

Lichfield City Neighbourhood Plan (LCNP) – Referendum 22 February 2018

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced by government as part of its Localism agenda and is a way for communities to decide the future of the places where they live and work **in conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan (as developed and adopted by Lichfield District Council); the LCNP cannot contradict the Local Plan.**

The Neighbourhood Plan Committee, a cross-party Steering Group of Lichfield City Councillors, has overseen the development of the LCNP since 2014.

If a Parish Council has a neighbourhood plan in place it would receive **25% of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) contributions** from a developer as opposed to 15% without a Neighbourhood Plan. This element of CIL can be spent on provision, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure, or anything else that is concerned with addressing demands that development places on an area. This gives neighbourhoods more freedom and power to spend CIL money on a wide range of things. **The existence of an adopted Neighbourhood Plan ensures as much CIL money as possible is retained by the Parish in which the development is taking place, to be spent in consultation with residents and in accordance with the priorities laid out in the Neighbourhood Plan.**

The LCNP focuses on **economic and employment issues** rather than housing. The City is well positioned to increase its economic base, with a highly skilled workforce and excellent road & rail links, for example. The City also boasts numerous attributes and attractions that encourage tourism.

The LCNP has been prepared after considerable community involvement and engagement, a **summary of key engagement/publicity activity** is contained at **Appendix A**.

The different topic areas within the LCNP reflect priorities highlighted by those who attended workshops or responded to consultations. Views expressed were condensed into **broad objectives**:

- Increase higher value employment activities in the City
- Increase the number of start-up businesses in the City
- Increase local retail spend
- Increase high spend tourism and length of stay
- Increase levels of employment and commercial activity in cultural, creative, medical and educational sectors
- Improve pedestrian access into and around the City Centre and between Lichfield City Railway Station, Trent Valley Railway Station and the Cricket Lane Strategic Development Allocation
- Maintain and enhance the City's historic character, particularly its medieval core.

To support these objectives, a number of **policies were developed** and consulted upon, culminating in the **Pre-Submission Consultation (July - September 2016) including 52 statutory consultees..** The consultation was publicised in the local press as well as social media and posters in prominent City locations (**detailed in Appendix A**).

The revised Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to Lichfield District Council for further *informal* consultation in February 2017, with a revised document **formally submitted to Lichfield District Council in July 2017 for further consultation to be undertaken by Lichfield District Council and the statutory independent examination.**

From this time the City Council had no control over timings of subsequent events or any revisions to the plan; the only option was to withdraw the LCNP if the City Council was unhappy with the Examiner's recommended amendments. Following receipt of the independent examination report, **Lichfield District Council complied with statutory timescales** to confirm the LCNP could pass to referendum stage and then to organise and hold the referendum, hence **the referendum date of 22 February. Referendum arrangements** will be similar to any other election with postal voting & poll cards.

The question asked at the referendum will be: "Do you want Lichfield District Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Lichfield City to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

The LCNP must obtain majority support from electors if it is to be adopted. If adopted, LCNP then becomes part of the formal Development Plan for the area, with legal force, and helps shape the direction of future employment development in the City.

Copies of the LCNP and supporting documents can be found on the City Council's website at http://www.lichfield.gov.uk/Neighbourhood_Plan_1085.aspx A copy can also be emailed by contacting enquiries@lichfield.gov.uk or viewed at the City Council's offices at Donegal House, Bore St, Lichfield WS13 6LU, telephone 01543 250011.

Appendix A - Summary Timeline of Key Engagement Activity

Date	Activity
Throughout Neighbourhood Plan development	Publicity in 'City Life' supplement advising local residents and businesses of the existence of the Draft Plan and its development (published four times per annum) Regular updates provided to Businesses at each meeting of the Lichfield City Forum Information and updates provided on the City Council's website
Summer 2014	Appointment of Neighbourhood Plan Committee and initial brief completed for potential consultant partners
15 September 2014	Consultants appointed
September 2014 – January 2015	Initial consultation with local bodies undertaken by NP Consultants
January 2015	Draft scoping report presented following initial consultations carried out by NP Consultants
June 2015	Final Initial scoping report presented to the Neighbourhood Plan Committee by the City Councils NP Consultants following further consultation
July – November 2015	Focused publicity for upcoming consultation event including letters to local residents groups, businesses and other interested parties, promotion on website, City Council noticeboards etc.
13 October 2015	Presentation at City Forum Event to local businesses
9 November 2015	Meeting with Persimmon, St Modwen, Neighbourhood Plan Committee representatives and City Council's NP Consultants regarding Cricket Lane proposals
27 November 2015	Consultation workshops held at the Guildhall, Lichfield Attended by individual residents, resident groups and representatives of local businesses and business organisations
December 2015	Consideration of information gathered from consultation exercise and amendments made to draft Plan
January 2016	Submission to LDC for informal comments Formal request for SEA screening
March 2016	SEA Screening response received Informal comments received from LDC
March – June 2016	Consideration of responses received and amendments made to Draft Plan
July – September 2016	Pre-Submission Consultation (Regulation 14) Including publicity in local press, City Council notice boards, City View supplement, social media, hard copies of the draft Plan made available by post, at local library and at Council offices
October – December 2016	Consideration of responses and amendments to Draft Plan in readiness for submission to LDC
December 2016	Preparation of draft LCNP Consultation Statement
February 2017	Submission of revised Draft LCNP to LDC following Regulation 14 Pre Submission Consultation for further informal consultation
April – May 2017	Consideration of responses received to informal consultation, amendments to Draft LCNP with particular reference to emerging Draft Local Plan Allocations Document and recently released Lichfield Centres Report (2017)
May 2017 – June 2017	Amendments to Draft LCNP prior to formal submission; updates to supporting documents