

# The Bentley Plan





# Bentley Parish Council

[www.bentleyparishcouncil.co.uk](http://www.bentleyparishcouncil.co.uk)

## The Bentley Plan: A Report from Bentley Parish Council

### introduction

Like many rural communities, Bentley is facing increasing pressure for development which if not properly planned could irrevocably damage the character of the settlement. This paper sets out the work that has been undertaken by Bentley Parish Council, with support from the community, to produce a plan for the future growth and development of the village. The intention of the Bentley Plan is not to prevent development, but rather to provide a framework for development that respects the character of the settlement and provides for its sustainable growth.

The Bentley Plan includes a vision and spatial strategy which together provide clear guidance for considering the acceptability of development proposals which will be adopted by East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) as part of the Bentley LIPS.

The Parish Council is now converting the Bentley Plan into a Neighbourhood Plan which will be ready for submission by the end of this year. Neighbourhood Plans are being given increasing weight during their production making the work to date, as outlined in this report a material consideration for any planning applications or development proposals that come forward whilst the Bentley Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared.

This is a positive demonstration of Localism which needs to be recognised. The community must be given full support to resist proposals that could undermine the emerging plan, and the opportunity to complete its neighbourhood plan.

## **background**

Bentley is a village of approximately 1130 residents that lies on the border of Hampshire with Surrey, in the far north of East Hampshire District. Bentley Parish covers about 9.3 square kilometres and is situated equidistant between Alton and Farnham. It is adjacent to the village of Crondall to the north and is separated from the village of Binsted to the south, by the River Wey. Immediately to the south lie Alice Holt Forest and the South Downs National Park. There are currently around 430 houses in Bentley.

In recent months two firms of developers have held consultation events in Bentley Memorial Hall to showcase their proposals for residential development in the village. Concerns expressed by residents of the village over these proposals and the prospect of other development proposals coming forward in the interim period before the finalisation of the EHDC housing allocation plan, highlighted the need for a proper forum to collect and express those views. In order to ensure that the Parish Council was representing residents' views on this topic, the Parish Council decided to carry out some consultation of its own. Consequently, the Parish Council held 2 consultation events, and the results are summarised in the Bentley Plan set out in Schedule C.

Over the summer, three meetings were held between the Parish Council and officers from EHDC Planning Policy department. It was agreed that the work being carried out by the Parish Council would form part of the Local Interim Planning Statement (LIPS) being prepared by EHDC. EHDC has provided support to the Parish Council by giving guidance and copies of large scale maps showing SHLAA sites in the Parish. All of the information in this report, including the Bentley Plan, has been given to EHDC for inclusion in the LIPS for Bentley.

## **the consultation events**

### **Event 1: Consultation held at Bentley Village Fete Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July**

This event was carried out by Bentley Parish Council. It was used to gather the community's views on the sites that were known to be available for development at that point in time and to seek more detailed opinions on the nature of any future development and to use this work to produce the Bentley Plan.

The Parish Council exhibited the SHLAA map used by East Hampshire District Council (EHDC) at its earlier consultation event held in Alton (on which 22 residents had commented), and another plan of the village with explanatory text and a set of

suggested development parameters to consider. A questionnaire was used to gather residents' views and Parish Councillors were in attendance to help with questions. The information presented at the exhibition is shown in Appendix 1.

Approximately 70 people attended the event and 49 people filled out questionnaires. In addition, 29 further questionnaires were filled out after the event and returned to the Parish Clerk before the consultation period deadline. The raw data from the questionnaires is shown in Appendix 2.

There was total support for Bentley to produce a Plan which would set out a vision for sustainable development in the village. There was clear and overwhelming support for development to take place not all on one site, but for smaller scale developments sited around the edge of the village. There was also strong support for any development to be connected to the village, and to be of different designs and character.

The preferences for the community facilities suggested in the questionnaire were more evenly spread with additional matters raised for consideration in the individual comments, these included;

- (a) Space and sports provision for teenagers
- (b) Improved/additional play facilities generally
- (c) Traffic management measures and parking
- (d) A school extension
- (e) Accommodation for over 50's
- (f) Drainage and infrastructure capacity

The feedback from this consultation event was been used by the Parish Council to prepare a Bentley Plan, which sets out design and development parameters for the growth of the settlement.

## **Event 2: Consultation held at Bentley Memorial Hall Wednesday 14th August**

This event was carried out by Bentley Parish Council. It was used to feedback the results from the first consultation event, and to ask whether or not the residents supported the conclusions reached by the Parish Council and its Bentley Plan. Information boards were exhibited containing information on neighbourhood planning, and the residents were also asked whether they would like a neighbourhood plan for Bentley. A questionnaire was used to gather residents' views and Parish Councillors were in attendance to answer questions. The information presented at the exhibition is shown in Appendix 3.

Approximately 118 people attended the exhibition, and 87 people completed questionnaires with the following results:

(a) 92% - 80 people support the principles of the Bentley Plan (LIPS)/ 4 people did not/3 failed to tick either box;

(b) 95% - 83 people said that Bentley Parish Council should prepare a Neighbourhood Plan/ 1 person said no/ 3 people failed to tick either box.

In addition, 4 more questionnaires were filled out after the event that all supported the principles of the Bentley Plan and the Parish Council preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

## **conclusion**

There was clear and overwhelming support for both the Bentley Plan and for the Parish Council preparing a Neighbourhood Plan.

The Parish Council has since submitted a Neighbourhood Area Designation Application to EHDC under the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, which is subject to consultation until 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014. It is expected that the work carried out as part of this exercise will form the basis on which a Neighbourhood Plan can be developed.

## **the Bentley Plan**

The Bentley Plan submitted for inclusion in the LIPS has two elements: The first is a Vision for how the village should grow based on development criteria including the location, scale and rate of development, character and infrastructure. These criteria are summarised in the Vision as a set of key principles.

