

Review of the Neighbourhood Plan

“We are moving from a single planning document to a broader programme of action”.

Dunham Massey Parish Council has been exploring the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan for some time. During this process, we have carefully considered the changing planning landscape, the resources required and the issues that matter most to our community.

Following this review, the Parish Council believes that preparing a Neighbourhood Plan is no longer the most effective way of protecting and enhancing Dunham Massey. Instead, we propose to focus our time and resources on a range of targeted initiatives that can deliver more immediate and practical benefits for the parish.

The reasons for this proposed change of approach include:

- Recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) place greater emphasis on the allocation of land for housing. The Parish Council is not in a position to identify or allocate suitable housing sites.
- National and regional planning policy is expected to change further in the near future, creating uncertainty over the long-term value of a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Funding and grant support previously available to assist with preparing Neighbourhood Plans has been withdrawn.
- Feedback from residents has shown that many of the community's highest priorities relate to issues beyond the planning system. The Parish Council believes its resources would be better directed towards addressing these concerns.
- Planning applications affecting the parish are already considered by the Parish Council, providing an opportunity to review proposals and make representations to the local planning authority.
- Increasing pressure on the parish comes from infrastructure and development proposals in neighbouring areas rather than within Dunham Massey itself. We believe our efforts are better focused on influencing these proposals and mitigating their impacts as they arise.
- Much of Dunham Massey already benefits from strong planning and environmental protections. Existing conservation areas, Green Belt designation, and significant land ownership by the National Trust provide important safeguards against inappropriate development.

A New Approach

Rather than preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, the Parish Council proposes to pursue a programme of work aimed at protecting the character of Dunham Massey and enhancing the local environment. This could include:

- Exploring opportunities to extend existing conservation areas or designate new conservation areas where appropriate.
- Preparing local design guidance to help ensure that any future development reflects the character of the parish.
- Identifying and seeking protection for valued community assets, such as public houses and other important local facilities.
- Supporting the conservation and enhancement of wildlife habitats and biodiversity.
- Continuing to work closely with the National Trust on shared priorities for the parish.
- Reviewing land use and ownership to identify opportunities to protect important sites, while also understanding whether previously developed land or redundant agricultural buildings may offer more appropriate locations for any future development.
- Supporting local and regional nature recovery initiatives, including alignment with Trafford's Nature Recovery Strategy where appropriate.
- Investigating opportunities for wider conservation planning across the parish.
- Working with Trafford Council to identify and recognise non-designated heritage assets through its Supplementary Planning Document.
- Exploring how the emerging Trafford Design Guide can better reflect the needs and character of rural communities such as Dunham Massey.

The Parish Council remains fully committed to protecting the unique character, heritage and environment of Dunham Massey and want to thank those residents that have contributed and supported our work to date. Whilst a Neighbourhood Plan can still be revisited in the future if circumstances change, we believe this revised approach will provide a more flexible and effective way of responding to current challenges while continuing to represent the interests of our residents.