

LONGHOUGHTON PARISH COUNCIL

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN – CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

1 Essentials of the Plan

The Neighbourhood Development Plan (DNP) when written will set out the way in which the inhabitants of the Parish wish to see the Parish develop over the years to 2036. The NDP must reflect the needs and wishes of the Parish and it will be essential to present firm evidence to support the proposals. The NDP is scheduled to be prepared over a period of two years and much of this time will be devoted to consulting and communicating with residents.

Before the NDP is approved it will be subject to a referendum in which all residents who are registered to vote, will be able to vote to accept or reject the NDP. From the start of the process to compile the NDP it is therefore essential to strive for the involvement of all residents in the compilation so that when it gets to the referendum, the Plan expresses the needs and views of residents and will be supported.

To achieve this will require a well thought out consultation and communications strategy covering all stages in the process of developing the NDP.

2 Objectives of the Communications Strategy

The NDP has to set out the needs and wishes of people of the Parish. To achieve this a strategy has to be in place to communicate and engage with residents to encourage their involvement in the process. Engagement means communicating with residents so that they have an understanding of the stages of the process of compiling the Plan and for them to get involved with expressing their views at each stage. For the Plan to be effective there will need to be the highest possible level of involvement from residents. This is an opportunity for residents to help shape the future of the community.

3 Means and Methods of Communicating

A range of communication methods will be required to achieve the above objectives.

Communications has to be two ways otherwise it is ineffective. It is envisaged that the following communication means will be used:

- Face to face discussions – in Public Meetings and door to door.
- Workshops and Drop-in sessions
- Community Newsletter
- Special 'DNP' Newsletter
- Parish Council web-site
- Newspapers – The Northumberland Gazette
- Social Media – possibly - Facebook, Twitter and Instagram as appropriate.
- Open Sessions at Parish Council Meetings.

4 Consultation

Consultation is the process of obtaining the views of residents. Effective consultation requires excellent communications. Obtaining the views of people requires two way communications to be in place. It is proposed that the following methods of consultation are used to capture people's needs and views.

- Surveys – On-line or on paper using Survey Monkey for recording responses and analysing the results.
- Drop-in Events and Workshops – People's views are recorded on a response form and collated by the use of Survey Monkey.
- Public Meetings – Opinions received from discussion plus response forms completed. Collation of individual views by the use of Survey Monkey.
- Requesting of views by email.

5 Feeding Back the Results of Consultation Events

Feeding back to residents the results of surveys/workshops/Drop-in events/public meetings/email requests, is essential so that residents can understand what views and opinions have been expressed. The 'feedback' method must be accompanied by a means for individuals to make further comments and for those comments to be recorded and consolidated when received.

6 Who we are communicating with.

Overall we are trying to communicate with all resident families, businesses and community organisations within the Parish.

These will include:

- Residents who live in the Parish full-time
- Second home owners
- Holiday Let proprietors
- Static Caravan owners
- Key stakeholders ie. land owners

Within each of these groups we will need to identify different age groups:

- The very young
- The Young
- Working age residents – families and individuals
- Older people
- Multiple households.

7 Responsibility for Consultation and Communications

The NDP Steering Group will be responsible for implementing the consultation and communications strategy. At each Steering Group meeting consultation and communications will be an agenda item.

8 Appointment and Use of Champions

Lesbury NDP Steering Group has successfully used the concept of 'Champions'. A champion is a person who volunteers to co-ordinate the consultation and communications within a relatively small group of residents by explaining the process and issues and obtaining their views. This is an advanced way of encouraging involvement and participation. If we were to wish to go down this route it will require a substantial effort to identify the Champions and set up the network.

9 Selection of Appropriate Consultation and Communication Methods

A detailed plan will need to be compiled for each stage of development of the NDP. A range of consultation and communication methods will be appropriate for each. These will need to be considered in relation to each stage. The possible stages are set out below:

- Purpose and Process
- Objectives and vision
- Housing, Housing Needs and Settlement Boundaries
- Retail, Business and Tourism
- Environment
- Mineral Extraction and After Use.
- Community Facilities
- Transportation and Roads
- Draft of Policies
- Draft NDP