

Middridge Parish
Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2038
CONSULTATION STATEMENT



August 2024

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Prepared for Middridge Parish Council by Shaun Hanson MRTPI, Planning Advice Plus



Woodside, Ovington, Richmond,
North Yorkshire DL11 7BW
t: 01833 627924
e: shaun@planningadviceplus.co.uk
w: www.planningadviceplus.co.uk

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In accordance with Regulation 15(1)(b) of The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, this Statement has been prepared to accompany the Submission Draft of the Middridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan (hereinafter also referred to as the ‘NP’, ‘Neighbourhood Plan’ or ‘Plan’).
- 1.2 15(2) of the Regulations sets out that a Consultation Statement must –
- 1) Contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
 - 2) Explain how they were consulted;
 - 3) Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;
 - 4) Describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.
- 1.3 In order to meet these requirements, this Statement is set out as follows –
- Background to the Neighbourhood Plan;
 - Preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, with chronological account of the key stages of public consultation from commencement up to the Pre-Submission stage, including who was consulted, what measures and methods were used, the outcomes of consultation and how they were addressed in the development and drafting of the NP;
 - Conclusion and appendices.

2.0 BACKGROUND TO THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

- 2.1 Prior to embarking on a Neighbourhood Plan, Middridge Parish Council has had a long history working with and for the local community to maintain the character of the village and wider Parish and to protect and enhance its valued attributes.
- 2.2 Against this background, the Parish Council took a prompt interest in the potential benefits of a Neighbourhood Plan, recognising that, with appropriate and locally tailored policies, it could help to protect these essential qualities.

2013 Pre - Neighbourhood Area designation questionnaire

- 2.3 Keen to get the ball rolling, the Parish Council undertook some preliminary community engagement as early as August 2013. This is mentioned here in the interests of chronological accuracy as it pre-dated the application and designation of the Parish as a Neighbourhood Area (dealt with overleaf).
- 2.4 Whilst the engagement took the form of a paper survey¹ described as a ‘Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire’, it mainly sought to gather broad brush information about the characteristics of the local population and their attitudes to local issues. In the event, most of the matters covered

¹ This was delivered by hand to all properties in the Parish’s area

were not within the remit of a neighbourhood plan to tackle and are consequently not relevant to report in this Statement.

- 2.5 However, the survey did seek respondents attitudes to the prospect of further housing development in the Parish. This revealed that a resounding majority (over 91%) did not support it. This was reinforced in many of the comments which were made, with respondents valuing the essential 'village' character of Middridge and its separateness from neighbouring settlements. This provided a very clear early signpost to the eventual focus and subject matter of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.6 A copy of this early community survey questionnaire is included in Appendix 1 at the end of this Statement.

2014 Designation of Middridge Parish as a Neighbourhood Area

- 2.7 Following this early community engagement exercise, the Parish Council applied for Neighbourhood Area status on 9th May 2014. The boundary followed the Parish boundary, such that the proposed area encompassed the whole of Middridge Parish. The application was published for the statutory six week period via Durham County Council's website. A public notice was displayed on village noticeboards and in an edition of the locally circulating 'Middridge Mercury' which was delivered to all properties in the Parish on 15th May 2014. Representations were also invited from Durham County Council Ward Members and adjoining local Parish/Town Councils.
- 2.8 After the conclusion of the publicity period, no objections had been received and the Neighbourhood Area was duly designated on 4th July 2014. A map showing the boundaries of the Neighbourhood Area is included on page 3 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.9 Prior to this stage, a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group had already been established to spearhead and manage the tasks of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. It comprised a mix of Parish Council representatives and interested local residents.

3.0 PREPARATION OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

2016 Parish Housing Questionnaire

- 3.1 By way of a context as to the direction of travel of the Neighbourhood Plan, it is relevant to note that, soon after the designation of the Neighbourhood Area, the Parish became the focus for large scale housing proposals. This affected an area of open countryside on the eastern side of the Parish adjacent to a historical housing allocation (known as Eldon Whins) which itself also became the subject of a planning application for large scale housing in 2016. Further details are in paragraph 1.16 of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.2 In the light of these applications, the NP Working Group initiated a second community consultation exercise in April 2016 to concentrate specifically on the subject of housing development. This consisted of a short questionnaire which was hand delivered to all properties

in the Parish's area. Its purpose was ostensibly to inform the Neighbourhood Plan, but it also provided an effective way to gather local opinion to help the Parish Council respond to the (then) contemporaneous planning application.

3.3 The questionnaire sought feedback on the following –

- 1) The degree of support (or otherwise) for the proposed Eldon Whins development subject of the contemporaneous planning application;
- 2) The degree of support (or otherwise) for the proposed development of land adjacent to Eldon Whins subject of the 2014 planning application (which had at this time only just been withdrawn);
- 3) The degree of support (or otherwise) for further limited housing development elsewhere in the Parish (with an opportunity to suggest possible locations);
- 4) The degree of support (or otherwise) for different housing types if new housing development does take place.

The questionnaire also provided the opportunity to leave free text comments.

3.4 Analysis of responses was undertaken following the conclusion of the consultation exercise. The headline results of this were as follows –

- A total of 96 completed questionnaires were received;
- Over 90% of respondents were not supportive of housing development at Eldon Whins or on the land adjacent to it;
- Similarly, over 90% were not in favour of limited housing development elsewhere in the Parish;
- If housing development were nevertheless to take place, responses to the various house types listed were as follows –
 - 96% of respondents were not in favour of 3+ storey town houses
 - 82% of respondents were not in favour of affordable social housing
 - 64% of respondents were in favour of bungalows or elderly persons housing
 - 54% of respondents were in favour of low density housing

In terms of comments, these shone an important light on the reasons for respondents views, with an overriding message that people wanted to keep the village identity of Middridge intact and ensure it maintained its separation from Newton Aycliffe and Shildon.

3.5 Copies of both the housing questionnaire and a full summary of the responses to it are provided at the end of this Statement at Appendix 2a and 2b respectively.

2018 Topic-Focussed Questionnaire

3.6 By 2017, the NP Working Group had reached the conclusion that it would benefit from the provision of expert help to ensure that further work on the Plan would be on the right tracks. Grant funding was sought and professional help was secured.

3.7 The feedback received from the community thus far had provided a strong core message as outlined in paragraphs 2.5 and 3.4 above. However, there remained some important gaps in terms of community opinion, where further local input would help to create a broader foundation and scope for the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.8 Consequently, a new and more comprehensive topic-focussed questionnaire was prepared in 2017. Its purpose was to gather more relevant and targeted feedback to inform the development of the Plan, as well as further details on the key messages which had already emerged. Development of the questionnaire also took place in consultation with Durham County Council to ensure that they were actively involved and on board with the scope and nature of it.