The second is a Plan that translates the key principles into a spatial strategy for the growth of the village. The Plan sets out the assets and areas that are most sensitive to development and in so doing suggests in broad terms where it may be acceptable to develop, and where it may not. The Vision and the Plan will be the basis for developing a more detailed framework through a neighbourhood plan and its supporting policies.

## THE BENTLEY VISION

This vision for Bentley has been prepared by Bentley Parish Council as part of East Hampshire District Council's LIPS process. It will be used by East Hampshire District Council to help in the assessment of development proposals for the village that come forward through the planning system. It may also provide a basis for developing a longer term plan for the future of the village.

This vision reflects the particular physical character and qualities of the village, including its setting, landscape and heritage assets, as well as the cultural and community assets that have been identified as being of value and importance.

The vision is for the settlement to grow sustainably and in a way that protects its identity. To achieve this the vision has five fundamental aims:

1. To plan for change that is appropriate to the scale and character of the settlement
2. To protect existing qualities that are important to the character and identity of the settlement
3. To minimise impacts on infrastructure
4. To provide opportunities for improving community assets and infrastructure
5. To avoid compromising how the longer term growth of the settlement is planned

The aims of the vision have been translated into development criteria and a set of key principles for assessing any proposals for change and development within Bentley parish.

### 1) The location, scale and rate of development

- Development is to be located to minimise negative impacts on the setting of the village
- The linear one sided development pattern of the village is to be retained and protected
- The setting, character and heritage of the existing buildings along the Main Street are to be protected
- Open views southwards towards the South Downs from the Main Street and other vantage points within the village are to be retained and safeguarded
- The existing rural edge of the settlement is to be protected including the setting and character of Hole Lane
- The scale and rate of development is to be incremental to reflect the historic growth pattern of the settlement
- Development should be in small scale 'pockets', site specific and sensitive to the setting
- Development should be planned so as not to compromise options for the longer term growth of the settlement

## 2) The character of development

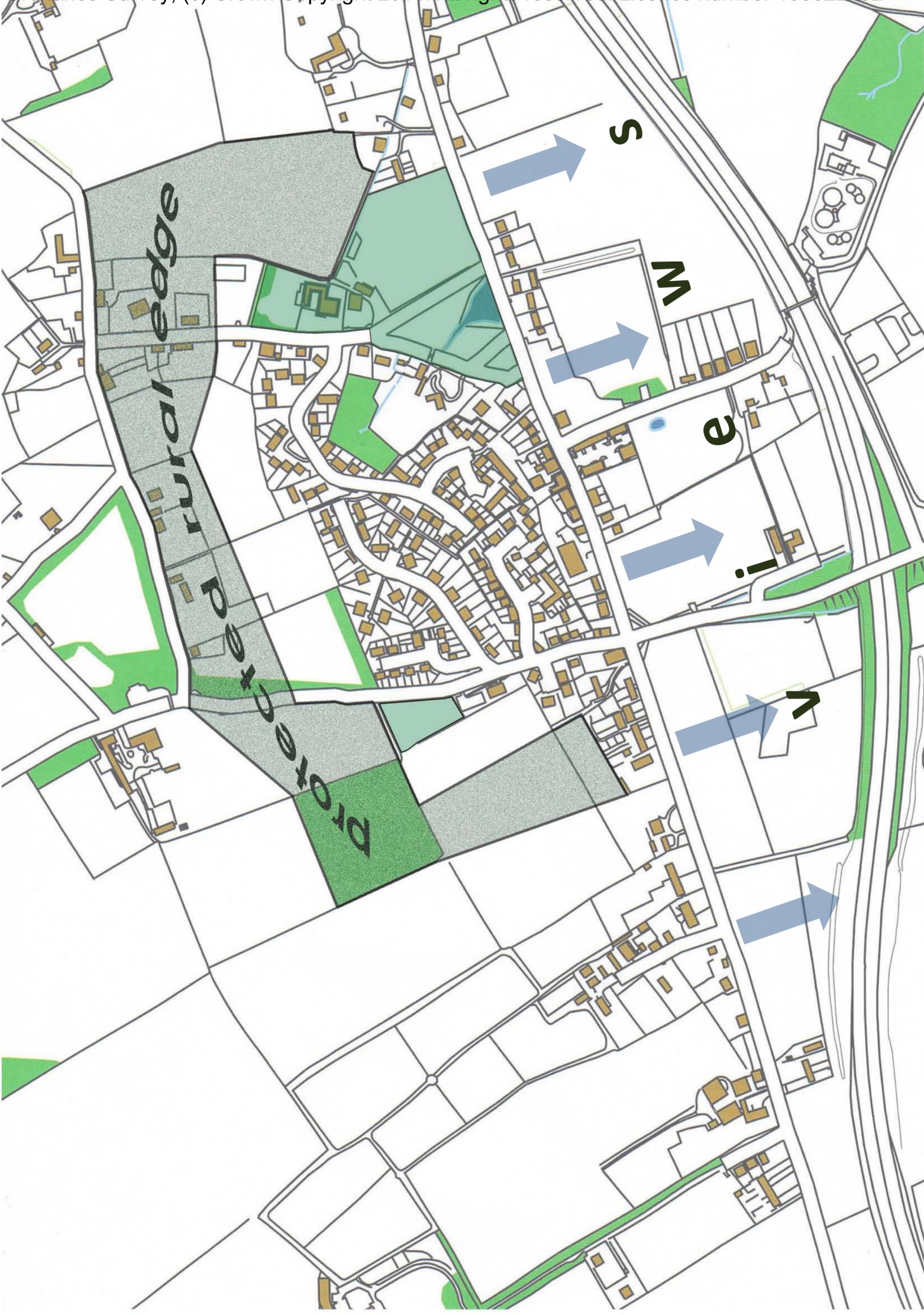
- The layout of built form should take account of and respect the existing historic patterns, of built form and movement including footpaths, rights of way and public open spaces
- Development should be site specific and respond to the local landscape setting, features and views
- Any development should be designed to create an appropriate edge condition in relationship to the existing settlement and the wider setting
- Public realm and landscape should be integral to the design and layout of built form
- Built character and materials should not be homogenous across developments

