the SE average requires approx. 2,000 new homes to increase the NM housing stock from approx. 8,500 (exc Barton) towards 10,500 and the population from 17,000 (exc Barton) to more than 21,000. The vast majority of new homes (at least 80%) must be Starter Homes, private rented and affordable rented homes and 2/3 beds type. These tenures are those where the planning system can exclude or discourage 40+ age households from acquiring new homes. Those households will be able to meet their housing needs from the existing NM housing stock.

#### Challenge 1

The new NFLP has proposed 1,000 new homes on land with potential to be released from the Green Belt. The previous LP Part 2 proposed site allocations for approximately 220 homes. There will therefore be a need to double the number of

homes that that planned for in NM (excluding Barton and the rural area). This can be through extending the area of one or more of the strategic sites or previous site allocations, finding new sites and/or by assuming higher development densities.

### Challenge 2

In order to attract <40 age households to live in NM (and to reduce their dependence on other towns) will require additional employment land and land for new retail, leisure, recreation, education/early years, health and cultural facilities and services. This land can be sourced from intensifying existing sites, by securing land from the strategic sites or other site allocations and/or finding new sites.

### THE CONNECTIVITY CHALLENGE

NM itself (excluding Barton) is a conventional form of town centre located centrally, with rail station close by and various suburbs surrounding it, connected by the main roads leading into the centre from N, W, E and S. The main patterns of movement generated from within NM are car-based, comprising mostly one of three types of trip:

- Out-commuting from across NM to Southampton and SE Dorset
- Shopping trips from suburbs to the town centre
- The school run

In addition, there is traffic passing through NM on the E-W A337. There is already considerable congestion at peak hours on the road system, especially on roads heading north to the A35 and Gore Road/A337 heading west. The congestion on Station Road/Ashley Road through the town centre is common across the day.

The station (which benefits from frequent and reasonably fast services to Southampton/Thames Valley/London and SE Dorset) is busy but subject to a number of proposed improvements<sup>4</sup> to the rail network likely to be capable of handling significantly higher levels of use for commuting.

### Challenge 3

Significant growth on all four edges of NM is likely to increase congestion in the town centre (including increasing the demand for car parking space) and on roads heading north and west. There is no prospect of creating additional road capacity in or around the town, so the challenge is to provide realistic alternatives to car trips and to invest in junction improvements and town centre road re-configuration.

### Challenge 4

If the rail station is going to play a major role in attracting new commuting households, its connectivity to all parts of the town by walking, cycling and bus services must be excellent, as there is no prospect of delivering significantly higher levels of car parking on site. This may require dedicated bus and cycle lanes on

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<sup>4</sup> Network Rail Wessex Route Study. Aug 2015 (see also Improvements to the Rail Network; Bournemouth BC Economy and Tourism Overview and Scrutiny Panel Item 8. 12 April 2016)

limited road space and perhaps Park & Ride sites and/or dedicated station-bus services.

### THE ENGAGEMENT CHALLENGE

This vision represents a significant and deliberate departure from the way that NM has grown over the last 30 – 40 years. The nature of the town's facilities and retail offer has been shaped by the older population, which has continued to grow. It has also shaped the image of NM to the outside world, whether that is house buyers, business investors or retailers. In effect, the new Local Plan proposes more of the same, indicating that all the demand for new homes in NM will be from 65+ people.

For this to succeed – setting aside the other challenges – there has to be a desire by the majority of the local community to want to see this change and be willing to vote for it at a referendum in due course. Some will be resistant to change as a matter of principle; others to change of this type, especially if they see this as a 'zero-sum' game, i.e. there will be winners and losers, and they will be the losers.

But, there may be a significant minority of younger households in NM (whether longstanding NMers or newer arrivals) that are more likely to see the upsides and few or any downsides.

#### Challenge 5

Aside from testing the technical validity of the vision through the other four challenges, the project must quickly test how much support there is for the vision and understand how such support may grow or be lost as the solutions to the technical challenges become more obvious. Once the current engagement activities are completed, it may be helpful to develop and test with local people two scenarios of the future of NM: one based on the status quo and the other based on this vision. The scenarios should set out the principal upside and downsides and make clear their dependences - 'you can't have your cake and eat it' - so that the community can understand and respond to the key trade-offs.