3.9 In late 2017 and early 2018, competing issues and priorities for the Parish Council led to a hiatus in Neighbourhood Plan progress, but things were ready to proceed again in the Spring of 2018 when the topic-focussed questionnaire survey was rolled out. The following bullet points summarise the key features of this exercise -

- The engagement and consultation took place over the period from 26th March to 9th April 2018
- It centred around an 8 page topic-focussed questionnaire, consisting of a total of 18 questions, split into the following sections –
 - Housing
 - Design of new development
 - Village economy
 - Local Green Spaces
 - Protection of valued assets
 - Further comments
 - Demographic Details
- A copy of the questionnaire was delivered to every address in the Parish. It had been previously decided that this should be a purely paper exercise, so there was no online version and questionnaires were completed by hand. Reasons for this were as follows –
 - No one in the NP Working Group had experience of setting up and using an online questionnaire system such as survey monkey
 - It was recognised that a number of Parish residents lacked internet access and so it was logistically more straightforward to base the whole survey process on paper returns
 - There was some concern about the potential for mis-use of an online system in terms of the authenticity of responses
 - Members of the NP Working Group were available and willing to assist with the hand delivery and subsequent collection of questionnaires

- Completed questionnaires could be returned by posting them into a drop-in box at the village hall, or by posting/handing them directly to the Parish Clerk. Members of the NP Working Group also visited each property in the Parish to collect completed questionnaire, including where necessary making return visits to maximise the number of completed responses
- The consultation exercise was promoted in advance by delivering an explanatory letter to each property in the week prior to commencement of the consultation. This provided information about the impending questionnaire survey and the process for responding

3.10 A full copy of the 2018 questionnaire is provided in Appendix 3a at the end of this Statement.

Outcomes from 2018 Topic-Focussed Questionnaire

3.11 Following the consultation exercise, a total of 145 completed questionnaires had been collected, representing a creditable 58% response rate².

3.12 Responses to questions were then collated. Those that could be quantified were entered into a spreadsheet to enable statistical outputs, whilst free text comments were manually recorded.

3.13 Following this exercise, a document entitled 'Community Engagement Results' was prepared by the Working Group. This brought together the raw statistical data from the 'tick-box' survey questions with the associated comments that were received. The document also included some brief discussion sections which provided a useful preliminary interpretation of the survey findings on a question by question basis. A summary of this document is provided at Appendix 3b.

3.14 There was then a further filtering out of non-NP matters, along with a drawing together and prioritisation of the NP-relevant responses and comments. This enabled the Working Group to boil the survey findings down to three core messages –

- a) That the essential village nature and character of Middridge should be maintained and its physical separation from Newton Aycliffe and Shildon (ie – by dint of open countryside) be safeguarded.
- b) That to help achieve this, existing built development should be protected from further outward housing growth.
- c) That the existing valued green spaces and built assets of the village should be protected for the contribution they make to its character and to community wellbeing.

3.15 The veracity of these messages were clearly evidenced in the frequency they were raised and the fact that they were repeated across the subject matter covered in the questionnaire. In turn, they provided the foundation to develop an overarching vision and objectives for the NP. As messages a) and b) were clearly linked, these lent themselves to a single objective, whilst a separate objective was arrived at for message c). The resulting draft vision and two objectives

² Based on the number of residents on the 2018 electoral register

were as follows –

VISION: *To safeguard the existing rural character of the Parish of Middridge and its open Countryside, keeping its separation from neighbouring Towns and Villages, whilst also protecting and enhancing the open spaces and valued features which are part of its character and appeal.*

OBJECTIVE 1 (RURAL SETTING): *To safeguard the rural setting of Middridge Village and protect the open Countryside separating it from neighbouring Settlements.*

OBJECTIVE 2 (VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT): *To protect and enhance the local green spaces and valued features of Middridge for the contributions they make to its character and appeal.*

3.16 These were then shared with Parish residents in order to check that they correctly encapsulated and expressed the community’s views. This was by means of a notice delivered to every household in the Parish, a copy of which is included at Appendix 4. No adverse comments were received and so the Vision and Objectives were carried forward to form the building blocks of the NP and its resulting policies³.

3.17 As the Plan was drafted, two substantive ‘topic’ chapters emerged, one dealing with objective 1 and one dealing with objective 2 above. The resulting relationship between chapters, objectives and policies is set out in a table on p.24 of the Plan, a copy of which is provided below for reference. This also provides the up to date wording for the objectives as mentioned in footnote 3 below.

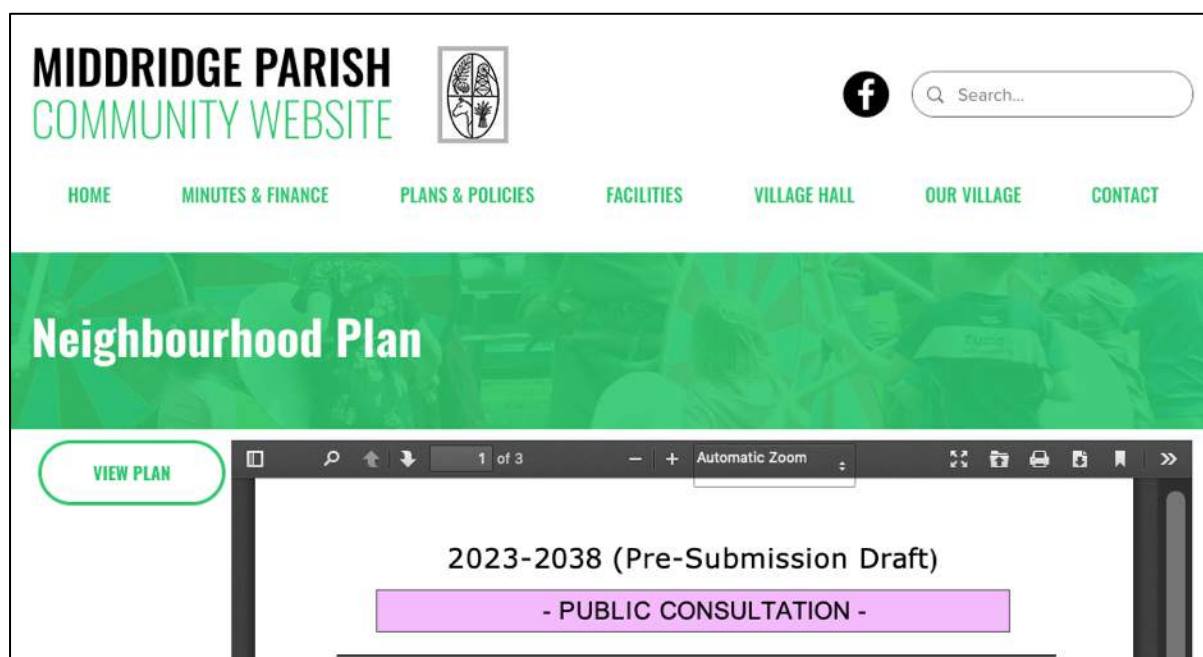
CHAPTER		TOPIC OBJECTIVE	POLICY/POLICIES TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVE
4	The Valued Rural Setting of Middridge Village	‘To safeguard the valued rural setting of Middridge village and maintain its separateness from neighbouring settlements’.	<u>Policy MNP1:</u> Protected Rural Setting (p.29)
5	The Valued Attributes of Middridge Village	‘To protect and enhance the valued open spaces and built assets which contribute to the village’s character and wellbeing of the community’.	<u>Policy MNP2:</u> Local Green Spaces (p.39) <u>Policy MNP3:</u> Valued Village Assets (p.41)

3.18 The approach to both chapters and their policies was developed in close liaison with the County Council in order to ensure it was supported and in conformity with strategic local policy. The Basic Conditions Statement, prepared alongside this Consultation Statement, sets out how the NP fulfils this, and each of the other Basic Conditions.