## 3) Infrastructure

- Development should be located and planned to minimise infrastructure impacts on the existing settlement including traffic, parking and drainage
- Development should be located and planned to be accessible, connected to existing footpaths and rights of way, and to promote walking and cycling for local journeys
- The rate of development should be planned to ensure it meets its additional infrastructure needs
- All development will be considered against opportunities it provides for additional community infrastructure

## 4) Key Principles

- there will be a few smaller developments instead of one large development
- areas around the northern and western edge of the village may be acceptable for development
- developments will be at a scale of around 8 – 12 dwellings in separate pockets connected to the village
- connections to the village will use the existing footpaths and pedestrian routes to minimise traffic generation
- the existing rural character of the edge of the settlement is to be protected and enhanced
- each development pocket will include a landscape setting that creates an appropriate and attractive rural edge to the village
- the setting and character of Hole Lane is to be protected
- open views southwards towards the South Downs are to be preserved
- the settings of the Conservation Area and Listed buildings are to be protected
- any development should contribute to the community infrastructure needs identified by the Parish



The Bentley Plan, along with a Vision for Bentley will be submitted to East Hampshire District Council and become part of the LIPS for Bentley which will be used to consider future developments in the village. The Bentley Plan and Vision are based on the following key principles:

- there will be a few smaller developments instead of one large development
- areas around the northern and western edge of the village may be acceptable for development
- developments will be at a scale of around 8 – 12 dwellings in separate pockets connected to the village
- connections to the village will use the existing footpaths and pedestrian routes to minimise traffic generation
- the existing rural character of the edge of the settlement is to be protected and enhanced
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- the setting and character of Hole Lane is to be protected
- open views southwards towards the South Downs are to be preserved
- the settings of the Conservation Area and Listed buildings are to be protected
- all developments will make a contribution to the community infrastructure needs identified by the Parish

# Appendix 1

Consultation held at Bentley Village Fete  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2014

# Questionnaire

Name

Address

Contact

**Should Bentley Parish Council prepare a Plan?**

YES

NO

**If there is to be development where should it happen?**

Do you support the alternative approach of smaller scale developments around the edge of the village?

YES

NO

Or should all the development be on one site?

YES

NO

If you think it should all be on one site, which site?

A B C D E F G

Are there other places in the village you think are more suitable for development?

YES

NO

If there are other places, please add a Post It Note to the map on Board 1 and/or comments on the back of this questionnaire.

**What should development be like?**

All the same design and character?

YES

NO

Different designs and character?

YES

NO

Connected to the village?

YES

NO

Separate from the village?

YES

NO

**Community benefits**

Development may provide funds for community improvements or facilities, if it does what are the priorities? (1 = low importance 5 = high importance)

School parking/drop off area:    1    2    3    4    5

A new scout pavilion:            1    2    3    4    5

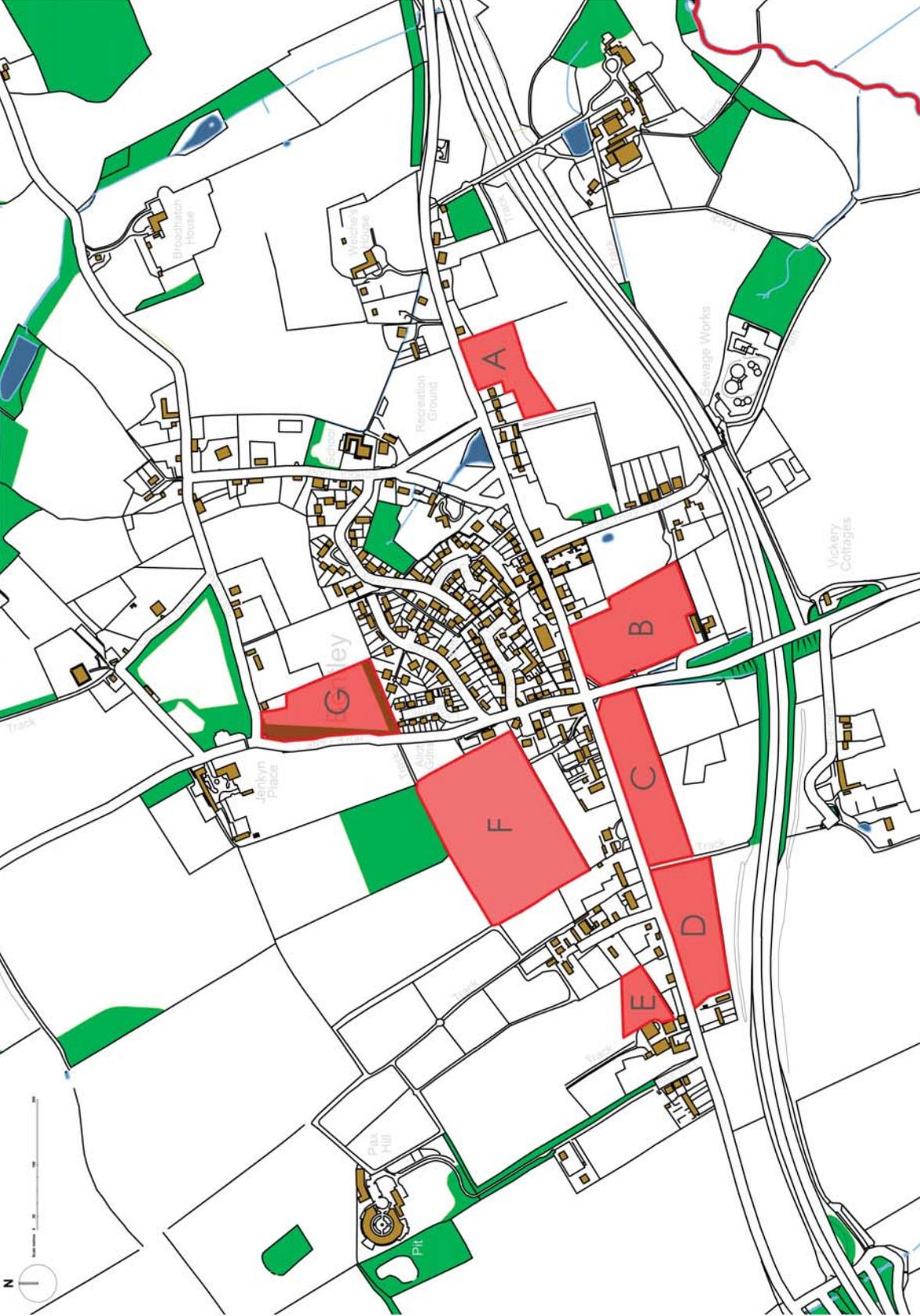
A new sports pavilion:           1    2    3    4    5

