

# **BREAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

## **REPORT OF 2017 INITIAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY**

### **Introduction**

This short report sets out the key findings and conclusions from an initial survey of households in Breage Parish exploring the opportunity to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish.

### **Methodology**

Some 1,300 questionnaires were hand delivered by parish councillors and volunteer helpers to normally resident households in the Parish – the 2011 Census of Population indicating that there are 1,306 normally resident households in the Parish. The questionnaire followed the model suggested for initial household surveys from Cornwall Council's online Neighbourhood Development Plan Toolkit and was accompanied by a covering letter from the Chair of Breage Parish Council. Distribution of the questionnaires largely took place over the weekend commencing 2 November 2017, with a closure date of the 24 November 2017 set for the return of questionnaires to Breage Parish Council. With a reliance on the use of hand delivery by volunteers it cannot be guaranteed that the questionnaire was distributed to all households in the Parish. Recognising this and in order to provide a potential fall back solution a copy of the questionnaire was also made available through the Breage Parish Council web site. The questionnaire sought views on a number of topics:

- To explore community attitudes towards the opportunity to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Breage.
- To capture initial views from the community in respect of what are seen as positive attributes of living in the Parish, and of what could be improved.
- To what topics should be considered in a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish.
- To identify potential volunteers from the community that might wish to contribute in some way towards the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish.

### **Response Rate**

At the close of the initial survey period some 141 completed questionnaires had been returned to Breage Parish Council. This represents a response of some 11%. Consultation with officers of Cornwall Council indicates that this is around the average for other parishes across Cornwall that have embarked on the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan and have used the initial questionnaire from the Council's Neighbourhood Development Plan Toolkit.

## **Preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan**

A large majority (95%) of respondents to the survey considered that producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish was a good idea. Although a myriad of reasons were given as to why preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan was considered a good idea these largely fell into three broad categories:

- ***Local involvement in policy making***: the opportunity for the local community to have a say on the future development of the Parish.
- ***Give some direction to development***: the opportunity to better control development including protecting the built and natural environment, and directing new development to the most appropriate location.
- ***Provide a more local flavour to existing policies***: the opportunity to add detail to and interpret strategic policies that currently apply to the Parish.

Not all respondents considered that the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plan was a good idea. A small minority (5%) either did not know or considered the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan to be a bad idea. The main reasons for this were as follows:

- Neighbourhood Development Plan will lead to unwanted development.
- Scarce resources should be spent on other things.
- Parish Council will not respect local views.
- Unnecessary administrative burden and bureaucratic.

## **Positives of Living in Breage**

A large and varied number of responses were received in respect of what are considered to be the positive aspects of living in the Parish, but the most common of these fell into the following categories:

- ***Countryside and rurality***: the rural nature of the Parish and its local countryside, including a network of footpaths, landscape and wildlife are highly valued.
- ***Coastline and beaches***: the coastline to the south of the Parish and its associated beaches are seen as positive attributes.
- ***Community spirit***: kith and kin connections, neighbourliness and a generally strong community spirit are considered positive characteristics of living in the Parish.
- ***Quiet and tranquil***: the relatively peaceful nature of the locale, and a low incidence of anti social behaviour and crime are all valued.
- ***Community facilities***: the on-going availability and access to various community facilities are seen as positives, particularly in the village of Breage.
- ***Access to nearby towns***: the relative ease of access to nearby towns including Helston and Penzance via the local road network is seen as a positive attribute of the Parish.