³ Note that minor wording changes subsequently took place to the draft Vision and Topic Objectives in order to ensure that they were reflective of the final content and nomenclature used in the Pre-Submission NP

4.0 PRE-SUBMISSION (REGULATION 14) CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The Pre-Submission NP was completed in late 2023. However, to avoid clashing with the Christmas/New Year period, the statutory (Regulation 14) consultation exercise was delayed until 2024, when it took place over a 6 week period from Monday 5th February to Sunday 17th March 2024.
- 4.2 The consultation was publicised via a summary leaflet, hand delivered to all addresses in the Parish in the week prior to commencement of the consultation. The leaflet included a link to view the Pre-Submission Plan on a dedicated Neighbourhood Plan webpage on the Parish Council's website (see screenshot below), as well as information on how to view paper copies of the Plan for those without internet access.



Screenshot showing the Parish Council's webpage which included a full copy of the summary leaflet and a link to view the Plan⁴

- 4.3 The leaflet also contained –
- A summary of the main provisions of the Plan (ie - its Vision and Policies)
 - An explanation of the background to the Plan
 - Information about the consultation itself, including how to respond and what would happen after the consultation is complete
 - Notice of a consultation event, planned as part of the Pre-Submission consultation, which would take place in the Village Hall between 10am and 2pm on Saturday 24th February 2024 (it was later recorded that a total of 8 people attended this)

⁴ Note that Durham County Council's Neighbourhood Planning webpage also included a link to view the Neighbourhood Plan

- 4.4 A full copy of the summary leaflet is provided at Appendix 5 of this Statement.
- 4.5 In addition, publicity also took place with a copy of the summary leaflet in the 31/01/2024 edition of 'Newton News', a local community newspaper which is circulated weekly to all homes and businesses in the area. It also has a dedicated website and a copy of the publicity can still be viewed online at the time of writing at - <https://www.newtonnews.co.uk/midddridge-parish-neighbourhood-plan/>
- 4.6 A list of the statutory consultees notified about the Pre-Submission NP⁵ is included in Appendix 6.

Outcomes from Pre-Submission (Regulation 14) consultation

- 4.7 At the close of the consultation, a total of 8 submissions had been received. Appendix 7 contains a table setting out details of these submissions, the Qualifying Body's responses to them and how (where relevant) they resulted to changes to the NP⁶.

5.0 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 In light of the evidence provided in this Statement, it is concluded that the process and techniques involved in community engagement were thorough and robust and the resulting outcomes have been properly considered and reflected both in the development and final content of the Midddridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.2 Accordingly, it is the conclusion of this Statement that the requirements of the relevant Regulations have been fully met.

⁵ In accordance with sub-section b) of Regulation 14, being 'any consultation body referred to in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan'


⁶ The NP changes are shown as yellow highlighted text in the Appendix 7 table

APPENDICES

The following Table provides a summary of the Appendices which follow:

APPENDIX	PAGE	DESCRIPTION
1	10	2013 Pre – Neighbourhood Area Designation Questionnaire
2a	11	2016 Parish Housing Questionnaire
2b	12	2016 Parish Housing Questionnaire Results (NB – spreads over 2 pages)
3a	14	2018 Topic-Focused Questionnaire (NB – spreads over 2 pages)
3b	16	Summary of 2018 Topic-Focused Questionnaire Results (NB – spreads over 6 pages)
4	22	Draft Vision and Objectives Notice
5	23	Publicity leaflet for Pre-Submission NP (NB – spreads over 2 pages)
6	25	List of statutory consultees notified at Regulation 14 stage
7	26	Summary of submissions to Regulation 14 consultation & Qualifying Body's response to them (including consequential changes to the NP) (NB – spreads over 3 pages)

APPENDIX 1: 2013 PRE - NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA DESIGNATION QUESTIONNAIRE (CONDENSED INTO 1 PAGE FOR BREVITY)



Midridge Parish Council
Midridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan
Questionnaire

1. How many people live in your household?
(Please indicate the number from each age range)

	0-5	6-16	17-25	26-50	51-60	61-75	76+
Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Female	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

2. Which of the following applies to you and anyone over 16 in your household?
(Please indicate the number for each option that applies)

Employed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unemployed	<input type="checkbox"/>	Self employed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Retired	<input type="checkbox"/>	In education/training	<input type="checkbox"/>	Unable to work	<input type="checkbox"/>

3. Where were the householders born?

4. How many vehicles belong to your household?

5. If in employment, what is your main method of travel?

6. Where do you most frequently do your shopping?

Newton Aycliffe	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shildon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bishop Auckland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
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1

7. Where do you most frequently spend your leisure time?

Newton Aycliffe	<input type="checkbox"/>	Shildon	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bishop Auckland	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
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8. How many years have you lived in Midridge?

9. What made you come to live in Midridge?
.....

10. What do you like about living in Midridge?
.....

11. What do you NOT like about living in Midridge?
.....

12. Do you think any areas of the Parish need extra attention? (ie road repairs)
.....

13. What would be your attitude to new housing within the Parish? (Please tick one box)

Strongly against	<input type="checkbox"/>	Against	<input type="checkbox"/>	In favour	<input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly in favour	<input type="checkbox"/>
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14. If you are in favour of new houses, where would you like them to be built?
.....

2

15. If you are in favour of new houses, what kind of housing would you like to see?
.....

16. Which of these issues should be addressed if there was to be any further housing developments in the Parish? (Please tick all that apply)

Availability of primary school places	<input type="checkbox"/>	Convenience of health care	<input type="checkbox"/>
Highway and parking capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scale of development	<input type="checkbox"/>

17. What is your main method of transport?
.....

18. Buses run every half hour to Bishop Auckland via Shildon and Darlington via Aycliffe. Are you satisfied with the service? If not, what are your suggestions?
.....

19. Volume and speed of traffic has been an issue for many years. Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding this issue?
.....

20. The Parish Council would like to see the 40mph limit extended from both Aycliffe and Shildon to our 30mph village limit to help slow down the traffic through the village.

Would you support this? Yes No

3

21. The village has 2 venues for social activities - the Bay Horse pub and the Village Hall. Do you use the Village Hall, either for attending groups / activities or private letting?

Regularly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Occasionally	<input type="checkbox"/>	Never	<input type="checkbox"/>
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22. Are there any other activities you would like to see taking place in the village? Please give details
.....

23. Would you be willing to volunteer to help in either running the hall or an activity?

Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maybe	<input type="checkbox"/>
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24. Is there anything else you would like to add, eg any suggestions, issues of concern etc, that has not already been covered? Please give details.
.....
.....

If you wish to discuss or comment on any of the questions or issues raised in further detail, please include your name and contact details below:


Name:

Contact: (tel number / address)

Thank you for your participation

4

APPENDIX 2a: 2016 PARISH HOUSING QUESTIONNAIRE (CONDENSED INTO 1 PAGE FOR BREVITY)

