

## A round-up of the latest news from the Datchet Neighbourhood

### Plan team

#### HOUSING SITES DROPPED FROM BOROUGH PLAN

As you may know, RBWM is in the process of creating a Borough Local Plan (BLP) which will determine future development in our area and guide decisions on planning applications. RBWM submitted its proposed BLP to the government's Planning Inspector for examination nearly two years ago. Since then, several significant changes have been made. A revised version has been published for public consultation between 1 November and 15 December 2019. The revised sections will then be submitted for consideration by the Inspector as part of her ongoing examination. As Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan sits under the umbrella of the BLP, these changes may also influence the content and scope of the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) so the DNP team is keenly watching its progress.

The revised BLP has important implications for Datchet as two of the three proposed housing sites, HA41 on Slough Road and HA43 on Eton Road, have been withdrawn, and the number of new homes allocated to the village has been reduced from 350 to 80. The remaining housing site (now numbered AL39 instead of HA42) lies between London Road and the M4, and the proposed allocation on this site has been reduced from 150 to 80 housing units (although that does not mean that more than 80 can't be built).

The AL39 site is approximately 3.92Ha (9.5 acres), almost wholly in Flood Zone 2, mostly Grade 1 agricultural land, and it is currently in the Green Belt. Permission must be granted for this land to be taken out of the Green Belt before any development can take place. To do this, the contribution of the site to the Green Belt is assessed. As areas of the site may be used for Portakabin foundations and access routes for the Smart Motorway work, RBWM considers it to be urbanised and its agricultural land value diminished. The consultation



*The proposed housing site AL39, formerly HA42, lies between London Road and the M4*

process will allow members of the public to say whether they agree and, if not, why. (At the time of writing, the land is not being used to facilitate the M4 works.)

RBWM has proposed specific requirements for the AL39 site. These include:

▶ **Housing**

The site should include a mix of housing, including family homes with gardens, which respect the character of the area and the natural landscape, with 40 per cent affordable housing and clusters of fully-serviced plots for self-build. Their design should respond positively to the size, shape and rhythm of the existing development on London Road, and the impact on long-distance views into the site should be considered, especially from the Conservation Area.

▶ **Play areas and allotments**

The best and most versatile soils on the site should be conserved with on-site open space, including play facilities, and allotments.

▶ **Connectivity**

The developer is required to provide safe pedestrian and cycle routes through the site and easy access to the village centre, and ensure that the site is well-served by public transport.

▶ **Wildlife and trees**

There should be a net gain in biodiversity, ensuring habitats areas are connected. Valuable trees should be retained with new planting of trees and hedgerows especially on the site boundaries.

▶ **Flooding, noise and air pollution**

Sustainable drainage systems and flood alleviation measures should be integrated to mitigate flood risk and manage surface water run-off. Appropriate mitigation measures should address the impact of noise and air pollution from the M4.

**How to comment**

To see the revised Borough Local Plan and associated documents, with details of how to comment, visit [www3.rbwm.gov.uk/blp](http://www3.rbwm.gov.uk/blp). Full information and hard copies are also available in the library and Parish Council office. Please note, the areas for comment are very limited; they should focus on 'the proposed changes to the Borough Local Plan' and on 'legal compliance and soundness considerations'. The consultation period closes on 15 December 2019.

### **DATCHET DESIGN GUIDE**

One of the many supplementary documents which will be attached to the BLP, is the Borough-wide Design Guide (BDG). This sets out design standards to improve the quality of our local towns and villages. As a supplementary document to the BDG, the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan team has helped to research and draft a specific Datchet Design Guide, in conjunction with a planning consultant and RBWM planners. This is intended to help home owners, developers and planners to maintain and improve Datchet in ways which will be in keeping with the character of our local areas. If the Datchet Design Guide goes for approval by Borough Councillors at RBWM cabinet later this year, we anticipate that there will be a six-week consultation period in the new year, giving residents an opportunity to evaluate and comment on this guide. After consultation, the final document will then go to RBWM's full council to agree adoption. We are unable to give exact timings at the moment as the DDG is a supplementary document and its schedule and content may be affected by that of the BDG.

### **HOUSING AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**

Based on your feedback, the DNP team has started drafting policies related to housing and the built environment in Datchet. It's a lengthy process but we are liaising with a planning consultant for advice and have started gathering further evidence to support these policies. For example, you told us that there is a shortage of starter homes and homes for down-sizing so we need to research current housing provision and gather data to confirm this, with a view to trying to ensuring that any new housing development meets local need. We are also looking to create a 'Local List' of important buildings which are not listed by Historic England but which are worthy of local protection. We will be seeking your views on these.

### **GREEN AND BLUE ENVIRONMENT**

One of the key messages from the DNP's village-wide surveys is that residents want to preserve and enhance the riverside and the green spaces in and around the village; to protect special views including those across the Thames; and to improve the biodiversity of the area, ensuring local people have access to nature. As a result, we have also started to look at policy areas for our 'Green and Blue Environment'. We need to consider what protection is already afforded by current planning policy and where the DNP can strengthen

this or plug any gaps. For example, it can look at creating 'green corridors' for nature so that our green spaces are linked, and identify areas of importance for special protection.

The revised BLP includes a requirement for allotments at the AL39 site on London Road. As there are already allotments near The Myrke and in Old Windsor, the DNP can also assess whether there is a demand for more allotments locally, or perhaps a community garden, or similar. Again we will be consulting with residents.

### **CHRISTMAS WISH LIST**

The DNP team will be at St Nicholas' Fayre at St Mary's Church from 11am-4pm on Saturday 30 November. This year, we'll be running the 'Letters to Santa' stall where children can write their wish lists for Christmas and send them to the North Pole. While they're doing that, we'd like to hear your wish lists for Datchet. We are particularly interested to find out more about the types of children's play or leisure facilities which might be needed in the village, especially as the proposed new housing site, AL39 on London Road, is required to include some public play facilities. The DNP team is keen to hear from families, youth groups, nurseries, play groups, mother and baby groups, childminders and other carers, to find out what facilities you think are currently lacking. Please come and tell us what you think. (You don't need children to express a view!)

If we don't see you at the Fayre, you can send us an email, to [DatchetNP@datchetparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:DatchetNP@datchetparishcouncil.gov.uk), write to the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group c/o Datchet Parish Council, 1 Allen Way, Datchet SL3 9HR, or contact us via our website, [www.DatchetNeighbourhoodPlan.org](http://www.DatchetNeighbourhoodPlan.org). We look forward to hearing from you.

(ends)

Images follow.

# Datchet Neighbourhood Plan

Copy for The Link, Christmas 2019 issue - Final

Images: Riverside photo, DNP logo, AL39 map,



Picture caption:

*Residents have told the DNP team that they want to preserve and enhance Datchet's green spaces and protect its special views including those across the Thames*



Picture caption:

*The proposed housing site AL39, formerly HA42, lies between London Road and the M4*