Other:

|  |
|--|
|  |
|--|

## Your comments and ideas

Please let us have any other comments, questions or ideas that you have:



Like many rural communities, Bentley is facing pressures for development that if uncontrolled could have a significant effect on the character of the village.

Bentley Parish Council are developing a Plan to help control and influence development in the village. East Hampshire District Council have agreed to use this Plan to help decide what is acceptable when considering planning applications.

The number of houses that Bentley has to accommodate is yet to be decided by East Hampshire District Council and this Plan may help influence their decision. This Plan needs to be prepared quickly if it is to be used to control development.

These two maps and the questionnaire are for you to make your views known on where and how development should happen in Bentley. This information will be used to develop the Plan and agree it with East Hampshire District Council.

This map shows the sites that have been put forward by landowners and developers for new houses in Bentley. Any one of these sites may be sufficient to meet the short term housing numbers in Bentley.

# MAP 1 sites proposed for development in Bentley



Bentley Parish Council is exploring an alternative that would provide more control over development and have less impact on the village. The alternative proposes:

- a few smaller developments instead of one large development
- each at a scale of 8 to 12 dwellings
- in separate pockets around the edge of the village
- connected to the village to reduce car journeys
- located to preserve open views southwards towards the South Downs
- designed to fit in with the setting and existing village character

There is a **questionnaire** which you can use to make your views known, and which is also on the village website.

[bentleyparishcouncil.co.uk](http://bentleyparishcouncil.co.uk)

Please ask your friends and neighbours to complete the questionnaire. The more feedback we have from you the stronger our case will be.

# MAP 2 an alternative plan for Bentley?

# Appendix 2

Analysis of consultation held at Bentley Village Fete  
Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> July 2014

