

Residents consider how their town can 'flourish'

The benefits of a town centre manager and the length of time it could take Alsager to be revived were just some of the issues highlighted by residents during the first drop-in session for the neighbourhood plan consultation.

The draft plan was approved by the town council on Tuesday and the first drop-in was staged at Costa yesterday (Wednesday).

If rubber-stamped following a town referendum, the neighbourhood plan would allow the community to shape future development in Alsager.

Margaret O'Hare, of Hall Drive, claimed that a lot of residents in the town were "angry" due to the amount of housing development undertaken.

Mrs O'Hare, who was at the first drop in, was in favour of Alsager appointing its first town centre manager, but she felt that it would take five to 10 years for the town to be revived.

A call for the creation of the role was put forward by the neighbourhood plan steering group based on feedback from surveys and local businesses.

Mrs O'Hare added: "We need local small businesses to thrive but the landlord rates are just too expensive, that's why so many businesses in this town are falling by the wayside."

"I hope that a town centre manager with a business background, good people skills and knowledge of the area will enable us to see this town flourish."

"There has been no plan or structure in place for Alsager and we have been pushed aside by Cheshire East Council."

Alsager resident Graham



Coun Robinson and Nicola Clarke, Alsager Town Council clerk, at the first drop in event for the neighbourhood plan consultation process. ("Chronicle" photo. 320/19).

Bagnall felt that the town was "falling behind" and wanted the "terrible" condition of the roads and pavements addressed.

Mr Bagnall believed Alsager should replicate Poynton's modern shared space idea in the town centre.

Shared space is an urban design approach, which minimises the segregation of pedestrians and vehicles. This is done by removing features such as kerbs, road surface markings, traffic signs, and traffic lights.

Mr Bagnall added: "Towns like Alderley Edge and Wilmslow are thriving but we are not and due to that there is no community feel or atmosphere."

Coun Hilary Robinson, who is a member of the steering group, also felt that there was a lot of "anger" in the town due to the volume of developments allocated to Alsager.

Coun Robinson hoped that a town centre manager working alongside the steering group could revitalise Alsager and trigger residents to become more involved in their town.

The neighbourhood plan has been under the development

since January 2017 and is now entering a stage known as regulation 14.

This stage lasts six weeks and residents will have the opportunity to consider the policy proposals and comment both online and at a series of public consultation events.

Other public consultations are scheduled at the following dates, times and locations.

- Today (Thursday) 5pm-7pm, Wilbraham Arms.
- Monday 10am-noon, Alsager Civic, 5pm-7pm Bank Corner.
- Wednesday 10am-noon, market stall in Fairview Car Park, 5pm-7pm The Plough Inn.
- Thursday 24th, 10am-noon, Radway Social Club.

Additional copies of the draft neighbourhood plan will be available for reference in Alsager Library. Printed comment forms will also be available from the town council offices, from Alsager Civic and from the library. Completed forms can be returned to each of these locations.

The final date for receipt of comments is 28th February.

A further six-week consulta-

tion period will then take place with statutory bodies. Cheshire East will arrange for an external examiner to assess the neighbourhood plan to determine whether it can be adopted.

Once the examiner is happy with the plan and any revisions Cheshire East will organise a referendum in the town for local people to vote on its adoption.

If more than 50% vote to support the plan then it will be adopted as a development plan by Cheshire East and have statutory force.

It is currently anticipated that the referendum will take place in September.

The draft neighbourhood plan comprises a wide range of policies aimed at influencing future development in Alsager in areas including: economy and employment, town centre, housing, natural and built environment, community and well-being, traffic, transport and services.

For more details about the neighbourhood plan and the consultation process contact Christine Marsh, chairman of the steering group, 01270 486010.

Cadets apply for minibus funding