

I am grateful to Mr Robertshaw for his letter to the Rutland Times last week.

I imagine that many of the residents in Oakham and Barleythorpe had similar thoughts when the voting card dropped through their letter box. The Planning document is a lengthy one, as some have suggested to me, however it is only a fraction of the material that the Steering Group produced to prepare the Referendum Document which is now on the Rutland County Council website. On the website are copies of the other documents that we have produced to support the plan as well as the report prepared by our Independent Examiner, Mr Andrew Ashcroft.

Pages 7 and 8 covers the introduction to the Plan and the reasons for the need of a plan. This includes details of the various pieces of legislation that require to be met. Incidentally 'highways' mentioned in Mr Robertshaw's letter is included here noting that 'the Neighbourhood Plan does not address highway and road management. Such policy is determined by Rutland County Council as the highway authority'.

Page 33 contains the Vision and pages 34 and 35 the Objectives which the Steering Group's research suggested would be achieved by an effective neighbourhood plan our community. The question is do you agree with the aspirations set out in the Vision and do your views agree with those set out in the 23 objectives?

There are 10 policies covering a number of different aspects including housing, the town centre, employment, recreation, infrastructure and green spaces. These are shown in the Plan starting at page 36. Details of each policy are shown after the justification text for each policy. The justification text relates to the need to meet the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the local Planning Policy and the results of our community consultation. If these policies were to be implemented is this something we, residents of Oakham in Barleythorpe, would wish to see?

Mr Robertshaw also asks 'who exactly will take responsibility for making the improvements and bringing about this vision'? The answer really, I suspect, is that we will. As residents of Oakham and Barleythorpe we need to hold to account those we elect to the two Councils. The plan has, after all, been prepared on behalf of Oakham Town Council and Barleythorpe Parish Council. Page 77 notes that both the Town and Parish Councils will use the Plan to frame their representations on submitted planning applications. They will also use the Plan to monitor how well the provisions of the plan help to achieve the Vision and Objectives set out in the plan.

At this point I would like to acknowledge the support given by Paul Dowse, John Nowell and David Salkeld who, like me, have been involved with the plan right from the very first meeting and to Janet Hughes whose wise counsel has helped our discussions in the development of the Plan when Janet joined the team. I would also like to acknowledge the contribution made by Michael Himan. Michael's experience, knowledge and most of all his passion about 'all things Oakham' was lost to us following his untimely death in 2019.

The support of the teams at Oakham Town Council and Barleythorpe Parish Council and former members of the Steering Group have all, in their way, contributed to the document you see before with a special vote of thanks go to Councillor Adam Lowe for his unstinting support as the representative of Oakham Town Council.

Finally, thanks again to Mr Robertshaw for raising the points in his letter and if the residents of Oakham and Barleythorpe need more information about the Plan they are welcome to contact the writer at the Oakham Town Council's offices in Rol House, Long Row in Oakham

Christopher Clark
Chair, Oakham and Barleythorpe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group