# Completed Questionnaires

# 77

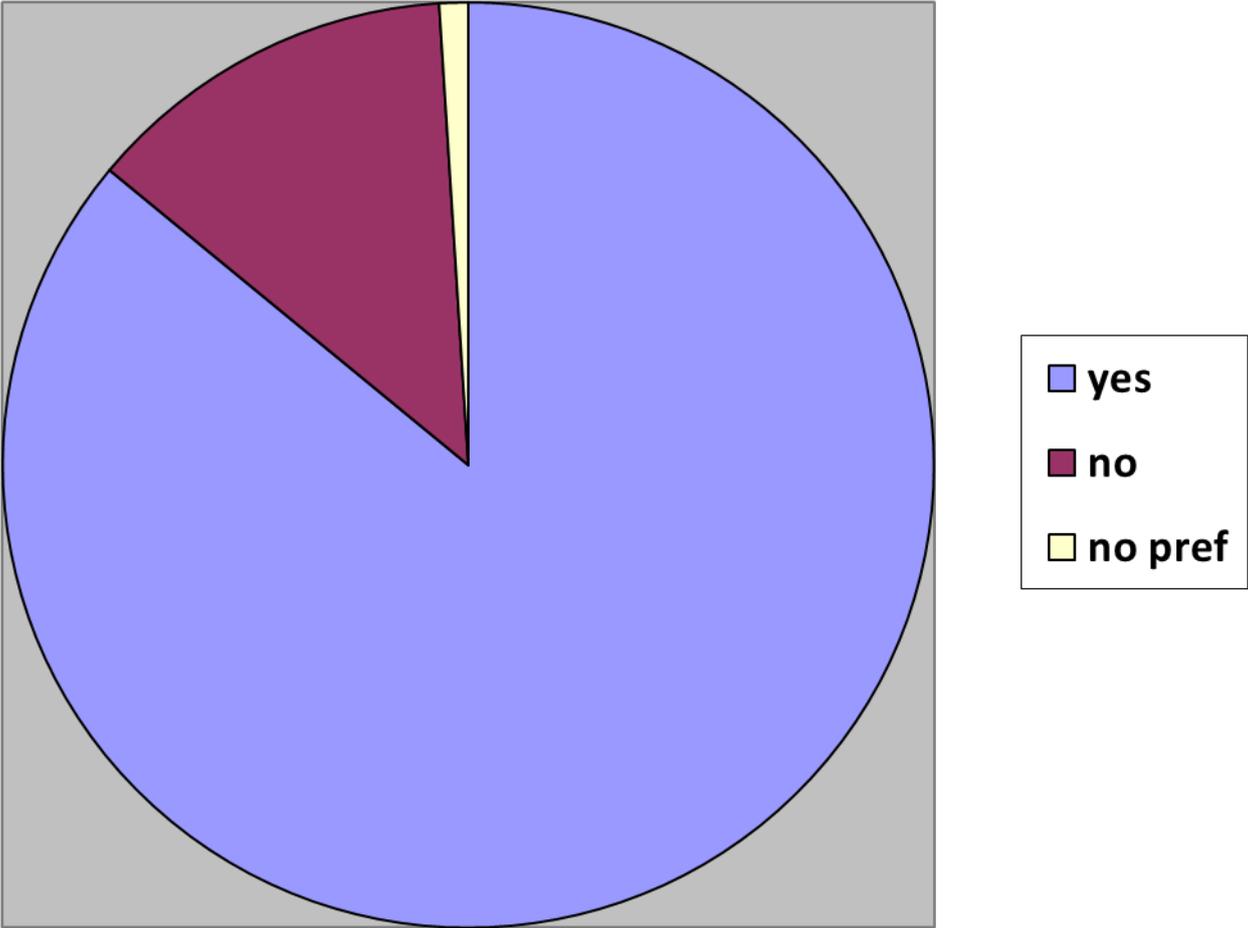
49 questionnaires completed at the fete

29 questionnaires sent by post/email

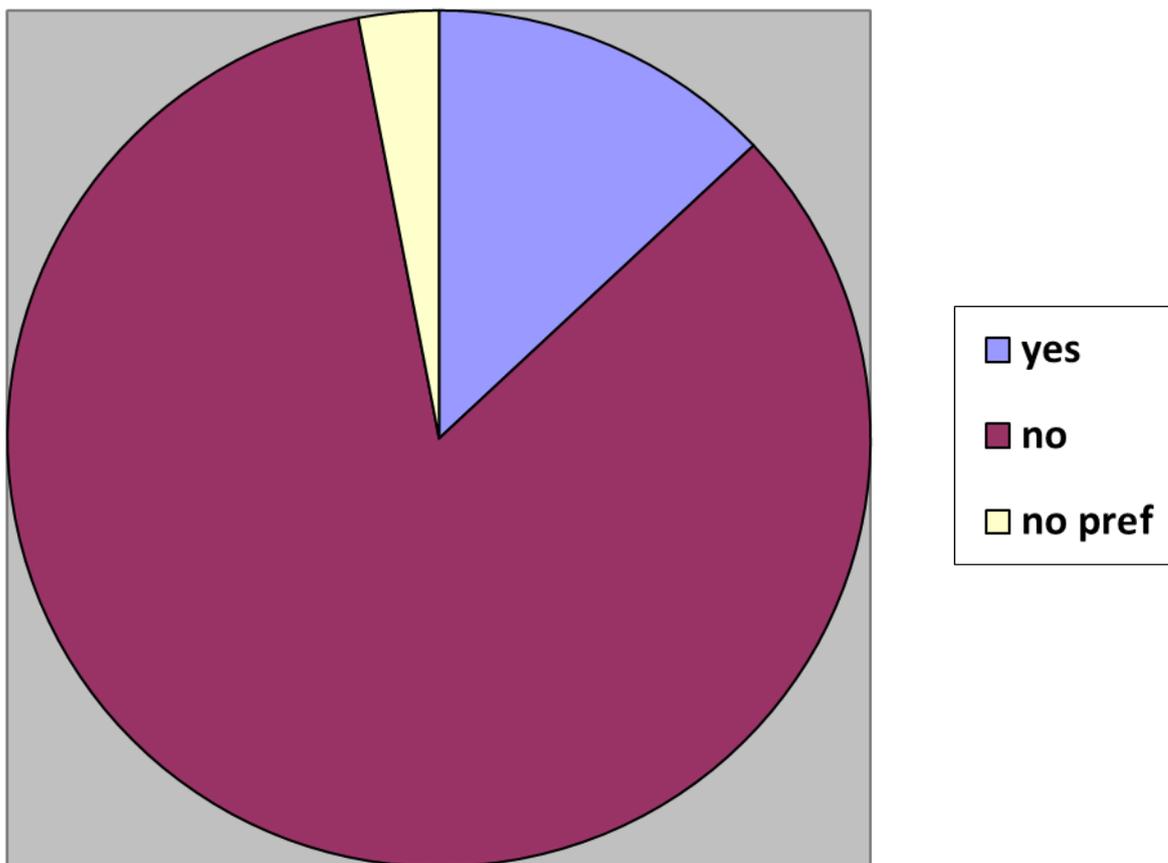
**Should Bentley Parish Council  
prepare a plan?**

**100% Agreed.**

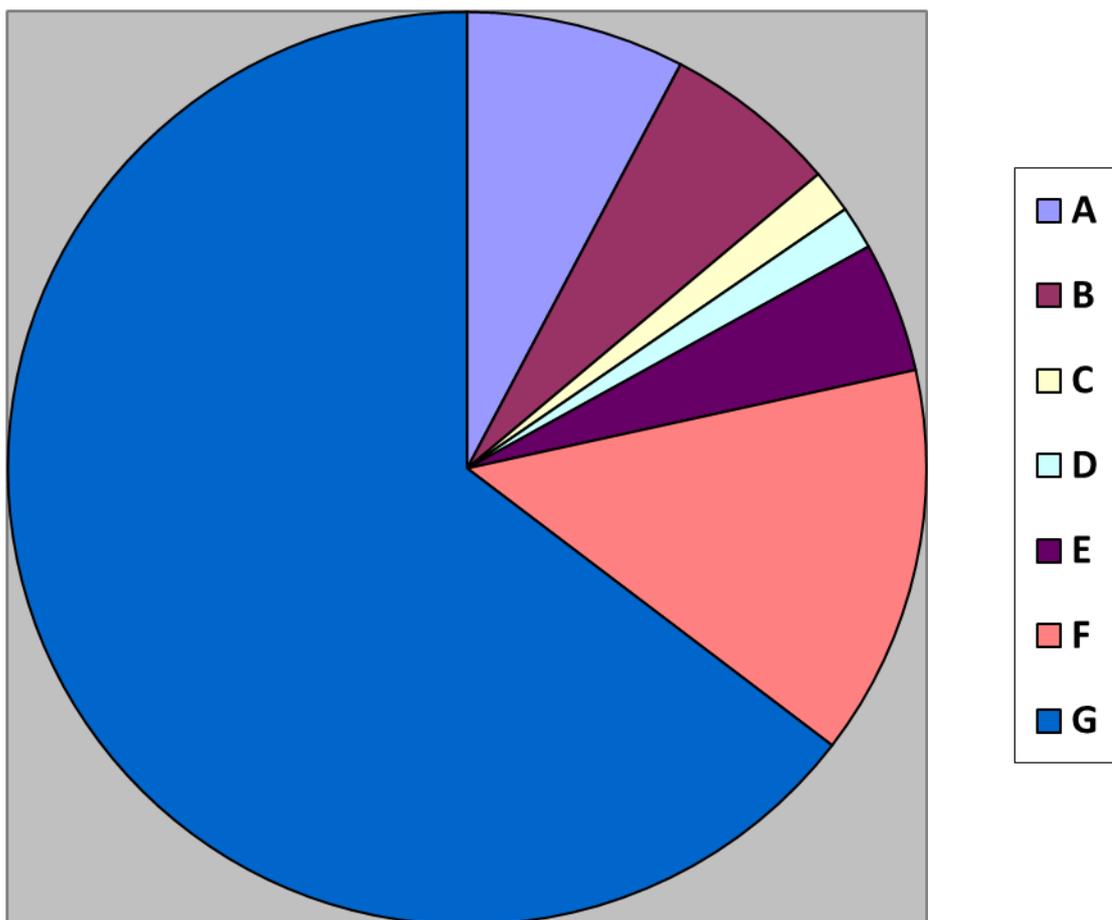
**Do you support the alternative approach of smaller scale developments around the edge of the village?**



