



DATCHET NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



A brief overview of the draft plan



CHAPTER 1 Introduction

What is the purpose of Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan?

The community has expressed a strong desire to retain Datchet's character as a village. The DNP can help to ensure that growth within the Parish is sustainable, meeting the needs of residents and businesses without compromising the heritage, friendly atmosphere and community spirit of the whole village.

What can a Neighbourhood Plan do?

- Guide development within the parish
- Seek to address the challenges that face the community.
- Consider land-use issues which are part of RBWM's planning process.
- It must have regard to national policy; it cannot promote less development than the Borough Local Plan; and its scope is framed by the flood zones, Green Belt and Conservation Area which form a significant percentage of land in our Neighbourhood Plan area.
- Identify issues of a non-planning nature as separate projects or 'non-policy actions' for the Parish Council, RBWM and stakeholders to pursue. (See section 10 of the draft plan).

***Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan cannot do anything about planes, trains, pollution, traffic or flood schemes
— topics which are frequently raised in public consultations***

Consultation

The DNP steering group has engaged widely with the local community.

So far, this has included:

- Leaflets, surveys, character assessment walks, Zoom meetings,
- 20 articles in *The Link*, updates on the DNP website, and social media
- Datchet Design Guide consultation
- Drop-in Day, information stalls at local events and open days
- Involvement of community groups
- Awareness-raising sessions at the Railway Station and at Tesco
- Clean Air Day banners and leafleting on The Green

By involving the community widely, we have identified issues that are of considerable importance to Datchet, its residents, businesses and community groups. The Plan's policies have been designed to respond to these demands.

CHAPTER 2 Local Context

Evidence

Policies in a neighbourhood plan must be based on evidence. Extensive detailed evidence has been compiled to support the DNP. This includes:

- History of development in Datchet
- Profile of the Community
- Datchet's environment
- Datchet village
- Commercial activity
- Education
- Traffic and movement
- Public transport

A number of issues and challenges were identified through community consultation. These include how to accommodate growth and change while maintaining and protecting the natural and historic environment in order to keep the village character and identity for future generations.

CHAPTER 3 A vision for Datchet

How do residents envisage Datchet in 2033? In consultation with the village and through a village-wide survey, the following vision for Datchet was established:

In 2033, Datchet retains its character as a large rural village. The attractive village greens, historic centre, public Riverside Garden and Recreation Ground, which are key to the village's identity, continue to be enjoyed and valued by residents.

The Conservation Area and heritage assets throughout the village have been enhanced and safeguarded for future generations. The special views, including the historic views across the Thames towards Windsor Castle and beyond, and the public and private riverside gardens have been preserved for future generations.

Growth within the Parish has been sustainable, meeting the needs of residents and businesses without compromising the heritage, friendly atmosphere and community spirit of the whole village.

The health and well-being of our residents is paramount. Datchet provides a high standard of 21st-century living throughout the parish. New housing and the development of existing property has delivered character while addressing the needs of the community, providing homes for people of all ages, abilities and means which are well-designed, sympathetic and sustainable. This has allowed young people and families to stay in the community, and older generations to downsize, freeing up family homes.

By incorporating measures to minimise flood risk and mitigate climate change, new development has not increased the overall flood risk for the community. The strict enforcement of policies for flood risk, and improved maintenance of drainage ditches and watercourses, including Datchet Common Brook and the Myrke Stream, have served not only to prevent a worsening of flood risk but have improved the situation.

The biodiversity, wildlife and its habitat, trees and hedgerows throughout the plan area have been protected and enhanced, and continue to thrive, providing access to nature for the wellbeing and enjoyment of residents and visitors.

Community facilities and services, including leisure and recreation, have been enhanced to meet residents' needs. Appropriate infrastructure developments keep the village an attractive, well-planned and safe place for everyone.

The needs of pedestrians and cyclists have been addressed with footpaths and cycle paths providing well-connected, safe and accessible routes that have helped to reduce pollution as fewer people make short journeys by car.

Achieving the vision

These objectives, derived from consultation and research, are designed to address the issues raised by the community. They form the basis of the Neighbourhood Plan's policies and actions.

Objective 1: To preserve and protect the character of the village, its attractive historic centre and village greens, public riverside, heritage assets (including non-designated heritage assets) and special views.

Objective 2: To maintain, protect and enhance green spaces of value to the community to promote biodiversity and ensure local people have access to nature.

Objective 3: To ensure new housing reflects the high quality local vernacular in the parish in terms of building style, materials and density, and responds to the housing needs of the community with suitable housing for people of all ages, abilities and means, providing the opportunity for existing and future generations to remain in the community.

