

CONSULTATION JANUARY 2020 – VISION, OBJECTIVES AND PLANNING THEMES

Thank you to all residents who have sent in their completed questionnaires and those who attended any of the four drop-in events at Boulmer, Howick and Longhoughton. The following is a summary of the views and comments expressed. The full responses can be viewed.

Vision

94 percent were in favour of the vision. One resident considered that there should be more reference to the conservation of wildlife and species especially in view of Climate Change. Others thought that it was very important to maintain the essential character of the villages and that any developments should be of the right quality and appropriate design. The overall view was that the vision is well balanced.

Objectives

94 percent were in favour of the objectives. Significant support for quality development of an appropriate scale to achieve a sustainable community and particularly the maintenance of essential services. The preservation of heritage and character for future generations was suggested as an obligation. In relation to the environment more emphasis should be given to increasing species and habitats. Second homes and holiday lets need to be restricted especially at Boulmer.

Planning themes

91 percent were in favour of the planning themes. Some thought they were too high level. Affordable (low cost) housing for local people was thought to be a priority with appropriate accommodation for young families and older people. The green infrastructure should be developed for cycling and walking and this could provide opportunities for the creation of small businesses. Some thought that there should be more information to advise tourists and visitors of the heritage and wild life.

Areas for development and protection

Sites at Boulmer and Longhoughton were nominated to be designated as 'Green Spaces'. Affordable housing should be spread around rather than in one place. There should be a designated site in Longhoughton for small offices. It was thought essential to safeguard the natural, historic and environment of the area and to improve the meadows along the coast for flora and fauna. Support for green routes including the green-necklace (green route) in Longhoughton.

Other issues the plan should cover

Transport was a popular issue, particularly to the Station at Hipsburn and the suggestion of a tourists shuttle from Amble to Bamburgh. More trees and improved habitats for wild life and improved footpaths and cycle routes between the villages. Improved facilities in Longhoughton including the development of the ex Spar site. The need to deal with speeding traffic and car parking. Creating the opportunities for employment is essential for young people and this will help to balance the ageing population.

The following paragraphs are included to answer some of the points raised by residents.

Howick to Seaton Point – Conservation Designations

One resident questioned the existing conservation and protection of the coast and inland. The Northumberland coast and its rare species are well protected with World, European and English protection designations. The coast in the Parish of Longhoughton, from Howick to Seaton Point, is covered by a world-standard RAMSAR designation that covers wetland species and habitats. It is also

classified as a European Special Protection Area (SPA) and a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Both these designations protect rare and vulnerable birds and regularly occurring migratory species both on the coast and inland. Additionally, in England it is classified as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The whole coast from Holy Island to Amble is of course classified as the Northumberland Coast Area of Outstanding Beauty, meaning that it is given extra protection to conserve the area for its natural beauty, species and habitats.

Neighbourhood Plans - Who is doing them

The question was raised as to how prevalent are Neighbourhood Plans. Since 2011 when the legislation came in for Parish and Town Councils to do Neighbourhood Plans more and more have taken up the option. In Northumberland alone there are 9 parishes that have approved plans, with another 6 in the final stages and another 22 in the process of producing a plan. These include our neighbours, Lesbury, Craster, Embleton and Alnwick/Denwick.

Neighbourhood plans are essentially about local issues that are not covered in the Northumberland wide plan and they are a way of putting the community in charge of how land is used.

In the preparation of the Longhoughton plan there will be more consultations on the contents of the plan and when we have a final draft plan it will be put out to all households for consultation. Final approval will be in the hands of registered voters in the Parish when it goes to a referendum.

Professional Help in Producing the Neighbourhood Plan

In the Consultation some residents questioned whether the Parish Council has the expertise and knowhow to do the plan.

The Government provides grants for Parish Councils to engage qualified planners to help write technical parts of the Neighbourhood Plan. In Longhoughton we have appointed Jo-Anne Garrick Ltd. Jo-Anne has extensive experience in planning and advising on Neighbourhood Plans. She will be writing some of the technical papers needed for the plan and will put together draft policies based on the evidence that has been compiled from the consultations and Ward reviews. Northumberland County Council is also giving advice to the Parish Council on compiling the plan.