

Freshwater Neighbourhood Plan - Questions and Answers sheet.

What is a Neighbourhood Plan? Basically it is a town plan created by the community. The core difference is that it is produced by residents, rather than by the government and county administrative centre.

Aim - To develop a vibrant and prosperous neighbourhood by encouraging development that supports a range of good quality jobs, businesses, shops and services that meet the needs of local people and protects and enhances the quality of the local environment.

Why do we need one? Freshwater is surrounded by conservation and protected areas, that limit the amount of development or changes that can take place. There are some pockets of developmental space and so these are coming under increasing pressure. If Freshwater is to maintain its character and grow in a controlled and coordinated way that suits the community, then the community needs to drive this.

Why should I bother? Change happens. If there had been no development in the past, then we would not be living here now. If there had been no planned infrastructure, then we would find life very difficult. We gain from the planning of the past, so to gain from future planning, we need to think about it now. Somebody has to do that thinking and put it down on paper, then ensure that the paper gets to the right people. This is the opportunity to do that.

Where do we start? The Neighbourhood Plan, if adopted, will become an addition to the Island Core Strategy (ICS) and it must conform with that document, so the starting point is to collect the relevant extracts from there (the steering group has done this for each working group). Because the ICS has been passed by the UK Government, it complies with all EU regulations as well. A local steering group has been formed and has identified six areas as the basis of the Freshwater Neighbourhood Plan (FNP). Each of these areas will ideally be covered by a working group of five members, who can meet on a casual basis and drive the direction of their theme. Each working group will be given the relevant extracts from the ICS as a framework within which to work. They will also receive the community profile from the 2001 census and the 2011 census, when available (April 2013?). The working groups will also get advice from the steering group on how to compile the information.

How long will all this take? It is expected that to complete and present the FNP will take up to 2 years. However, it is hoped that all working groups will have collected their information within six months, jointly presented it to the community within the following six months, then agreed the contents for presentation to the steering group. Some groups have less areas to cover than others and may be able to reduce those times.

What do we basis this work on? The FNP needs to reflect the views of the community. It needs to be impartial. It needs to have backup evidence for statements made within the document. The core points are "Trends, Issues and problems, now and in the future." It also will be cross referenced to the existing documents of the Freshwater Village Design Statement and the Freshwater Parish Plan, where they are applicable.

How detailed does this NP have to be? It can be as little or as large as the community deems fit. The NP will consist of a series of policies with each policy varying from a few sentences up to a page. In a lot of cases it will be a major policy with other smaller associate ones added. For example, there may be a policy on the roads within Freshwater Village, plus extras on the style of street lighting and other street furniture. Remember though it all has to follow the ICS and EU rules. If something is left out then it is open to abuse, but at the same time some common sense needs to be applied.

What are the working group themes?

- 1) Built Environment
- 2) Rural Landscape
- 3) Community Provision
- 4) Tourism and Leisure
- 5) Economy
- 6) Renewables

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