

The Link, Spring 2023

Datchet Neighbourhood Plan copy

14 February 2023

Datchet's Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2033

It's almost referendum time. Make sure you have your say. Alison Crampin reports

Good news! After two public consultations last year, the Datchet Neighbourhood Plan (DNP) was sent for an independent examination in November 2022. The examiner has now confirmed that the DNP meets all the relevant regulations and has recommended some helpful minor modifications to ensure that its policies can stand up to challenge and scrutiny. This means that the Plan will be ready to go to a village-wide referendum in May. If it's successful, the DNP, which addresses the issues you raised, will be 'made' and RBWM will use it to help determine planning applications in our area.

Local planning issues

Currently, there are two types of planning policy which apply in Datchet:

1. National planning policy set by central government, which applies across the country.
2. Borough planning policy, set by RBWM, which applies across the borough.

But, within these larger areas, there are different communities with different planning needs, so a 'one-size-fits-all' approach doesn't always work. A neighbourhood plan is unique to the area it covers. It works at a much more local level, giving smaller communities, like Datchet, the power to establish our own planning policies to address specific local needs while still working within the wider planning framework and respecting designations such as flood zones, Green Belt and Conservation Areas.

Consultation process

Over the past few years, the DNP team has engaged widely with the local community to identify planning issues that are of importance to Datchet, its residents, businesses and

community groups. It is thanks to the support of our local community, everyone who responded to surveys, joined us on Character Assessment walks, came along to the DNP stall at various local events and attended drop-in sessions, who visited our website and Facebook page, and read our articles in each and every issue of *The Link* since Spring 2017, that we have reached this stage.

The examiner said that matters you raised had been duly considered, and he was satisfied that the consultation process was robust and complied with the neighbourhood planning regulations. The result is a set of planning policies, laid out in the DNP, which address challenges that face our community. They cover issues such as character and heritage, the environment and green spaces, housing need, sustainable design, community assets, and ways that good planning can help to reduce pollution and mitigate flooding.

The purpose of the DNP is to help ensure that growth within the Parish is sustainable, meeting local needs without compromising the natural and historic environment, friendly atmosphere, local character, and community spirit of the whole village.

The referendum

The Plan is currently scheduled to go to a village-wide, public referendum on Thursday 4 May 2023 for you to decide whether it should be used to determine future planning applications in Datchet. The referendum will be organised by RBWM's Democratic and Electoral Services with funding available from central government.

This is the same date as the local elections. As the DNP isn't political, and won't be affected by whoever wins or loses the election, the DNP team had hoped that the referendum might be held separately. We were also concerned that publicity for the referendum might get lost amid the political campaigns and electioneering. However, due to the amount of work being undertaken to prepare for the election, RBWM has told us that it does not have the resources to hold a separate referendum before that date.

Regardless of how many people vote in the referendum, if more than 50 per cent of votes cast are in favour of the DNP, then the Plan must be formally 'made' by RBWM and will become part of the local development plan.

Closer to the date, please look out for more information about the DNP and the referendum. We will be publishing details of where you can see the examiner's proposed modifications and the final version of the Plan. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please email the DNP team at DNPSG@datchetparishcouncil.gov.uk See also www.DatchetNeighbourhoodPlan.org

This is Datchet's plan, created by local residents to address planning issues the village may face in the next ten years. It's up to us all to decide what happens next.



Caption: The DNP seeks to find solutions to local issues, such as flooding and pollution, through good planning



Caption: This is your chance to help shape development so it addresses local issues, meets local needs, and protects what we love most about the village



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