Other 'positives' that were identified by respondents include:

- Breage Church
- Local schools
- Cornishness
- Clean air
- Population diversity
- Most homes occupied all year
- Nice, older properties
- Bus routes
- Dark skies
- Green spaces
- Local history
- Superfast broadband

### **Potential Improvements for Breage**

A myriad of suggestions were put forward in respect of ways in which the Parish could be improved but only four broad categories that demonstrated some commonality:

- **Traffic management:** a desire to curb traffic speeds and better manage traffic movements including potential parking provision was noted with particular respect to the A394, Godolphin Cross, Breage and Praa Sands.
- **Community facilities:** although the availability of community facilities is seen as a positive attribute of the Parish respondents also suggest that there is a need to extend and improve these further, particularly in Ashton and in respects of services for younger people and the over 50s.
- **Footpath network:** the network of public footpaths and bridleways that runs across the Parish is also seen as a positive but one that requires enhanced maintenance and improved access and signage.
- **Affordable housing:** there was some commonality attached to providing more affordable housing in the Parish (in the right location) to particularly meet the needs of young people/families with a local connection.

Other suggestions that were less commonly raised are listed below for completeness:

- Litter
- Too much development in Ashton
- More consultation with local residents
- Improve policy engagement
- Maintain roads
- Improve old motel site on A394
- More litter/dog dirt bins
- More support for local events
- Maintain hedgerows
- Get local people together more

- Re-use empty properties
- Provide public toilets in Breage
- Impact assess all housing developments
- Keep Praa Sands public toilets open
- A more central role for Breage Parish Church
- Fewer caravans to be sited on domestic sites
- Improve public transport
- Holiday lets to pay council tax
- Offer vacant land to local people
- Curb second homes
- Stop light pollution
- Improve the 'horsepool'
- Parish Council to be more visible to the electorate
- Provide space for business
- No more houses to be built
- Provide a community website
- Lighting needed in smaller hamlets
- Cut overgrown hedges/verges
- Provide mains drainage
- More public seating
- Neighbourhood Watch Scheme
- Display council meetings better
- Keep local settlements separate and distinct
- Build in traditional materials and terrace style
- Fewer solar panels/satellite dishes on domestic properties
- Improve enforcement
- Improve upkeep of Breage Church
- Provide low level street lights
- More police
- Unblock drains
- Reduce weeds
- Tidy up Praa Sands
- More public houses
- Cheap bus fares and improved provision
- Cycle lanes
- Sustainable growth
- Church services
- Clean up beaches
- Reduce take up of green fields
- Stop seagull feeding

## Topics to be Considered by a Neighbourhood Development Plan

The table below sets out the level of support for a Neighbourhood Development Plan addressing a range of different topics.

**Table 1: Topics to be considered in a Neighbourhood Development Plan**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>% in support</b>
1=	Community facilities	93
1=	Open space, footpaths	93
3	Transport, traffic	87
4	Location, distribution of development	86
5=	Historic environment, heritage	84
5=	Type of housing	84
7	Landscape	83
8	Recreation, leisure facilities	81
9=	Housing design	77
9=	Housing numbers	77
11	Wildlife	75
12	Second homes, holiday homes	69
13	Renewable energy	59
14	Education, skills	57
15	Economy, jobs	52

The data indicates the following:

- All of the topics secured a majority (50%+) in support of their inclusion in a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- There are two clear ‘front runners’ that secured the greatest level of support – community facilities and open spaces, footpaths.
- There are three clear ‘back sliders’ that secured the lowest level of support – economy, jobs, education skills, and renewable energy
- Other potential topics to be considered in a Neighbourhood Development Plan fall between these two extremes.

In order to give greater direction to the topics that a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Breage might elect to prioritise it is helpful to group the above responses into convenient categories demarked by percentiles – this is summarised in the table overleaf.

**Table 2: Typology of support for topics to be included in a Neighbourhood Development Plan**

<b>Relative importance</b>	<b>% band</b>	<b>Topics</b>
Most important	91 – 100	Community facilities Open spaces, footpaths
Important	81 – 90	Transport, traffic Location, distribution of development Historic environment, heritage Type of housing Landscape Recreational facilities
Mixed	71 – 80	Housing design Housing numbers Wildlife
Less important	61 – 70	Second homes, holiday homes
Least important	51 – 60	Renewable energy Education, skills Economy, jobs

The above typology suggests that a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Breage should:

- Definitely consider issues related to ‘community facilities’ and ‘open spaces, footpaths’.
- Look to consider issues related to ‘transport, traffic’, ‘the location and distribution of development’, ‘historic environment and heritage’, ‘type of housing’, ‘landscape’ and ‘recreational facilities’.
- Give consideration as to whether the issues of ‘housing design’, ‘housing numbers’ and ‘wildlife’ need to be addressed.
- Think carefully as to whether the issue of ‘second homes, holiday homes’ needs to be addressed.
- Probably not consider issues relating to ‘renewable energy’, ‘education, skills’ and ‘economy, jobs’.