Objective 4: To ensure that development is sustainable and sensitively designed to be attractive, to minimise flood risk, mitigate climate change, promote biodiversity, reduce our carbon footprint, and enhance the existing community's wellbeing.

Objective 5: To enhance the facilities currently available to the existing community and to ensure that new development is supported by adequate additional infrastructure, facilities and services, keeping Datchet an attractive, well-planned and safe place for existing and future residents.

Objective 6: To improve transport and movement, in particular through non-car modes, ensuring there is a safe environment for pedestrians and cyclists.

CHAPTER 4 Housing needs of specific groups

The emerging Borough Local Plan (BLP) is allocating one new housing proposal within Datchet for 80+ new homes providing a mix of housing types. This site, known as AL39, is bordered by London Road, Riding Court Road and the M4.

Housing development in Datchet is constrained by the Green Belt, flood zones, and lack of brownfield sites.

It is considered that further new development will be relatively limited. It is expected that most development is likely to come forward in the form of infill within the settlement boundary.

The focus of the Neighbourhood Plan is on ensuring that the right type of housing development is brought forward.

Affordable housing

While the National Planning Policy Framework, NPPF, requires a minimum of 10% of homes in major development (10+ units) to be affordable, the emerging Borough Local Plan seeks a minimum of 30%, based on demographic trends and the evidence of need set out in the strategic housing market assessment. There is a site-specific requirement that development at AL39 should provide at least 40% affordable housing.

Downsizing/Housing for older people

Feedback from residents supported evidence from estate agents and census data which identified a lack of properties in Datchet which meet people's needs as they age. This can take many forms from simple 'downsizer' housing which is more suitable in size and provision for people who previously raised families in a larger family home, to housing which is specifically designed to allow for people's needs, for example where their mobility is restricted. If more downsizing units were provided, then that may mean that older people living in family-sized houses may move, so freeing up these units.

POLICY DAT 1: Major residential development that is required to provide 2- and 3-bed units as part of that mix must design these units so that they are able to meet the needs of older people. (See DNP for policy detail.)

CHAPTER 5 Design and layout of development

People value Datchet's attractive character and want new development to fit in with this. The DNP supports the principles laid out in the Datchet Design Guide. (See the draft DNP for full policy details)

POLICY DAT2: HIGH QUALITY DESIGN AND CHARACTER

- A. Development must demonstrate high quality design and layout which respects the local character identified in the Datchet Design Guide.
- B. Boundary treatments that front onto the street should generally seek to create an open feel and follow the prevailing pattern in the area. High boundary treatments may be appropriate where privacy is required or to mitigate pollution impacts but should use more natural features such as trees and hedges, reflecting the planting palette in the Design Guide. Walled boundary treatments must consider the potential need to enable water to disperse quickly by providing openings in the wall.
- C. Communal residential properties must provide private green space for the amenity of residents.
- D. Proposals that would result in the loss of green space in front gardens for car parking must minimise the impact on surface water flooding by using permeable surfacing solutions and also minimise the impact on biodiversity by providing planting strips.
- E. Development must demonstrate that it has maximised the potential to achieve net biodiversity gain on site through planting and use of a range of landscaping techniques.
- F. Residential development proposals which do not provide secure, off-street vehicle parking must demonstrate how they have provided for secure bicycle parking. This includes residential extensions where existing secure, off-street vehicle parking that also provides for bicycle storage would be lost.
- G. Development must make sufficient provision for refuse and recycling bins to be stored in an easily accessible unobtrusive location.
- H. Development proposals in or affecting approach routes into Datchet village must ensure that they do not reduce the green screening which hides the setting and is a key part of the character of Datchet.

POLICY DAT3: SHOPFRONT DESIGN

Proposals for new shopfronts must demonstrate high quality design which respects the features of high-quality shopfronts identified in the Datchet Design Guide. In particular this relates to: projecting signs and features, lighting, colour and materials, signage and signwriting, shutters. Original features such as recessed doorways, pilasters, plinths, cornices and fascias should be retained and repaired where damaged.

CHAPTER 6 Heritage

There are 38 listed structures in Datchet parish which constitute designated heritage assets. All of these are Grade II listed and protected by national and local plan policy.

There is also the opportunity to identify other local structures which are of heritage value. A number of these non-designated heritage assets have been identified in Datchet (see draft plan and Appendix B for full details). These non-designated heritage assets will be added to any 'local list' that is prepared by RBWM.