<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Parish Housing Questionnaire </div> <p>As you may know, the Parish Council are in the process of developing a Neighbourhood Plan, which is intended to allow local people to have more INFLUENCE over all aspects of Development in their area for the next 20 years. A key focus of this is Housing Development, and it is very important that the Middridge Neighbourhood Plan reflects the views of local Residents on this Issue.</p> <p>Consequently, we would ask you to give us your views on the following Questions:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Draft County Durham Plan includes a Proposal to build 350 Homes in the area of the Parish known as "Eldon Whins" (see Map over). <p>Are you in favour of this Development? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Persimmon Homes had submitted a Planning Application which would add a further 270 Homes to the "Eldon Whins" Development (see over) and which has now been withdrawn. <p>Are you in favour of such a Development? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Are you in favour of any LIMITED Housing Development anywhere else in the Parish? <p style="text-align: right;"><input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO</p> <p>If in favour, where could such Development occur?</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 20px; width: 100%; margin-bottom: 10px;"></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Whatever your views, it is possible that National and/or County considerations may dictate that Housing Development take place in the Parish. If this should occur, what are your views with regard to the type of Houses that should be built:- <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 80%;">i. Three Storey (or higher) Town Houses?</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">YES</td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="width: 10%; text-align: center;">NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>ii. Affordable Social Housing?</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">YES</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>iii. Housing for the Elderly/Disabled?</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">YES</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">NO</td> </tr> <tr> <td>iv. Low Density Housing?</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">YES</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td style="text-align: center;">NO</td> </tr> </table> <p style="font-size: small;">Please feel free to amplify your answers with any Comments you may wish to make, using the space on the back of this Questionnaire. It would be helpful if you could give us your Name and Address, but this completely optional.</p>	i. Three Storey (or higher) Town Houses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	ii. Affordable Social Housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	iii. Housing for the Elderly/Disabled?	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	iv. Low Density Housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 10px;"> Proposed "Eldon Whins" Housing Developments </div>  <p style="text-align: center; font-size: small; margin-top: 5px;">COMMENTS</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; height: 80px; width: 100%; margin-top: 5px;"></div> <p style="font-size: small; margin-top: 10px;">The completed questionnaires will be collected before Wednesday 6th April</p> <p>NAME:</p> <p>ADDRESS:</p>
i. Three Storey (or higher) Town Houses?	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO																	
ii. Affordable Social Housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO																	
iii. Housing for the Elderly/Disabled?	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO																	
iv. Low Density Housing?	<input type="checkbox"/>	YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO																	

APPENDIX 2b: 2016 PARISH HOUSING QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Parish Housing Questionnaire Results

1. Surveys Issued

There are a total of **155** Habitable Properties currently in Middridge Parish. **HOWEVER, 9** of these Properties are **KNOWN** to be empty:-

- (a) 16, Eden Grove
- (b) 2, Middridge Farms (?)
- (c) 6, North Side
- (d) 7, North Side
- (e) 9, Northside Close
- (f) 35, South Side
- (g) Eldon Moor Farm House – 3 Properties

Consequently, it is **BELIEVED** that **146** Questionnaires were issued.

2. Completed Questionnaires

A total of 96 completed Questionnaires were collected (at least to date), which represents 65.8 % of the Questionnaires issued.

In many cases where Questionnaires were not completed, this was due to our inability to make contact with the Properties concerned, despite repeated attempts, rather than because people stated that they were not interested.

Consequently, this high percentage of Responses indicates that Middridge Residents are **VERY** concerned about possible Housing Development in the Parish.

3. Question 1: Proposed County Plan “Eldon Whins” Development

Of the Responders, 8.4 % were in favour of the Proposed County Plan “Eldon Whins” Development, and 91.6 % opposed; 99 % of Responders answered this Question (all bar one who stated they were undecided).

4. Question 2: Proposed Persimmon “Eldon Whins” Development

Of the Responders, 7.5 % were in favour of the Proposed Persimmon “Eldon Whins” Development, and 92.5 % opposed; **ALL** Responders answered.

5. Question 3: Other Limited Development

Of the Responders, 8.4 % were in favour of Limited Housing Development in the Parish, and 91.6 % opposed; 97.9 % of Responders answered this Question.

Unfortunately the Responders in favour of Limited Housing Development elsewhere in the Parish, **ALL** suggested **DIFFERENT** possible locations!

0

APPENDIX 2b: 2016 PARISH HOUSING QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (CONTINUED)

6. Question 4: Possible Housing Types

The answers to the Questions regarding the type of Houses which should be built **IF** Housing Development were to be permitted, were as follows:-

- (a) Three Storey (or higher) Town Houses – 3.6 % were in favour, and 96.4 % opposed; 87.5 % of Responders answered this Question.
- (b) Affordable Social Housing – 18.3 % were in favour, and 81.7 % opposed; 85.4 % of Responders answered this Question.
- (c) Bungalows or Houses for the Elderly - 64 % were in favour, and 36 % opposed; 92.7 % of Responders answered this Question.
- (d) Low Density Housing – 53.9 % were in favour, and 46.1 % opposed; 94.8 % of Responders answered this Question.

NOTE – 26 % of Responders answered all four Questions in the negative. It is of course possible that these answers accurately represent their views. **HOWEVER**, it is also **POSSIBLE** that they did **NOT** understand them, and **BELIEVED** that answering any of them positively would be taken to mean they were in **FAVOUR** of Housing Development (it is noteworthy that **ALL** such Responders were **OPPOSED** to **ANY** form of Housing Development in their answers to Questions 1 – 3). Thus it is **POSSIBLE** these Results **OVERSTATE** the opposition to the types of Housing.

7. Comments

Just over one-third of Responders chose to make Comments, some on more than one topic, which can be broadly categorized as follows:-

- (a) Concerns regarding increased Traffic (32.4 %)
- (b) Concerns regarding keeping the Village Identity separate from Newton Aycliffe and Shildon (27 %)
- (c) Keep the Village as it is (24.3 %)
- (d) Other - all essentially different (16.3 %)

8. Conclusions

Just under two-thirds of the properties in the Parish responded. To summarise the results of the Questionnaire:-

- (a) 91.6 % of Responders **OPPOSE** the Proposed County Plan "Eldon Whins" Development.
- (b) 92.5 % of Responders **OPPOSE** the Proposed Persimmon "Eldon Whins" Development.
- (c) 91.6 % of Responders **OPPOSE** Limited Housing Development elsewhere in the Parish.

IF Housing Development were to be permitted:-

- (a) 96.4 % of Responders **OPPOSE** Three Storey (or higher) Town Houses.
- (b) 81.7 % of Responders **OPPOSE** Affordable Social Housing.
- (c) 64 % of Responders **FAVOUR** Bungalows or Housing for the Elderly.
- (d) A small Majority of Responders (53.9 %) **FAVOUR** Low Density Housing.

APPENDIX 3a: 2018 TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE (CONDENSED INTO 2 PAGES FOR BREVITY)

Middridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan Questionnaire

We need your views to develop the Neighbourhood Plan for Middridge Parish...

You may remember that we have begun the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Middridge. Well, the time has now come for us to consult again with the local community and ask you some focused questions to help shape the future of our Parish over the next ten to fifteen years.

What needs protecting?

What needs improving?

What do we want our area to look like?

What new development should there be?

Your input will help us develop a document with policies setting out how to manage future development and use of land of our area, the requirements that development should meet and how important features and assets of the area will be safeguarded or improved. The finished Plan will need the backing of the local community before it can be adopted, so everyone's views are important.


Once completed, the Plan will have legal status and be used in making decisions on future planning applications within the Middridge Neighbourhood Area.

...Let us know what you think by completing this questionnaire!


Completing and returning the questionnaire

Questions are mostly of the simple tick-box variety, but there are plenty of opportunities for you to add comments, plus an open question at the end if there's anything else you'd like to tell us.

All questions relate to land within the Neighbourhood Area of Middridge (see map adjacent). Further information about the Neighbourhood Plan is on our website, where there is also an online version of this questionnaire. Use of the online questionnaire is encouraged as it makes it easier for results to be accurately collated and analysed.



However, paper questionnaires are equally welcome and can be returned using the drop-in box at the Village Hall, or by post to the Clerk of the Parish Council (address below). The closing date for completed questionnaires is xx xxx 2017.