#### **Tentative Policy Scope**

1. Policies guiding the key principles of each of the strategic sites
2. Policies allocating or reserving other sites for development
3. A policy setting out the principles of a town centre and station masterplan
4. A policy defining housing mix (of type and tenure, inc. second home restriction) on new schemes
5. A policy managing development in the Old Milton Character Area
6. A policy defining a green infrastructure network through the Parish
7. A policy managing design standards across the Parish
8. A policy setting out the timing and funding of key infrastructure delivery

#### **Tasks**

It was agreed that the Group should be advised of specific tasks that it could pursue to inform the NMNP in taking forward the issues raised above through the formation of smaller task groups for that purpose. The Group itself should undertake further analysis of the demographic data to inform the task groups as necessary.

The following tasks are recommended:

Sites (Policies 1, 2, 4 and 8 above)

- Strategic sites as per agreed brief
- Site assessments of all other sites (LP2 etc)
- Analysis of housing stock supply and demand
- Analysis of land ownerships/leases etc and failures to come forward
- Concept plans
- Land owner/tenant meetings
- Refined concept plans with development policy principles

Town Centre & Station (3 and 8)

- Site assessments
- Analysis of land ownerships/leases etc
- Analysis of town centre 'offer' and competitive position (SWOT)
- Analysis of retail supply and 'offer' elsewhere in NM
- Concept plans
- Land owner/tenant meetings
- Refined concept plans with development policy principles

Old Milton (5)

- Site assessments
- Analysis of land ownerships/leases etc
- Analysis of OM 'offer' and competitive position (SWOT)
- Concept plans
- Land owner/tenant meetings
- Refined concept plans with development policy principles

Social Infrastructure (1, 2 and 8)

- Analysis of current capacities and sites versus projected changes
- Provider meetings
- New site selection and specifications

Economic Development (1,2,3 and 8)

- Analysis of NM land supply and demand forecasts
- Analysis of NM 'offer' and competitive position (SWOT)
- Land owner/chamber meetings
- New site selection and specifications

Green Infrastructure & Design (6, 7 and 8)

- Map existing network of assets
- Compare with key places of change (sites)
- Identify opportunities to create new connections
- Identify design policies



If task groups are to be set up, then the following advice may be useful:

- They should seek consensus but not at all costs
- They should complete their work with a short summary report bringing together all the above outputs
- They may be requested to reconvene later in the plan making process if further analysis is required on their subjects

At what points the above work will need to be tested with the local community will become more obvious once the work has been started. For now, the assumption is that each group will have made enough progress to be able to inform the scenario testing described above, maybe mid-way through the process towards the Draft Plan. The Steering Group should review progress with this goal in mind.

RCOH has set aside 8 person days to support the task groups excluding the strategic sites work, which has additional days allocated under the separate scope agreed with the TC. This support may comprise helping set the brief for concept planning work to be undertaken by land owners' consulting teams, accompanying task group site visits, reviewing evidence analysis, meeting with landowners and reviewing interim work outputs from the task groups. It will be for the Steering Group to determine how to make the most effective use of these days across the tasks and to agree with RCOH how to plan for them in advance as best as possible.

### **Taking this Forward**

The challenges and tasks set out above respond to the the strength of feeling that the role of the neighbourhood plan should be to rebrand 'NEW' Milton over the 20 year of the plan. This is an ambitious vision but one we feel while stretching and plausible, much of the challenges to its delivery were not discussed at the workshop; but one in which the whole steering group, including those who were unable to be present at the workshop should discuss, test the interdependencies, and reach a conclusion quickly on its acceptability and hence validity with the community and whether the Group feel they have the capability to make it happen.

To this end we recommend a SG meeting is called as soon as possible, that Mark Williams be invited to this meeting and that this meeting takes place before the first Strategic Sites workshop.

### **Project Plan**

A revised project plan is attached. The above work programme is likely to take up to six months to complete, which ought to enable the NP to stay in step with the Local Plan. This means a Pre Sub consultation later in 2017 and the submission by the end of next year.