

June 2020: Message from Editor

WESTBURY LOCAL PLAN REVIEW

Once again, Shropshire Council's Planning Officers are challenging Westbury's current "Open Countryside Planning Policy Status" previously agreed under the Site Allocations and Management of Development document (SAMDev) at their meeting in June 2010, although this matter has been raised, fully discussed and agreed many times since 2006.

The last time this matter was discussed was in September 2018 when Westbury Parish Council and Ed Potter, our Unitary Councillor, called a Public Meeting re the "Preferred Scale and Distribution of Development" - as part of "Shropshire Council's Local Plan Review" and I was asked to include a Notice of that meeting in the September 2018 Westbury and Yockleton Newsletter - which I did.

At that meeting the matter of Westbury becoming a "Hub" was once again discussed/considered and Westbury residents and Westbury Parish Councillors strongly objected to Westbury being designated with "Hub" status, so the proposal was overwhelmingly rejected and Westbury's "Open Countryside Planning Policy Status" was retained.

This month, I have been approached by many local Westbury residents who wish me to place this matter on the Newsletter website and to encourage as many people as possible to send a letter to Robert Macey, the Shropshire Councillor in charge of Planning Policy, Shropshire Council, The Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire. SY2 6ND or send him an email to : robert.macey@shropshire.gov.uk.

Please do log on to our Newsletter website as soon as possible to view Councillor Ed Potter's latest report - it's located here: <https://wylocalnews.co.uk/articles> and then submit your views to Councillor Robert Macey, at The Shirehall well before 29 June 2020, as this matter will be considered by Cabinet on 6 July 2020.

Please forward this email to anyone that you think it would be of interest to.

Best Wishes

Rita Waters

Editor and Advert Accounts Manager

Westbury and Yockleton Newsletter

Westbury Local Plan Review
Update : 11 June 2020 : Councillor Ed Potter

On 10 June 2020, I met Shropshire Council Planning Policy Officers - together with representatives of Westbury Parish Council - after the points allocation for Westbury village becoming a community hub (allowing development) in the Local Plan Review was challenged by a developer. Following this challenge, Shropshire Council has accepted that within the "comfortable walking distance of the village" there is a business with five or more employees, thus adding five points to the village score, resulting in Westbury qualifying for "Hub" status.

This was challenged by the Parish Council and me; however the Council insists the scoring is accurate and - if not accepted - could be challenged at the inspection stage. This would be post the Public Consultation, which is likely to be in mid-July and run for eight weeks.

During the meeting, we ran through the many points which have been raised earlier in this process, in particular at the Public Consultation meetings which were held at Westbury Village Hall. Likewise, I highlighted many of the concerns that residents had raised - both with me and with Westbury Parish Council - over the past week or so, once it was apparent that the "Hub" status had been challenged.

One of the significant issues which has been raised as regards "Sustainability", is the security of the Outreach Post Office Service in Westbury, which is temporarily housed within a business premises in the village. This service has been suspended since the "Lock Down" began and there is no guidance or guarantee as to if - or when - this might resume. Having a Post Office Service - either permanently or as an Outreach Service - carries four points. Therefore - without the Post Office - the allocation of points for Westbury Village would drop below the "Hub" threshold of 48 points. Shropshire Council has asked for further investigations to be carried out by both the Parish Council and me as to the security and long-term viability of the Outreach Post Office Service in Westbury. We will feed back this information to the Planners within the next ten days when they will take a decision around amending the points allocation once again.

(Please note that the point allocation as per Shropshire Council's website is not the allocation which they should be using as it includes the St Mary's CE Primary School which closed in July 2017 and the Petrol Station - which no longer exists - and closed nearly 40 years ago, so the Shropshire Council website appears to be very out of date)

There are currently no applications lodged with Shropshire Council for any large scale developments in Westbury; however, I have been made aware by a number of local residents that there is movement by some developers to make applications as soon as they have the "green light" to do so. There is a lot of speculation as to the locations and many sites have been promoted in and around the village for development.

Going forward there are some key points to remember :

If Westbury is included in the Draft Local Plan, which goes to Shropshire Council's Cabinet to approve for Public Consultation, all residents will have the opportunity to respond to the Consultation and make their views known. At this stage, it is unlikely that I will be able to call a Public Meeting, much like we have had in the past (unless Government Guidance is relaxed). In this case, it will be important that residents should respond in writing - either on line or via the post or to me - and I will pass on their comments. Should we not be able to meet, I will consider holding a digital meeting, but I am conscious that many residents will not be able to access this. So I will be happy to discuss with anyone - via the telephone - their views which I will feed into the Consultation.

Following the end of the Consultation and, if Westbury is still included in the Local Plan - which goes before the Planning Inspectorate (an independent body) - the Parish Council and residents will be able to formally challenge the allocation of housing for Westbury (which, as a guide, looks to be in the region of 20-25 houses), I will provide more information on this, if and when we get to this stage.

Likewise, I am also aware that I have been contacted by a small number of residents who would like to see some development in the village. Again, my advice is very much the same that - if you would like your views considered - it is important to feed these into the Public Consultation from mid-July onwards.

I hope this provides a clear overview of where we are in what is a very complicated situation. There are lots of fine details which I will happily discuss over the telephone.

As ever, if you have any questions or think I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me

Ed Potter

Shropshire Councillor for the Loton Division (Including the Parishes of Alberbury with Cardeston, Montford, Great and Little Ness and Westbury)
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