Dronfield Town Neighbourhood Plan

Community Consultation Drop-in Events on Preliminary Draft: February 2018 - Key Findings

April 2018

Introduction and Aims of the Event

Dronfield Town Council undertook community consultation drop-in events to assist in the preparation of the Dronfield Town Neighbourhood Plan.

Two well-attended consultation events were held at the Civic Hall in February 2018 at which the community was given the opportunity to view and comment on the preliminary draft of the Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan. These took place at the Civic Hall, Dronfield on:

- Friday 2nd February, 4pm – 8pm

- Saturday 3rd February, 11am – 3pm

The time and date were purposefully selected to maximise attendance spanning as they do weekdays and weekends as well as daytime and evenings.

The events were advertised widely across the community. This included posters, flyers, Town Council website, Town Council Notice Board, targeted communications and word of mouth.

Each event comprised a series of display boards that detailed the background to the Plan and emerging policy proposals. Supporting information including maps was also presented.

Town Councillors were present at the events to answer questions.

The Survey

In order to gauge the level of community support for the draft Plan, participants were asked to complete a form incorporating two questions:
- Do you support or oppose the policies in the Plan?
- Please tell us why?

These questions were repeated for each of the themes in the draft Plan (Community, Natural Environment, Housing, Transport and Access, Economy and Heritage).

The Findings

There was overwhelming support for the policies across all the six theme areas, with a 90% approval rate for each one. The Heritage policies had the highest approval rate at 98% and Transport and Access the lowest at 91%.

The response rate to each of the themes was broadly similar. Community, Natural Environment and Transport and Access attracted most comments (45), followed by Housing (44). Transport and Access and the Economy both received 41 comments.

Looking at each specific policy theme in more detail.

Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan – Findings from Community Consultation Events – Apr 2018

1. Community Policies

- 96% (43) respondents support the community policies.
- 4% (2) respondents do not support the community policies.

Reasons for support:

Community (10) – responses generally highlighted the importance of community and community assets including; the community spirit/good community feel of the town and the role of community assets in providing opportunities for social interaction. Typical comments included:

"Rates highly as a place to live because of its strong community spirit, with many volunteers. Must be encouraged in the future."

"It is important to encourage community assets as these are what helps to form a community. A community that we can all use and participate in."

Protect existing facilities (4) – responses confirmed the importance of protecting (and improving) existing community facilities.

"I agree that the wide range of community facilities currently available should be preserved wherever possible."

A number of additional community facilities not currently identified as locally important in the draft Plan were put forward:
- addition of football pitches to Coal Aston Bowling Pavilion.
- allotment site (currently with a waiting list)
- The Barn.
- Coal Aston nature park.

Future development (4) – a number of participants highlighted the potential inability of facilities and services to support future housing growth.

"Services such as GPs are over-stretched and increased housing will make the problem worse."

Other comments: included the need to encourage occupation in the Civic Centre and the isolation of elderly residents living in Hallowes without a bus service.

Reasons not to support:

2 or 4% of respondents did not support the policy, one of which provided a reason.

- *"Already not enough doctor surgeries, schools, fire services and police presence to support existing residents".*

2. Natural Environment Policies

- 96% (43) respondents support the natural environment policies.
- 4% (2) respondents do not support the natural environment policies.

<u>Reasons to support:</u>

Green Belt (15) – the importance of protecting the Green Belt featured highly in responses.

"Particular attention to protection of the green belt to north – prevent sprawl from neighbouring authority."

"Green belt is essential to maintain separation to adjacent communities to retain identities of each area".

Green/Open Spaces (8) – responses highlighted the importance of protecting green/open spaces for a number of reasons including to encourage wildlife, facilitate community activities and for mental health and wellbeing.

"Protection of greenspaces, bridle paths and access to the countryside is key to the towns quality of life."

"Need to keep all green spaces. Local do use and value them."

A specific request was made to rename Hilltop, Moonpenny Way playground to include common play areas as well as to fenced of the play ground.

The Dronfield Nature Park was highlighted specifically as a good asset and a lovely walk.

A general comment was made regarding the bare and open nature of local parks and the desire to see woodland parks.

Countryside (2) – the ease of access to the countryside was identified as a key attribute of living in Dronfield. A typical comment was:

"Easy access to open countryside is an attractive feature of living in Dronfield."

Other comments included:
- *"the need to research further into the protection of the Moss Valley".*
- *"to protect the Blue Bell woods from Japanese Balsalm".*
- *"to encourage environmental improvements through planning approvals and grants".*
- *"an IPPC carbon footprint to inform planning on environmental priorities".*

<u>Reasons not to support:</u>

The 2 or 4% of respondents that did not support the natural environment policies.