Middridge Parish Council
c/o 51 Southside, Middridge, Newton Aycliffe, Co. Durham DL5 7JD
e: middridgepc@gmail.com
w: <http://www.middridge.org.uk/page1/styled-6/index.html>

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MIDDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE

A) HOUSING

Please note – This section of the questionnaire does not relate to the proposals for housing development at Eldon Whins. This development has now been approved subject to a Section 106 Legal Agreement and is therefore not within the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan to tackle.

It is important to recognise that a Neighbourhood Plan should not seek to completely prevent new housing development in its area. National planning policy requires that it must plan positively for local housing needs in order to enhance or maintain the vitality of the local community over the 10-15 year period of the Plan.

However, a Plan can put in place measures to limit what can be built in order to respect the scale and character of the village, its open rural setting and its separateness from Newton Aycliffe and Shildon.

The following questions ask what your views are about these issues and, most importantly, how the Plan might best tackle them.

1) *If new housing development was to take place in Middridge village, what importance would you attach to managing the following aspects of it? Please tick the box that represents your view and add a further comment or explanation if you wish*

Aspect	Very important	Quite important	Not important
a) The amount of housing should be carefully managed to respect the scale and character of the village (also see Q.2):	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comment:</i>			
b) The location of housing should be carefully managed to respect the open rural setting of the village:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comment:</i>			
c) The Neighbourhood Plan should ensure that housing does not diminish the separateness of the village from Newton Aycliffe and Shildon:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comment:</i>			

Please return your completed questionnaire by xx xxxxxx 2017

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MIDDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE

2) *Reference to the County Council's planning application records shows that in the last 15 years there has been permission granted for one dwelling in Middridge village. Thinking about the availability of housing in the village and the future needs of the community, what do you think would be an appropriate number of new dwellings to be built over the next 15 years in the village? Please tick:*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Another amount (please specify) _____

3) *Thinking about the availability of housing in the village and the future needs of the community, what type of new houses do you think would be appropriate over the next 15 years? Please tick one box per row:*

HOUSE TYPE	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
a) Affordable homes	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) Smaller homes (1 to 2 bedrooms)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) Family homes (3 to 4 bedrooms)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) Retirement/sheltered housing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) Bungalows	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) Homes for sale (on the open market)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) Homes for rent (on the open market)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

As an alternative to conventional 'developer-led' housing, the Neighbourhood Plan could put forward measures to facilitate custom or self-build homes. These are homes built or commissioned by individuals or groups of individuals for their own use, either by building the home on their own or working with builders.

It would be useful to find out whether there would be interest and support for this in the context of a Neighbourhood Plan for our Parish (NB - any such homes would have to comply with all other requirements of the Neighbourhood Plan).

4) *Would you support the Neighbourhood Plan including measures to facilitate custom or self-build housing within the Parish? Please tick and, if possible, specify in the comments box where and under what circumstances this might be appropriate:*

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment:

Please return your completed questionnaire by xx xxxxxx 2017

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MIDDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE

Given the limited opportunities for further housing within Middridge village, it is more likely that future development (if it were to take place) would be proposed at its edges. An important issue for the Neighbourhood Plan is how therefore to respond to this. In other words, how should the edge of the village be identified and under what circumstances would new housing at the edge be appropriate?

To assist with this, the approach of many former Councils in County Durham has been to identify **settlement boundaries** around villages. A settlement boundary marks the dividing line between the outermost edge of the settlement and the countryside beyond.

The Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to decide whether or not a settlement boundary should be identified around Middridge and if it is identified, how should it best operate in terms of managing future housing development.

5) *Which of the following options do you think would provide the best approach to managing future housing development at the edges of Middridge village? Please tick the option you consider is most appropriate and add any comments you may have about your choice below:*

Options:	Please tick one box only
<p>OPTION A) THERE SHOULD BE A TIGHTLY DRAWN SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY, WITH SOME FLEXIBILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT AT THE EDGE: A settlement boundary should be drawn tightly around the village, but with some flexibility for a limited amount of housing at the edge, the circumstances for which should be carefully set out through criteria to be agreed through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>OPTION B) THERE SHOULD BE A LOOSELY DRAWN SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY: A settlement boundary should be drawn less tightly, incorporating areas of undeveloped land around the edge of the village and providing space for housing on the undeveloped areas</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>OPTION C) THERE SHOULD BE NO SETTLEMENT BOUNDARY: A settlement boundary should not be drawn - housing proposals would be best assessed on a case by case basis, subject to criteria to be agreed through the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Comment:</i>	

Please return your completed questionnaire by xx xxxxxx 2017

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APPENDIX 3a: 2018 TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE (CONTINUED)

MIDDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE

6) In addition to the main village of Middridge, the Parish also has existing clusters of housing development nearby at 1-10 Middridge Farms on Walker's Lane and 11-16 Middridge Farms on Middridge Road. What (if anything) do you think the Plan should do in terms of future housing development in these small clusters? There are three options: a), b) and c) - please tick just **one** option for each cluster and add a comment to clarify or explain your view:

Option:	1-10 Middridge Farms (Walker's Lane)	11-16 Middridge Farms (Middridge Road)
a) Leave them as they are - the Plan should not make any specific provision for new housing development		
b) Consider making provision for limited new housing to take place (please specify what and where you think this could be in the comments box below)		
c) Another approach (please specify what you think this could be in the comments box below)		

Comment:

D) DESIGN OF NEW DEVELOPMENT

The Government attaches great importance to the design of the built environment, especially design that will help reinforce a strong sense of place and create attractive and comfortable places to live. A Neighbourhood Plan can play a role in helping to promote good standards of design, layout and appearance for housing and for other forms of development through guidance and policies.

7) How important do you think it is that the Neighbourhood Plan includes measures to promote good quality design for all new built development in our Parish? Please tick and add a comment or further explanation below, especially if there are any particular aspects of design that you would like to see better controlled:

Very important	Quite important	Not important

Comment:

E) VILLAGE ECONOMY

The Neighbourhood Plan could include provisions to help facilitate smaller scale local business and employment opportunities, such as start ups and working from home.

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MIDDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE

G) PROTECTION OF VALUED ASSETS

The preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan also offers an opportunity for people to put forward any particular feature, building or other site which deserves some kind of recognition and protection. Historic buildings or features are a good example. There is a lack of Listed Buildings in the Parish (only the war memorial is Listed), but we do have a Conservation Area in Middridge.

However, there may be other buildings, features or sites in the Parish's area which are considered by local people to be important and valuable to the character and identity of the area, but have never been specifically identified before.

These need not necessarily be historic, but you could include anything from a valued landscape feature, or attractive vantage point or view to a characterful building or structure and even down to smaller features such as an old historic footpath, wall, post box or sign etc.

12) Are there any buildings, features, sites or views you think may be suitable for identification and protection in the area covered by our Parish? If so, please describe them below as accurately as you can and briefly explain your reasons why:

H) FURTHER COMMENTS

13) If you have anything further you wish to add to your responses in this questionnaire, or anything which hasn't already been covered, please do so in the box below:

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MIDDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE

8) Do you think the Neighbourhood Plan should play a role in facilitating small scale business and employment opportunities, such as start ups and working from home? Please tick and add details in the comments box below, such as where within the Parish this might be particularly appropriate:

Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Comment:

F) LOCAL GREEN SPACES

Neighbourhood plans provide an excellent opportunity for communities to identify local green spaces of special importance to them which should be protected and improved. Such areas must hold a particular local significance, for example because of their beauty, historic or recreational value, tranquillity, or richness of wildlife. They must also generally be within or at the edge of the village rather than out in the open countryside.