**Or should all the developments be on  
one site?**

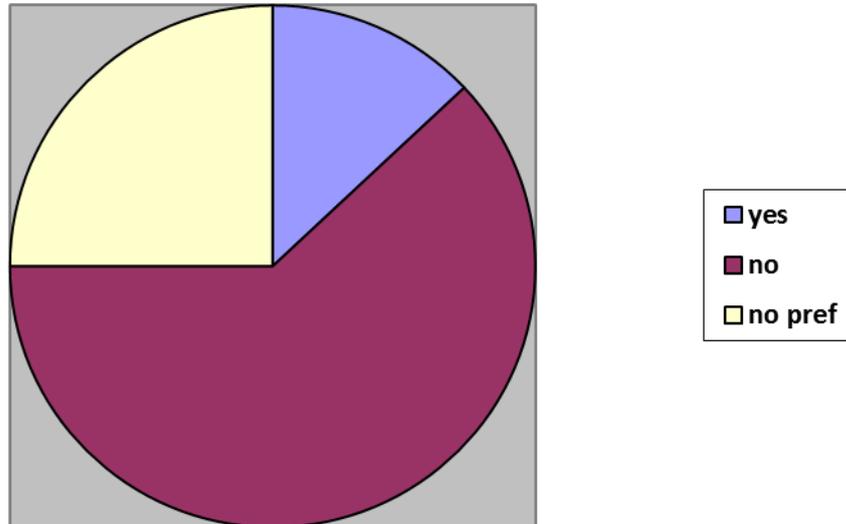


**Of the 13% that expressed a preference for development to be all on one site, the most preferred sites are.....**

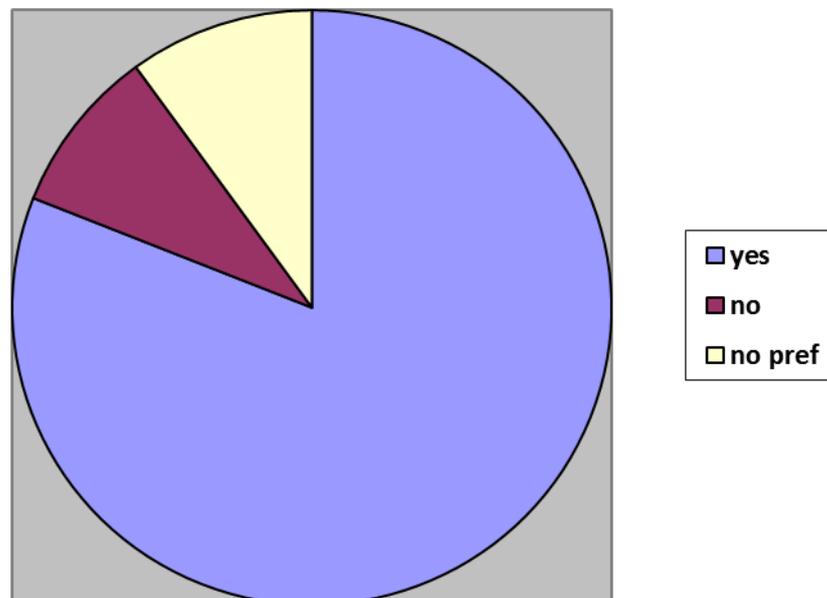


## What should development be like?

- All the same design and character?

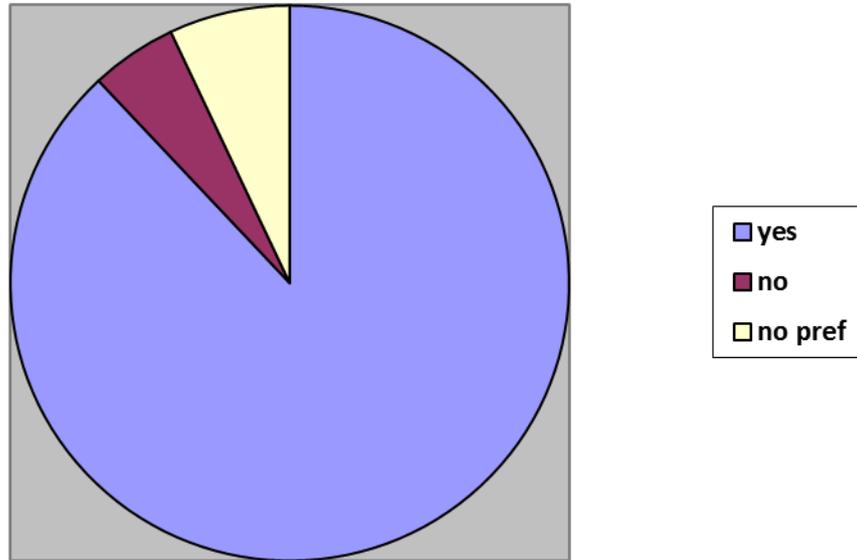


- 
- Different designs and character?

