

Questionnaire on the Future of the Village Plan

In the early 1980's village residents were asked to decide if the village plan set out in 1967 should be implemented. The plan proposed an area for growth to enable a loop road that by-passed the village centre to be built by housing developers. This would enable the area around the Green and the village centre to become free of traffic. By 1980 part of the loop road had been built (Old Vicarage Road), together with an access road to the loop road as part of the Broadlake development.

Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council, together with Cheshire County Council held an exhibition about the proposals and asked people attending to give their views in a questionnaire. The information that went with the questionnaire posed questions and answers as follows:

1. Why should Willaston expand to the limits set in 1967?

1.1 The village must be seen as part of the County of Cheshire and of the Borough of Ellesmere Port and Neston. The 12 acres or so of land to the south west of the village needed to complete the loop road, is now the only major site of allocated housing development land in Willaston and Neston. The land is needed to accommodate some of the increase in the number of new households, that was forecast for Willaston and Neston in the Cheshire Structure Plan (approved in 1979). Thus the land is needed for housing whether or not it includes part of a loop road. If this land is not used for housing, land at present in the Green Belt elsewhere in the Neston/Willaston area would have to be built upon.

1.2 The 1967 Village Plan showed how growth could be used positively for the benefit of the village, by getting house builders to put in a loop road. If this loop road is completed the Village Centre could become a pleasant place once more, and the area of the Green presently used by vehicles, could instead be used by people walking or playing.

2. Why cannot a by-pass be built beyond the village?

2.1 Cost – at least £3/4 million even without land costs.

2.2 The traffic does not justify an external by-pass, especially with the nearby A540, A550 and M53 roads already acting as by-passes.

2.3 A by-pass clear of the village would not cater for the internal traffic of the village, where there are about 800 cars at present. With an external by-pass, almost certainly the Green would still have to be used by traffic going about the village.

3. *How far is there a commitment to the loop road and the associated houses?*

3.1 *About a third of the total length of about 3,200' as been built in the form of Old Vicarage Road.*

3.2 *The twisting bend by the Nag's Head can no longer be improved, because Cannell Court old people's accommodation is built on land which would be used for road improvement.*

3.3 *Two buildings have bene demolished on the road line.*

3.4 *Sewers to carry surface water have been built at a capacity to deal with the additional housing. Extra expense would however be needed to deal with foul water sewage.*

4. *What is the purpose of the relief road?*

4.1 *To free the centre of the village from vehicles, and make the Green available once more for people walking and playing.*

4.2 *To move traffic from a twisting, narrow road with older houses built close to the road, to a wider straighter road with houses set well back from the road.*

5. *What about the Green Belt?*

5.1 *The Cheshire Green Belts were approved in general terms in the County Structure Plan (approved 1979)*

5.2 *Draft Green Belt boundaries were prepared in 1977 and are shown on Plan 1. Green Belt boundaries are being re-examined at present.*

5.3 *The re-examination of the Village Plan by the Borough Council will give people the opportunity to comment on the Green Belt boundaries.*

6. *What is the present and what will be the future population of Willaston?*

6.1 *The last census was in 1971, so an exact figure for the present population cannot be given. It is estimated that about 2,600 people live in the 960 existing dwellings. If the village is built to the limits shown in the Village Plan, the population is likely to be about 3,250.*

7. *Why should you bother to fill in and return the attached questionnaire?*

7.1 Ellesmere Port and Neston Borough Council and Cheshire County Council will decide what is to be the future of the Willaston Village Plan. The opinions of the residents are very important in helping the respective Councils come to their decision. Please complete and return the questionnaire after you have seen the exhibition.

The plan was never completed and Old Vicarage Road remains a cul-de-sac.