- *"Presumably, the sewerage treatment facilities will need to be expanded to meet likely need".*
- *"The green belt boundary needs to be altered to allow for the 860 new dwellings that are needed. This would only be infilled as opposed to severely extended so as to prevent encroachment".*

3. Housing Policies

- 93% (41) respondents support the housing policies.
- 7% (3) respondents do not support the housing policies.

Reasons to support:

Housing type (18) – was highlighted as a key consideration for any future housing development. There were 8 references to housing suitable for older persons, including smaller houses and bungalows. The need for affordable/ social housing and family homes was raised in 7 and 3 comments respectively.

"But strengthen the 'mix' of provision to ensure smaller/bungalows available for new starters and elderly."

Brownfield (9) – support for new housing on brownfield sites. Callywhite Lane was put forward by a number of respondents as a suitable site for housing development.

Green Belt (7) – support for no housing development in the Green Belt.

"Sustainable housing of the right type is needed in Dronfield but not on the green belt."

Infrastructure / services (5) – respondents identified concerns regarding the capacity of current services and infrastructure to support the future planned development.

"For large scale development to take place – schools, doctors, dentists, small shops need to be provided in that area. It would be unsustainable to travel to centralised facilities. Footpaths and cycleways are good but will not be used if people need to travel long distance."

Reasons given not support:

Of the **3 (or 7%)** that did not support the housing policies

- *there is already sufficient housing stock to meet the needs of Dronfield residents.*
- *unable to support the building of a lot of houses.*
- *the Plan does not provide sufficient alternatives to building on green belt land. Not enough brownfield sites exist to satisfy current need. The Plan should include retirement apartments rather than bungalows (less efficient in terms of space).*

4. Transport and Access Policies

- 91% (41) respondents support the transport and access policies.
- 9% (4) respondents do not support the transport and access policies.

Reasons to support:

Bus service (16) – featured strongly in comments in relation to the lack of services to meet current and future demand.

"Bus services have recently been reduced. Any significant population rise will put strain on these services."

"More buses needed. Too hilly to walk."

Rail (7) – specifically the need for improved rail services, bus links and car parking at the station car park. There were a further 5 comments in relation to public transport more generally.

Future development (7) – in particular, the impact of proposed development on the road network and the ability of transport infrastructure to cope.

Roads (7) – four general comments regarding the need to keep traffic flowing, the by-pass and traffic calming and three comments regarding issues on specific roads.

Cycle (2) – the need for more cycle routes.

"I would like to see proposals for safe cycle routes across the town so that it is possible to cycle through the centre from the north, south, east or western boundaries."

"More safe cycle routes through the town and cycle parking facilities. Any new development should have connecting footpaths and cycleways."

Reasons given not to support:

There was **4 or 9%** not in support of the policies.
- *"The recent reduction of bus services and the impact of future development on these services."*
- *"The lack of a rail link from west and recent removal of bus service (43A) further reduces accessibility. Map 6 shows bus stops no longer is use and is misleading".*
- *"The plan focuses on making travel by car more attractive and will therefore increase the number of cars on our roads".*

5. Economy Policies

- 95% (39) respondents support the economy policies.
- 5% (2) respondents do not support the economy policies.

Reasons to support:

Civic (11) – the need to enhance the Civic Centre and in particular; relocation of post office and bank to the centre, address the vacant premises (high rents), fewer charity shops, outdoor cafes.

A further three comments highlighted the need to encourage local shopping facilities and stop the increase in charity shops but were not specific to the Civic Centre.

Takeaways (2) – no more takeaways and no takeaways near schools.

Other comments highlighted Dronfield as a commuter town and thus the emphasis on the need to improve public transport, development of the area from Sainsburys down High Street and the need for more 'high tech' jobs.

Reasons not to support:

2 or 5% of respondents stated that they did not support the policies.

- *"The Plan should support the Callywhite Lane proposal and changes to access. It should also encourage other commercial units to move there to free up brownfield sites".*

6. Heritage Policies

- 98% (42) respondents support the heritage policies.
- 2% (1) respondents do not support the heritage policies.

Reasons to support:

Heritage and character (15) – overwhelming support for protecting the area's heritage including maintaining local buildings, listed buildings and monuments. The importance of retaining Dronfield's distinctive character was highlighted in a number of responses.

"With other sites identified, Dronfield's heritage is part of its heart and identity which makes it different from surrounding conurbations."

Conservation Areas (6) – specific mention made to Conservation Areas (and in particular supporting current businesses to improve their appearance within Conserservation Areas and review and upgrade.

Designated and non-designated heritage assets (5) – support for protecting non-designated and designated heritage assets.

Reasons not to support:

There was one (2%) respondent that did not support the policies:

- *"Green Belt land is there for a reason and there is plenty of brownfield sites available".*