### **Other Topics**

In identifying ‘other topics’ that a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish might focus on many responses commonly reiterated topics already listed in the schedule of 15 potential topic areas set out above or areas for improvement in the Parish that had been previously identified. Additional comments that do not fall into either of these categories are listed below for completeness:

- Link villages together socially
- Transport scheme to doctors/hospital

- Food recycling
- More dog access to Praa Sands beach
- Discount scheme for solar panels
- Prepare a register of vested interests
- Tourism
- Protect green fields in centre of Breage
- Keep school class size small
- Fiscal penalties for second homes
- Fiscal limit on sale price of new homes
- Provide accommodation for farm workers
- Improve care of cemeteries
- Prevent coastal erosion
- Boundary issues on building plots
- Tackle car parking prices and provide disabled parking
- Resist proposals for big retail stores/heavy industry
- Keep community pubs open
- No planning permissions granted until Neighbourhood Development Plan in place

### **Volunteers to Support the Preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan**

The survey elicited a number of additional members of the local community came who expressed an interest in helping in the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan – all have subsequently been written too via e-mail thanking them for their interest and explaining the proposed ‘next steps’ in determining whether to proceed with the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

### **Conclusions and Recommendation**

The following key conclusions can be drawn from the initial household survey:

1. A large majority of respondents support the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for Breage and consider that this will promote greater local involvement in policy making, give direction to the future development of the Parish, and provide a more local flavour to existing more strategic policies.
2. There is evident commonality in respect of local perceptions of the positives of living in the Parish and these focus on: rurality and the countryside, the coastline and beaches, community spirit, quiet and tranquility, community facilities and access to nearby towns.
3. A Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish should seek to protect, retain and build upon these positive attributes.
4. There is also some commonality in respect of those areas in which respondents consider the Parish could be improved with a focus on: traffic management, the protection and provision of community facilities, the maintenance and enhancement of the footpath network, and the provision of affordable housing to meet local needs.
5. A Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish should look to explore how these issues could be addressed from a development and land use perspective.

6. Although all potential topics secured majority support for consideration in a Neighbourhood Development Plan there were two clear front runners and three back sliders: the former being ‘community facilities’ and ‘footpaths, open spaces’ and the latter being ‘economy, jobs’, ‘education, skills’ and ‘renewable energy’.
7. This would intimate that a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish is likely to need to explore issues and provide policy coverage in respect of ‘community facilities’ and ‘footpaths and open spaces’ but is much less likely to need to consider issues relating to the economy, education and renewable energy.
8. Other topics that scored highly at this juncture include traffic and transport, the location of new development, heritage, type of housing, landscape and recreational facilities: this would suggest that these should also be considered further through the Neighbourhood Development Plan process.
9. Housing design, housing numbers, wildlife and second homes scored less highly at this juncture, and careful consideration should therefore be given to whether or how a Neighbourhood Development Plan should address these.
10. The survey has revealed a number of additional parishioners that have expressed an interest in being part of a Steering Group to oversee the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, or would actively support preparation in some other way.

It is therefore now recommended that the Parish Council considers the results of the initial household survey and the round of public meetings held earlier in 2017 before embarking on further decision making in respect of the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan for the Parish.

The decisions now required at this juncture are:

- Should the Parish Council continue to actively support the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan?
- If yes, should the Parish Council look to convene and establish a Steering Group to oversee the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, and how should this be progressed?
- If so, what governance, reporting and decision taking arrangements should be put in place between the Steering Group and the Parish Council?

Chris Ralph, 30/12/17