Middridge has possible examples of such areas, including its village greens, the allotments and children's play area and smaller informal areas of open space, woodland and trees.

9) Do you think it is important for the Neighbourhood Plan to identify local green spaces for protection within or on the edges of Middridge village? Please tick:

Very Important	Quite important	Not important

10) Are there any local green spaces you think should be specially identified for protection? Please describe the site(s) below as accurately as you can and your reasons why they should be protected:

11) Do you think there are any neglected areas of local green space which need improvement? Please describe the site(s) below as accurately as you can and briefly explain how they could be improved:

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MIDDRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL
NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN TOPIC-FOCUSSED QUESTIONNAIRE

I) DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS

This last section helps us find out if we have gained the views of a cross section of the population. It will not be used to identify respondents. Responses will be held securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act. You may skip any questions if you'd prefer not to provide a response.

14) Please enter your postcode

15) How old are you?

Under 18	36-45	66-75
18-25	46-55	76-85
26-35	56-65	Over 85

16) Are you...?

MALE FEMALE

17) What is your connection with the Parish? Please tick all that apply:

	YES	NO
a) Do you live in the Parish?		
b) If working, do you work in the Parish?		
c) Do you have a business based in the Parish?		

18) If you live in the area, how many years have you lived here? Please tick:

< 1	1-3	4-5	6-10	11-15	> 15

Finally, we welcome anyone who is interested in being kept informed about the Neighbourhood Plan and possibly helping in its preparation. Please indicate your interest by ticking the relevant box(es) and registering your details below (please note this is optional).

Would like to be kept informed Would like to offer assistance

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Please return your completed questionnaires by xx xxxxxx 2017, either by using the drop-in box at Middridge Village Hall, or by post to the Clerk of the Parish Council (address on page 1).

THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

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APPENDIX 3b: SUMMARY OF 2018 TOPIC-FOCUSED QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

Q1 – Importance of managing new housing development

Statistical Data

Importance of	Important	Not important	No answer
a) Managing amount	98%	0.7%	1.4%
b) Managing location	96.6%	0.7%	2.7%
c) Maintaining separateness	97.2%	0.7%	2.1%

Comments

There were numerous comments that the village should be left as it is, with no new development permitted, and that the separateness of the village from Newton Aycliffe and Shildon must be maintained. Many responders commented that they had moved to Middridge to live in a village, and to get away from ‘soulless’ housing estates.

Q2 - Number of Houses

Statistical Data

NB - many responders indicated none in the comment field. This was not an option in the tick box choices in the survey questionnaire. Therefore, in order to accurately record their views, a ‘0’ houses was added to the statistical results below.

Number of Houses	Support
0	29.5%
1	18.5%
2	2.1%
3	7.5%
4	1.4%
5	11.6%
6	4.1%
7	2.1%
8	4.8%
9	0%
10	10.3%
11	0%
12	5.5%

NB – 6.8% of respondents did not answer this question

APPENDIX 3b: SUMMARY OF 2018 TOPIC-FOCUSED QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Comments

Many responders said that with so many houses having been on the market for sale for so long, why do we need more houses? A few responders commented that with 240+ new houses to be built at Eldon Whins, Middridge was already contributing more than its fair share towards the national housing shortage. Many responders also questioned where any new houses in the village could be built. In the opposite vein, a few responders favoured more new houses; 20 and even 100 were mentioned.

Discussion

It should be noted that from their comments many responders (although not necessarily all) who chose the 1 houses option really favoured no houses. On this basis, residents are probably divided between those opposed to any new houses, and those who favour some new houses. Of those who definitely favour some new houses, the weighted mean was for 7 new houses.

Q3 - Type of Housing

Statistical Data

Type of Housing	Agree	Disagree	No answer
(a) Affordable	44.6%	31.5%	24%
(b) Smaller	37.4%	32.8%	28.8%
(c) Family	42.5%	30.9%	26.7%
(d) Retirement	36.3%	39%	24.7%
(e) Bungalows	56.1%	25.3%	18.5%
(f) For Sale	44.5%	28.1%	27.4%
(g) For Rent	16.4%	53.4%	30.1%

Discussion

Many responders (although not all) who were opposed to any new housing in the parish, either disagreed with all types of housing, or did not answer any of the questions. Thus it is likely that the amount of true disagreement is overstated.

Given this, probably the best that can be said is that there is support for:-

- a) Affordable houses
- b) Family houses
- c) Bungalows
- d) Houses for sale as opposed to for rent

APPENDIX 3b: SUMMARY OF 2018 TOPIC-FOCUSED QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (CONTINUED)

With regard to the latter, some responders were opposed to both houses for sale or rent on the open market, and presumably thus favour social housing for rent.

Q4 – Custom/Self-Build Housing

Statistical Data

Question	Agree	Disagree	No answer
Support for custom/self-build housing	56.2%	37%	6.8%

Discussion

Many responders (although not all) who disagreed with custom building apparently did so because they were opposed to any new housing in the parish. Thus it is likely that the amount of true disagreement is overstated. Given this, there is significant support for custom-built houses, if new development is permitted, and provided they blend-in to the existing village.

Q5 – Use of a Settlement Boundary

Statistical Data

Question	Tight	Loose	None	No Answer
Nature of settlement boundary	78.1%	8.2%	10.3%	3.4%

Comments

Several responders who favoured a tight settlement boundary were opposed to any flexibility for limited housing at the edge of the village. One responder commented that setting a settlement boundary would simply give developers a ‘green light’ to build up to that boundary.

Discussion

There is strong support for a tight settlement boundary.

Q6 – Future of existing housing clusters outside the village

Statistical Data

Cluster	No housing	Limited housing	Other	No Answer
Walker’s Lane	72.6%	21.2%	0.7%	5.5%
Midridge Road	71.9%	15.1%	0	13%

APPENDIX 3b: SUMMARY OF 2018 TOPIC-FOCUSED QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Comments

Some limited development along Walker’s Lane, or opposite 1–10 Middridge Farms, was mentioned. However, in opposition it was commented that Walkers Lane was too narrow to support the traffic from such development. Some limited development, either opposite 11–16 Middridge Farms, or along the main road to the village, was mentioned.

As another approach, the following were mentioned:

- a) ‘2 block housing adjacent to 13/16’ – it is unclear where this comment is referring to.
- b) Along the northern edge of the village (although many residents in this area were specifically opposed to this.
- c) There may be a case for a few houses to be built in existing house gardens.

Discussion

There is strong opposition to any further development at 1-10 Middridge Farms (Walker’s Lane) and 11-16 Middridge Farms (Middridge Road). Should such development nevertheless occur, Walker’s Lane is favoured over Middridge Road. There is no clear indication as to where limited new houses could be built in the village (or elsewhere), except at the village edges, which is strongly opposed by many.

Q7 – Design of new development

Statistical Data

Question	Important	Not important	No answer
Promoting good quality design	90.5	2.1	7.5

Comments

Many responders commented that new building should fit in with the current appearance of the village.

Discussion

There is strong support for good quality design.