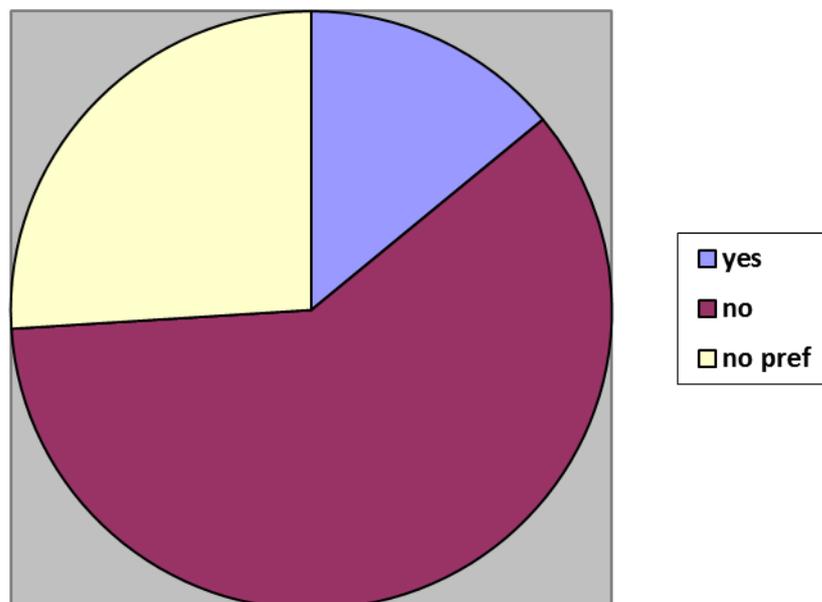


## What should development be like?

- Connected to the village?



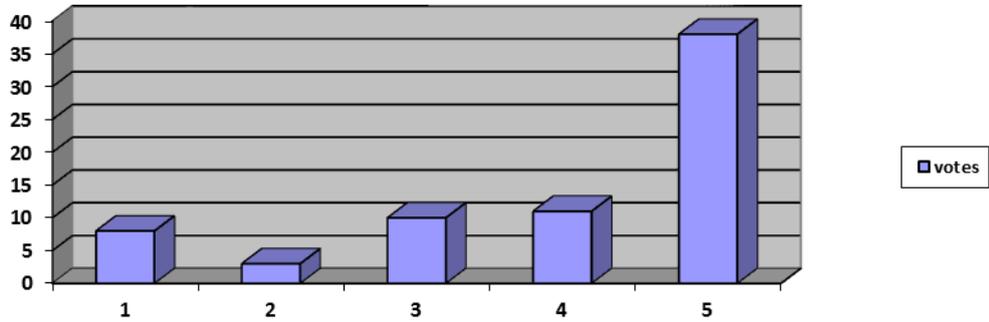
- 
- Separate from the village?



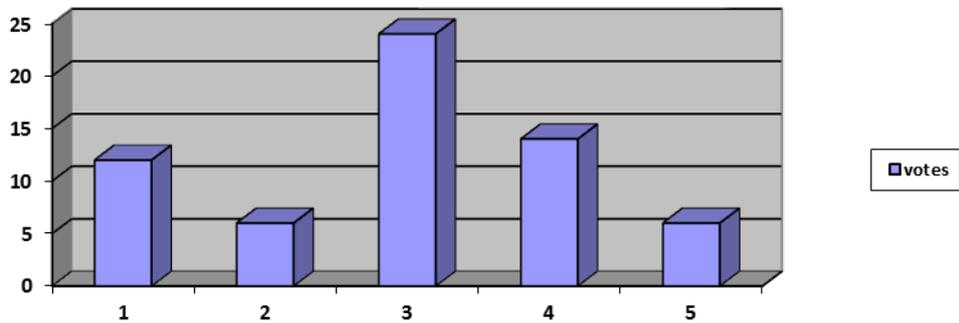
# Community Benefits

Priorities – 1= low importance, 5= high importance

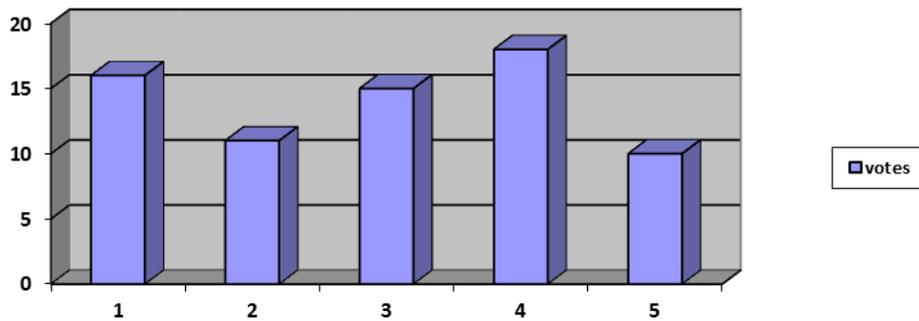
- **School Parking/Drop Off**



- **New Scout/Sports Pavilion**



- **Village Hall/Community Hub**



# Appendix 3

Consultation held at Bentley Memorial Hall  
Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014

# Questionnaire

event 2: 14<sup>th</sup> August 2014

Name:

Address:

Contact:

## The Bentley Plan

Do you support the principles of the Bentley Plan?

YES

NO

Do you have any comments to make on the Bentley Plan and the key principles?

Should Bentley Parish Council prepare a Neighbourhood Plan?