DAT4: NON-DESIGNATED HERITAGE ASSETS

The following are identified as non-designated heritage assets:

1. Drinking fountain, The Green
2. 1930s' Garage, The Green
3. Hall Cottage, The Green
4. Horse/Cattle Trough, The Green
5. James's Cottages, London Road
6. Jubilee Cross, The Green
7. Montagu House (Library), The Green
8. Manor Hotel, The Green
9. North Green/Patrixbourne, The Green
10. Pharmacy, The Green
11. St Mary's School, The Green
12. WWI Crucifix, London Road

In considering proposals which involve the loss or alteration of a non-designated heritage asset, consideration will be given to:

- a. Whether the asset is structurally unsound and beyond feasible and viable repair (for reasons other than deliberate damage or neglect);
- b. The extent to which measures to sustain the existing use, or find an alternative use/user, have been investigated.

Conservation Area Statement

This was published in 1995 and RBWM intends to review it. Such a review is supported although it is considered that the Statement could be strengthened by including more information on how to manage Datchet's Conservation Area. Datchet Parish Council will work with RBWM to ensure the update reflects such matters appropriately.

CHAPTER 7 Green and blue environment

Views

With its location on the River Thames, coupled with its rich heritage including the attractive area in the heart of the village, there are many views and vistas which are part of what defines the character of Datchet. (See the plan for full details).

POLICY DAT5: VIEWS

- A. It is expected that development proposals will be designed so that they do not have a significant adverse impact on views along the River Thames from any footpath, cyclepath or public right of way. In particular, views identified in the RBWM Townscape Assessment 2010 (or successor document) are expected to be retained and respected.
- B. Development is expected to preserve the setting of St Mary's Church and proposals are required to consider the impact on the view to the church spire and ensure that it does not have a significantly detrimental impact.

Local Wildlife Sites

Datchet is home to three Local Wildlife Sites (Datchet Common and Gravel Pits, Queen Mother Reservoir, Upton Court Park) which are of importance for a range of wildlife habitats. There are significant concerns that activities and the increased human presence is harming the wildlife in these Local Wildlife Sites. (See the plan for full details).

POLICY DAT6: WATERSIDE ACTIVITIES

Proposals for water-based leisure activities, including moorings, must not have a significant detrimental impact on the tranquillity or natural environment of the surrounding area. Proposals requiring access to the water at Datchet Common and Gravel Pits and Queen Mother Reservoir Local Wildlife Sites must provide evidence that the proposed buildings and activities will not have a detrimental impact on the habitats and species which use that location.

Proposals on sites adjacent to water for activities not requiring access to the water must demonstrate that there are no other suitable sites in the local area where such activities can be undertaken.

Local Green Spaces

Neighbourhood Plans have the opportunity to designate Local Green Spaces which are of particular importance to the community. This will afford protection from development other than in very special circumstances.

Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;
- demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value, tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and
- local in character and is not an extensive tract of land.

The five areas listed in Policy DAT7 are considered to fulfil all of these criteria. (See the plan for full details).

POLICY DAT7: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

The following spaces are designated as Local Green Spaces: Recreation Ground; The Willowfields; Sabatini Land; The Green and The Cut; The public Riverside Garden. Proposals for built development on this Local Green Space will only be permitted in very special circumstances.

Wildlife-friendly Features

National planning guidance requires development to achieve net biodiversity gain. Mature trees and hedgerows are significant biodiversity assets and therefore their retention is a vital part of this. Equally, new planting and the creation of new habitats needs to be carefully planned. In order to achieve biodiversity net gains – with the associated benefits for wildlife and reducing the impacts of development on climate change – all opportunities large and small need to be embraced.

POLICY DAT8: PROVISION FOR WILDLIFE IN NEW DEVELOPMENT

All development proposals are expected to deliver net biodiversity gains in addition to protecting existing habitats and species. Development proposals (particularly residential developments) which seek to address this requirement on site (in part or in full) by incorporating design features that encourage local wildlife to thrive, will be strongly supported.

Verges

Generous grass verges and tree-lined streets are a key characteristic of Datchet. Such verges are all too often lost to parking. This results in significant degradation of the verge. DNP community surveys and character assessment walks identified a number of verges for improvement. (See the plan for full details).

POLICY DAT9: ROADWAY VERGES

- A. Green verges along roadways should be retained. New development must maximise the provision of green verges along roadways and must demonstrate that these are designed so that vehicles are not able to use them for parking. Proposals must also ensure that new and existing verges will not be likely to be degraded by day-to-day activity.
- B. Proposals to enhance the biodiversity value of verges will be strongly supported

Green and Blue Projects

Biodiversity net gain offset opportunities

New development is required to provide a net gain in biodiversity and, where this is not possible on site, to make contributions towards offsetting biodiversity actions. Such actions could be used in any part of the borough, therefore it is important that opportunities to improve local biodiversity are identified should funding become available.