Q8 – Village Economy

Statistical Data

Question	Agree	Disagree	No answer
Facilitate small business/employment opportunities?	49.3%	40.4%	10.3%

APPENDIX 3b: SUMMARY OF 2018 TOPIC-FOCUSED QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (CONTINUED)

Comments

Some responders who favoured facilitating small businesses, qualified their support with comments about the impact on neighbours due to noise and/or extra vehicles parking. Parking was also quoted as a reason for some responders opposing this option. From their comments, some responders who opposed this option were obviously envisaging small industrial units, rather than home-based businesses, and made the point that these are readily available in Newton Aycliffe or Shildon. Some responders who did not answer this question commented that they did not understand what measures the neighbourhood plan could take to facilitate such businesses.

Discussion

There is some limited support for measures to facilitate small-scale/home-based businesses.

Q9 – Protecting Local Green Spaces

Statistical Data

	Important	Not important	No answer
Protecting local green spaces	96.5%	0%	3.4%

Q10 – Which local green spaces to protect?

Comments

Among the candidates mentioned for protection were –

- a) The Village Green
- b) 'The Dock'
- c) The Play Area
- d) 'The Paddock'
- e) The Parish's footpaths, particularly the former tramway.

Discussion

The protection of Local Green Spaces is considered extremely important.

Q11 – Which local green spaces to improve?

Comments

Some responders mentioned that some public footpaths, particularly the former tramway, were overgrown and could do with widening. There were also comments about the waste dumped near the entrance to the tramway.

APPENDIX 3b: SUMMARY OF 2018 TOPIC-FOCUSED QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS (CONTINUED)

There were some comments about the need for maintenance of trees and grass on the village green and for better maintenance/improvement of open spaces such as the play area and The Paddock. One responder suggested that the pond which used to exist on 'The Dock' should be reinstated. Other areas mentioned for improvement included the area at the rear of the Village Hall, hedges and shrubs along the edge of the road at either end of the village and the ponds off Eldon Moor Lane.

Q12 – Protection of Valued Assets

Comments

Among the candidates mentioned for protection were –

- (a) The Village Hall
- (b) The War Memorial
- (c) The Allotments
- (d) The Bay Horse
- (e) The stone walls on South Side
- (f) 36 or 37 South Side
- (g) The 'Manor House' (9 Eden Grove)
- (h) Middridge Quarry (although two responders suggested the quarry should be filled in, to prevent fires and accidents)
- (i) The stone wall and brickwork where the tramway bridge used to go over the Main Road.

Many responders also commented that they particularly valued the views from the edges of the village, and thus opposed any development which would block these views.

Q13 – Further Comments

These could be grouped under 3 headings – 'parking', 'speed and volume of traffic' and 'other' –

Parking

Many responders commented on the problem of village parking, citing a shortage of parking spaces. One responder even suggested allowing parking on the village green. Another mentioned that garages could be built on 'waste ground', although it was unclear where they were referring to. Another commented that parking should not be allowed on the road by the triangle of land in front of the village hall as it dangerously narrows the road.

Speed and volume of traffic

Many responders mentioned the speed and volume of traffic through the village as a problem, which is likely to become worse in the future. The provision of 'speed bumps' and other forms of traffic controls were also mentioned, as was the possibility of a bypass.

Other

Eden Grove could do with a salt bin to treat the road which is often badly affected by ice and/or compacted snow.

APPENDIX 4: VISION AND OBJECTIVES NOTICE

A Neighbourhood Plan (NP) has to have a Vision statement, and Objectives, which define **WHAT** the NP is trying to achieve. These then form the basis for the NP Policies, which explain **HOW** the NP will achieve these Objectives. Based on the Results of the recent NP Survey, and the Restrictions on what can be included in an NP, the proposed Vision and Objectives for the Middridge NP are as follows:-

VISION

To safeguard the existing rural character of the Parish of Middridge and its open Countryside, keeping its separation from neighbouring Towns and Villages, whilst also protecting and enhancing the open spaces and valued features which are part of its character and appeal.

OBJECTIVES

RURAL SETTING – To safeguard the rural setting of Middridge Village and protect the open Countryside separating it from neighbouring Settlements.

VILLAGE ENVIRONMENT – to protect and enhance the local green spaces and valued features of Middridge for the contributions they make to its character and appeal.

COMMENTS

It is **ESSENTIAL** that an NP can **DEMONSTRATE** that it clearly expresses the **VIEWS** of Local Residents, who **MUST** be **CONSULTED** at every stage of the Development of the NP. Consequently, if you have any Comments or Suggestions regarding the above Proposals, please contact the Clerk to the Parish Council (Alan Jordan) as follows by:-

1. (a) Email to middridgepc@gmail.com
2. (b) Or phoning (01325) 315639
3. (c) Or leaving Written Comments at 51, South Side
4. (d) Or leaving Written Comments in the Postbox at the Village Hall. Please

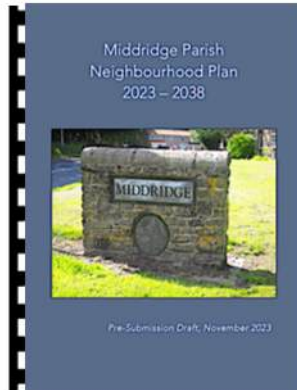
do **NOT** use the Royal Mail Postbox in the Village!

The **DEADLINE** for Comments is Wednesday, 15th August. Issued by the Middridge Neighbourhood Plan Working Group.

APPENDIX 5: PUBLICITY LEAFLET FOR PRE-SUBMISSION NP

Middridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2023-2038 (Pre-Submission Draft)

- PUBLIC CONSULTATION SUMMARY LEAFLET -



After a number of years of work, Middridge Parish Council have completed a Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish and are now embarking on a formal 6 week period of public consultation to invite comments and feedback upon it from local residents, statutory bodies and other stakeholders in the community.

This leaflet sets out further information about the Neighbourhood Plan, including a brief background to it and a short summary of its contents, together with details of the consultation process, how to get involved and what will happen next.

THE 6 WEEK CONSULTATION PERIOD WILL RUN FROM 5th FEBRUARY TO 17th MARCH 2024. FURTHER DETAILS ARE OVERLEAF.

Background to the Neighbourhood Plan

Middridge Parish Council first began the process of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan back in 2014. Since then, a Working Group has helped develop and shape the Plan, supported by a Planning Consultant and officers from Durham County Council.

The completed Plan gives voice and fulfilment to the aspirations of the local community, identified through previous consultation and feedback. This focuses upon the things that people most value about Middridge, namely its essential 'rural village' character and the attributes which contribute to this. These are captured in the Plan's overall Vision (below) and the Policies which seek to implement it (overleaf).

Together, these will provide a local level community-led context for the future management of development and land use in the Parish for the period 2023-2038.

The Plan's Vision

'To safeguard the valued rural setting of Middridge village and maintain its separateness from neighbouring settlements, whilst also protecting and enhancing the valued open spaces and built assets which contribute to the village's character and wellbeing of the community.'

APPENDIX 5: PUBLICITY LEAFLET FOR PRE-SUBMISSION NP (CONTINUED)

The Plans Policies

Policy MNP1: PROTECTED RURAL SETTING

This Policy identifies and safeguards an area of countryside extending out from Middridge as a 'Protected Rural Setting' (PRS). This recognises the essential role it plays in defining the historic character and identity of the village as a self-contained rural settlement, separate from Newton Aycliffe and Shildon.

Policy MNP2: LOCAL GREEN SPACES

This Policy identifies and safeguards the most valued Local Green Spaces in the village for the important open space roles they fulfil and the contribution they make to the character and appeal of the village.

Policy MNP3: VALUED VILLAGE ASSETS

This Policy identifies and safeguards the Village Hall and Bay Horse Public House as Valued Village Assets for the important role they play in the wellbeing of the local community and the character and appeal of the village.

