

# Meeting to Discuss Restarting the Bentworth Neighbourhood Plan

**Date:** Thursday 26 January 2023

**Present:** Adam Harvey, Acting Planning Policy Manager, EHDC

Jenny Wood, Principal Planner, EHDC

Tim Lipscombe, Neal Day and Nikki White, Bentworth Parish Council

## Main Points

### Background

Bentworth was designated a neighbourhood planning area in 2015. The parish council and the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) subcommittee carried out extensive work and consultation, drafted several policies, but went through no formal stages of the overall process. In 2020, following publication of a government white paper proposing a major overhaul, Bentworth decided to pause its planning activities. Other villages, such as Beech, carried on. In the meantime, none of the proposals in the white paper came into being.

**Note: the white paper above did not cancel the strategic housing land availability assessment (SHLAA) that had taken place. The BTW001 site at the corner of Church Street and Ashley Road is still on the register.**

The government is now proposing a Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill. It is introducing a new concept of a 'Neighbourhood Priority Statement' (we did not go into details).

### A Neighbourhood Plan has advantages and limitations

An NP is useful in assessing local planning applications to see if they meet the policies and constraints set out therein. Councils with an NP are entitled to an additional 10% of CIL funding (no NP: 15%; with an NP: 25%)

An NP does not cover infrastructure, such as roads, nor impacts of developments in other villages.

An NP must conform to the strategy guidelines laid down by EHDC. Any new NP must look forward to 2040.

Grants are available to help offset the costs of consultants, etc.

### The Council needs to decide what it is trying to achieve

Developing an NP is not easy. It takes a great deal of effort, time, and money. We would need a steering committee to drive this forward. The previous committee chairman is unable to lead any further work on a new NP.

EHDC advice is that the council should first decide what it wants to achieve, to see if an NP is necessary (would a priority statement do?) and is worth the effort. They are happy to have a follow-up meeting once we have made a decision.