The following list identifies such opportunities. (See the plan for full details.)

- Large woodland verge, London Road
- Railway line
- Recreation Ground Ditch
- Jubilee River

Flooding and drainage

Flooding is one of the topics raised most frequently by residents during consultation. Events in recent years, including widespread flooding in 2014, have highlighted the extent of the threat that the community lives with.

There are four designated main rivers in Datchet, all with the potential to flood. In addition there is an extensive latticework of smaller watercourses, drains and ditches. An estimated 80-85 per cent of Datchet is designated as Flood Zones 2 and 3 and there is significant concern that new development would increase the number of people at risk.

It is imperative that any new development does everything it possible can to actively reduce flood level risk in Datchet, principally by locating development away from areas of high flood risk.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (paragraph 166) states that, when determining any planning applications, local planning authorities should ensure that flood risk is not increased elsewhere. Applications should be supported by a site-specific flood-risk assessment. Development should only be allowed in areas at risk of flooding where, in the light of this assessment (and the sequential and exception tests, as applicable), it can be demonstrated that development is flood resistant and resilient and risks can be managed, including appropriate emergency planning.

Sewerage and drainage

Datchet's sewerage infrastructure is at capacity. There are still cess pits in Horton Road to the east of Mill Place and the Thames Water site. In the 2014 floods, some sewers overflowed.

Drainage schemes proposed to support new development should protect people and property on the development site from flooding and should not create an additional risk from flooding outside the development or have a detrimental impact on surface water runoff and sewage discharge networks in the village.

Use of sustainable drainage systems

Datchet is prone to groundwater flooding as well as fluvial and surface water flooding. This is due to the high water table and can mean that traditional sustainable drainage systems (SuDS), provided as part of new development, are ineffective. Groundwater must also be protected from contamination and pollutants. Susdrain recommends that in such locations, SuDS solutions need to focus on surface and shallow features to avoid infiltration.

Building design

The emerging Borough Local Plan Policy NR1 requires

development proposals to 'be constructed with adequate flood resilience and resistance measures suitable for the lifetime of the development'.

Following engagement with the Environment Agency, a number of recommendations for building design to achieve this were identified:

- New buildings and extensions should have appropriate floor levels. In Flood Zones 2 and 3, floor levels should be situated a minimum of 300mm above the 1-in-100 year river flood level, including allowances for climate change.
- Internal layouts could locate living areas on upper levels of properties. There are already examples of buildings in Datchet with raised floor levels, including on Queens Road, Agars Place and Horton Road by the library.
- In planning for the provision of appropriate flood attenuation measures, applications are encouraged to take account of good practice advice, including the 'Property Flood Resilience Measures' guidance prepared by CIRIA and guidance from the Environment Agency.

Bunds

There are two bunds in Datchet which were constructed to act as a flood defence mechanism. It is the responsibility of the riparian owners to maintain them. Bunds can perform an important function to reduce the worst effects of fluvial flooding. They are most effective when used in conjunction with other flood alleviation measures and when it can be ensured that their use does not increase flood risk elsewhere, by moving the risk of flooding from one site to another. The continuing use and maintenance of bunds is supported by the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan.

POLICY DAT10: FLOODING, DRAINAGE & APPROPRIATE DRAINAGE SOLUTIONS (See draft plan for full details)

- A. New development should be designed to take full account of flood risk. All opportunities to reduce the identified risk or to maximise the provision of appropriate flood attenuation measures should be investigated at the masterplanning stage and incorporated at the detailed design stage.
- B. Proposals for new development that are required to provide Sustainable Drainage Solutions (SuDS) must demonstrate that the solutions proposed will be effective and will avoid infiltration. This should allow for above-surface water management on site taking account of the underlying geology and sporadically high ground water table affecting parts of Datchet.
- C. Development should not result in an increase in maximum flood levels within adjoining properties using mitigation appropriate to site circumstances.
- D. Planning permission should only be granted for new development subject to a condition that no development shall commence until full details of the proposed drainage schemes for surface and foul water, and their subsequent management and maintenance, have been submitted and approved by the planning authority; and no building shall be occupied until the drainage schemes have been implemented in accordance with these approved details.
- E. The maintenance plan should also include an indication of the adopting or maintaining authority or organisation and may require inclusion within a register of drainage features.
- F. Retention of existing bunds is supported. Their removal or expansion must demonstrate that this will not increase the risk of flooding, either on the site of the bund (in the case of removal) or elsewhere (in the case of expansion).