About the consultation

The Pre-Submission Draft of the Middridge Parish Neighbourhood Plan will be the subject of public consultation, running from Monday 5th February to Sunday 17th March 2024. During this period, written feedback on the Plan will be welcome. It can be emailed, stating your name/address or organisation to middridgepc@gmail.com

or posted to: **Alan Jordan (Neighbourhood Plan Working Group Secretary)**
51 South Side, Middridge, Newton Aycliffe, Co Durham DL5 7JD

Viewing the Neighbourhood Plan

The complete Plan can be viewed at - <https://www.middridge.org.uk/local-plan>
For those without internet access, paper copies of the Plan can be made available on request by contacting Alan Jordan on 01325-315639 or at the address above.



A Pre-Submission consultation event will also take place from 10.00 to 14.00 in Middridge Village Hall on Saturday 24 February 2024. All are welcome to find out more and ask any questions.



What happens next

At the end of the consultation period, all feedback will be carefully considered and used to produce a 'Submission' version of the Plan. This will be subject to a final round of consultation led by Durham County Council, followed by an independent Examination to check the Plan meets statutory requirements. After this, it will proceed to a referendum to ensure it is supported by residents of the Parish before becoming a statutory part of the County Council's planning policy framework.

APPENDIX 6: LIST OF STATUTORY CONSULTEES NOTIFIED AT REGULATION 14 STAGE

Draft Pre-Submission Consultation

According to Middridge Parish Councils Gmail records, the Organisations consulted with regards to the Draft Pre-Submission Middridge Neighbourhood Plan were as follows:-

1. Statutory Consultees

1. The Coal Authority
2. Homes England
3. Natural England
4. The Environment Agency
5. Historic England
6. Network Rail
7. Highways England
8. British Telecom Openreach
9. County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust
10. The National Grid
11. Northumbrian Water

2. Businesses active in Parish

1. Keepmoat Homes
2. Persimmon Homes

3. Others

Other People or Organisations informed and/or consulted were:-

1. Stuart Carter – DCC Planning Officer
2. David Sutton-Lloyd – Aycliffe North & Middridge Ward DCC Councillor
3. Tony Stubbs – Aycliffe North & Middridge Ward DCC Councillor
4. Michael Stead – Aycliffe North & Middridge Ward DCC Councillor
5. Shildon Town Council
6. Eldon Parish Council
7. Heighington Parish Council
8. ~~Windlestone~~ Windlestone Parish Council
9. Great Aycliffe Parish Council
10. The Newton News
11. The Shildon Town Crier

APPENDIX 7: SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS TO REG. 14 CONSULTATION & QUALIFYING BODY'S (QB'S) RESPONSE TO THEM

Overview and introduction to summary table overleaf

At the close of the consultation, a total of 8 submissions had been received. 6 were from statutory organisations or bodies and 2 were from local residents. Details of the submissions and the responses to them are set out in the table overleaf.

The following notes provide additional explanation to assist in reading the table.

- **Note 1:** Submissions are in alphabetical order by name of submitter (by surname if an individual)
- **Note 2:** Submissions which refer to different aspects of the NP are itemised in the 'Submission Summary' column of the table, with the Qualifying Body's (QB) response correspondingly itemised in the last column
- **Note 3:** Submissions which have resulted in a consequential change to the NP appear as yellow highlighted text in the last column

APPENDIX 9: SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS TO REG. 14 CONSULTATION & QUALIFYING BODY'S (QB'S) RESPONSE TO THEM (CONTINUED)

Submitter Name	Submission Summary	Qualifying Body's response to Submission and consequential change(s) to Neighbourhood Plan (if appropriate)
1 Anne Clark	<p>Positive comments in relation to completing the Plan and it being a 'very impressive document'.</p> <p>Additional comments received:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Clarification of spelling of name on p.2 b) Query about whether European Obligations are still relevant as we're no longer an EU member (ref paras 1.25d and 1.33) c) Suggest minor revision to wording at para 2.2 d) Correction of date of construction of The Close in para 2.22 e) Query about meaning of red shading on map at para 4.3d f) Query on ownership of LGS4 in Appendix 1 g) Should the war memorial be mentioned in Appendix 2 	<p>Positive comments welcomed. Responses to additional comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Spelling corrected b) Comment noted. However the Neighbourhood Plan must still be compatible with relevant European Union obligations as incorporated into UK law, so the references noted in the Plan remain applicable (note - echoes Submission (a) by Submitter 8) c) Suggested revision included d) Correction included e) New footnote added to explain the meanings of the terms used in the map f) Ownership has been checked and is confirmed as correct in the Plan g) Comment noted. However, this matter is covered in an explanation contained in Footnote 29 on p.40 of the Plan
2 Durham County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Suggested minor wording change to para 1.27 b) Suggested inclusion within Objective 1 (p.24) of reference to safeguarding against/preventing certain types of development as a means of achieving the objective c) Suggested minor wording change to objective 1 (p.24) d) Suggested minor wording change to Policy MNP1 e) Consider adding further explanation in Policy MNP1 (and/or its justification) as to how the policy works alongside Policies 6 and 10 of the County Durham Plan f) Typo on titles of all Policies Maps g) NPPF references in the Plan need to be updated to be consistent with the latest (December 2023 version) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Minor wording change included b) Comment noted. However, it is the purpose of the associated policy (MNP1) and its accompanying explanation to amplify and achieve the objective (see chapter 4), so it is considered to be an unnecessary duplication to include the suggested reference within the objective itself. c) Comment noted. However, the suggested change would introduce repetition within the objective, so it is considered better to retain the existing wording d) Minor wording change included e) Comment noted. However, the relationship (and conformity) between the policy and the policies of the County Durham Plan will be fully explained within the Basic Conditions Statement f) Policies Maps corrected g) NPPF references updated

APPENDIX 9: SUMMARY OF SUBMISSIONS TO REG. 14 CONSULTATION & QUALIFYING BODY'S (QB'S) RESPONSE TO THEM (CONTINUED)

Submitter Name	Submission Summary	Qualifying Body's response to Submission and consequential change(s) to Neighbourhood Plan (if appropriate)
3 Environment Agency	No detailed comments to make	N/A
4 Historic England	Do not consider there to be a need to be involved in the Plan at this stage, however general advice of neighbourhood plans and the historic environment is provided in the submission	N/A
5 National Grid Electricity Transmission	No record of any NGET assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area	N/A
6 National Gas Transmission	No record of any NGT assets within the Neighbourhood Plan area	N/A
7 Sport England	No specific comments, however general advice of neighbourhood plans and sport is provided in the submission	N/A
8 Jill Unsworth	<p>a) Inclusion of some of the Plan's references to Europe may now be irrelevant (ref paras 1.25d and 1.33)</p> <p>b) Suggestion in respect of Eldon Whins development to include reference to Eldon Moor and Cobblers Hall Plan tations as a examples of their rurality and also the large area of grass between Elder Gardens and Midldridge Road</p>	<p>a) Comment noted. However the Neighbourhood Plan must still be compatible with relevant European Union obligations as incorporated into UK law, so the references noted in the Plan remain applicable (note - echoes Submission (b) by Submitter 1)</p> <p>b) Comment noted. However the Plan has already consciously sought to highlight the important rural setting of Eldon Whins (as well as Midldridge village), with references to it included at para 4.8 (and the photos following it) and the third bullet point of para 4.12 on p.32-33 (and the photos accompanying it)</p>