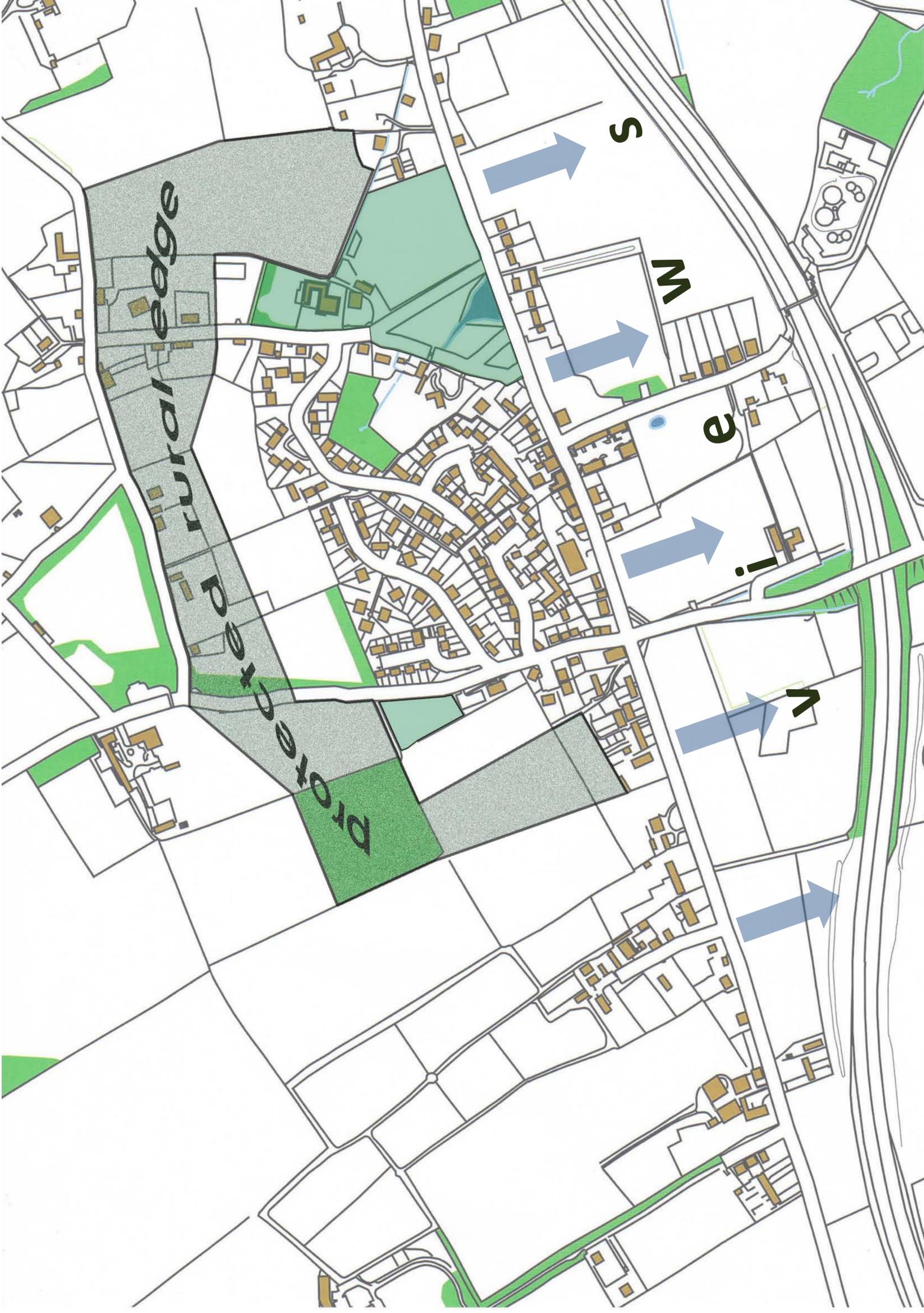
YES

NO

Are you interested in being involved in helping make a Neighbourhood Plan?

YES

NO



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## The LIPS

The Bentley Plan and Vision will be submitted to East Hampshire District Council in September and will form part of their LIPS (Local Interim Planning Statement) for Bentley. The intention of the LIPS is to reflect the community's preferences for where new development should be located in their settlement, and the additional work carried out by Bentley Parish Council in the preparation of the Bentley Plan and Vision will reinforce the Bentley LIPS. However, the LIPS will have limited influence over such matters as the amount, character and type of development within the village.

## A Neighbourhood Plan

There is the opportunity to convert the work that has been done for the LIPS into a Neighbourhood Plan for Bentley. A Neighbourhood Plan has statutory planning status and there are a number of advantages that it would give in addition to the LIPS:

- It can be used to decide what is a reasonable amount of development for the village
- It can be used to decide where and when this development happens
- It can be used to decide the mix, type and character of development
- It can be used to protect existing community assets
- It can be used to identify and deliver new community assets
- It will provide funds to the parish from development. With a Neighbourhood Plan in place, Bentley would qualify for 25% of the CIL (community infrastructure levy) contribution which is around £6,750 for a 4 bed house

### *How long would it take?*

With the work to date we are almost halfway there. The next stage would be to convert this work into a draft Neighbourhood Plan and agree a set of policies to be included in the Plan. The draft Plan would then be consulted on, refined and submitted for examination by the end of this year, at which stage it would have considerable 'planning weight' and influence over any planning decisions.

Following the examination there would be a referendum within the parish, and if there is a minimum 50% support from those who vote the Plan will be adopted by East Hampshire District Council and achieve its full planning weight.

### *How much work will it be?*

A great deal has already been done by the parish council. The next stages will require a steering group to attend meetings to help finalise the draft plan and policies, review the progress of the plan and to help keep the local community informed. The draft Plan and policies will be produced for the steering group by consultants who are experienced in neighbourhood planning.

There will also be a consultation event in the village for the draft Plan which will need members of the steering group to help with.

### *How will it be paid for?*

Funds are available from the Department of Central and Local Government (DCLG) to cover the next stages, additional funds may also be available from East Hampshire District Council.

The Bentley Plan: next steps