Sustainable design and construction

A survey on renewable energy and design matters undertaken to inform the Neighbourhood Plan identified very high support for improvements to the environmental efficiency of building.

In 2016 the residential sector alone accounted for over 16% of the UK's annual greenhouse gas emissions. Policy SP2 of the Emerging Borough Local Plan requires development to

incorporate measures to adapt to and mitigate climate change, such as good insulation, low water demand (maximising the use of grey water) and maximising renewable energy sources.

This is supported by the Neighbourhood Plan which asks that

development is encouraged to go as far as it can to minimise the impact of development on the environment and climate.

In particular, development at AL39 is encouraged to install heat pumps rather than gas boilers.

River Thames Scheme

As of 2020, Channel 1 of the proposed new River Thames Scheme from Datchet to Teddington is not going ahead due to lack of funding. However, the Environment Agency intends to build Channels 2 and 3 in such a way that Channel 1 could be added at a later date. The RBWM Emerging Local Plan proposes to safeguard the route for this purpose. Proposals in respect of the RTS are therefore supported in principle.

Alternative local flood defences to protect Datchet are being considered in conjunction with the Environment Agency. No timescale is available at present as options are being developed but

any additional flood defences should provide permanent, long-term solutions and protection.

CHAPTER 8 Community assets

In the Emerging Local Plan, the development at AL39 (Riding Court Road and London Road) will be required to provide on-site open space including play facilities and also allotments.

The Neighbourhood Plan community surveys highlighted

a demand for play equipment to support early-years development and learning

to complement the provision at the Recreation Ground. There was support for a natural play area made of sustainable materials.

The surveys showed support for allotments or community garden for growing food, and a sensory, flower, or wildlife garden with seating areas.

There was also support for

enhancing leisure and exercise facilities, both indoor and outdoor, for the health and wellbeing of all age groups.

POLICY DAT11: PROVISION OF COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Proposals to provide the following community infrastructure will be strongly supported:

- Play equipment for toddlers and young children, to support early-years development and learning, at AL39
- Allotments/community garden and space for food growing
- A sensory-, flower- or wildlife-garden with seating areas
- Provision for older children and adults

Riding Court

When the gravel extraction site is restored, it will include an amenity lake with potential permissive paths linking to the Public Right of Way network. The proposed entrance to the site lies a distance from the village centre. An entrance closer to the road bridge on Riding Court Road would be supported to improve ease of footpath and cycle path access to north Datchet.

In the Neighbourhood Plan community surveys, there was support for a cycle path through this site to link with National Cycle Network route 61 in north Datchet. In addition there is the potential to create a Local Wildlife Site on the land and any such proposals will be strongly supported.

CHAPTER 9 Key movement routes

The Plan seeks to improve access to safe and high-quality walking and cycling routes. A series of Key Movement Routes have been identified where improvements will have the greatest potential to increase levels of walking and cycling and at the same time reduce pollution and improve road safety for pedestrians and cyclists.

POLICY DAT12: KEY MOVEMENT ROUTES (see plan for map and full details)

- A. Development which proposes to improve cycling and walking will be supported.
- B. To ensure that residents can access important facilities serving Datchet, new developments should ensure safe and continuous pedestrian routes that connect to the Key Movement Routes.
- C. Proposals to protect and enhance the utility of identified Key Movement Routes are strongly encouraged. Development should seek to minimise the impact of air pollution by protecting and maintaining existing trees on the routes; providing for trees, hedging species, verges and other pollution-mitigating planting, particularly alongside a busy vehicular route adjacent to a Key Movement Route.
- D. Development will be expected to not have an unacceptable impact on the safety and accessibility of Key Movement Routes and to provide a strategy to mitigate the impact of additional traffic movements on the safety and flow of pedestrian and cycle access.

POLICY DAT13: PROVISION FOR CYCLE STORAGE

- A. All development is expected to provide secure bicycle parking commensurate with the level of development without individual ground floor storage (i.e. flats above ground floor level).
- B. Proposals to improve cycle parking on the Key Movement Routes and, in particular, at the village centre, Health Centre, Village Hall and Parish Office, and Tesco Express, will be strongly supported.

CHAPTER 10 Non-policy actions

Chapter 10 identifies a series of actions that have arisen through the community engagement in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. These were considered by the community to be important matters but do not necessarily require planning permission. As such, they are not the subject of planning policies in the Neighbourhood Plan. These non-policy actions should be reviewed in line with the rest of the Neighbourhood Plan as part any subsequent review, to take account of changing circumstances and community aspirations. See the plan for details.