

Shearsby Parish Council Neighbourhood Plan

Consultation Statement

Introduction

This Consultation Statement has been compiled to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbouring Planning Regulations 2012. Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain. According to the Regulations, a Consultation Statement:-

- contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- explains how they were consulted;
- summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted
- describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.

This document provides a record of the engagement that took place at various stages of the plan's evolution. It does include such information gathered initially for the preparation of the 5 Year Village Plan much of which is also of relevance for the neighbourhood development plan.

The main methods used to publicise the consultation and engagement process are described and the main findings of the engagement process are documented.

Regulations and government guidance

Stage 1: deciding to make a Neighbourhood Plan

Shearsby Parish Council (SPC) took the decision to produce a **Local Plan** at its second meeting on June 5th 2013. The plan developed by SPC based on community consultation was facilitated by Ms H Fudge of Local Council Support Associates Ltd.

It was suggested that a Neighbourhood Development Plan should be initiated at the open meeting (SPC minute February 18th 2014) to which all parishioners including farmers and other stake holders were invited by means of notices delivered by hand and posted on the notice board and on the website.

Unfortunately at the early stage of developing the plan there was much confusion as to what exactly was required. Little guidance and no templates were available and loose nomenclature using terms such as Local Plan, Village Development Plan, Parish Plan, Village Plan, Parish Development Plan, Neighbourhood Plan, etc. were used interchangeably and it was some time before it was realised that two plans with different objectives were required. The early consultation documents were therefore formulated to provide information for the Five Year Village Plan while much of this information was also of relevance to the Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (PNDP).

Stage 2: defining the neighbour hood

The Parish Council applied to the local planning authority in a letter dated 12th November 2014 to designate all of the area of the Shearsby Parish as the neighbourhood. This was approved on 16th January 2015. The letter and the map of the parish are attached as Appendix 1. The formal engagement period provided members of the public and other stakeholders an opportunity to submit comment on the proposed neighbourhood planning area.

Stage 3: preparing the plan

Formation of a **Local Plan** for Shearsby was agreed at Shearsby Parish Council (SPC) meeting on June 6th 2013 Item 6. At the next council meeting September 5th 2013 Item 12 it was agreed that a comprehensive questionnaire should be compiled and delivered to every household in the parish with an explanatory note on 11th October 2013 for completion and return by 31st October 2013. A comprehensive 13 page questionnaire was duly prepared and dispatched to 95 households. A copy annotated with the number of responses for each section is provided as Appendix 2.

At an open meeting of Shearsby Parish Council on February 18th 2014, Item 2 attended by eleven parishioners, the chair person emphasised the need for a Neighbourhood Plan, and that such a plan once accepted, gives the local community the power to have some control over decisions of housing, features of conservation area, open spaces, footpaths and hedgerows. The chair person asked that parishioners formed groups to explore the various areas. A councillor should convene the meetings and lead each group. The findings will be presented at a meeting on 1st April 2014 for discussion .

The following theme groups were formed (Item 3)

Footpaths and Hedgerows,

The Village Green and other Open Spaces,

Housing and the Conservation Area,

Broadband, Neighbourhood Watch, The Community use of the Village Hall,

Development of Cycle Track to Arnesby

Most of this information gathering work was used for the generation of the Five Year Village Plan which was under preparation guided by Ms H Fudge of Local Council Support Associates Ltd. However views expressed regarding Housing and The Conservation Area , Open Spaces and Land for Cycle Tracks were also of relevance to the Neighbourhood Development Plan.

It was agreed that the meeting would re-convene at an open meeting on Tuesday April 1st at St Mary Magdalene Church when each group will present their findings/suggestions to the meeting for discussion. The deliberations of the theme groups are presented in Appendix 3.

At the Shearsby Parish Council meeting of 11th December 2014 Item 13 it was agreed that arrangements should be made to hold a public consultation meeting to progress the Neighbourhood Plan on 7th February 2015. Parishioners were encouraged to attend by the offer of a free bacon roll. Hence the event is commonly referred to as the “1st Butty Meeting”. The various theme groups had put up poster panels displaying their findings and encouraging comments and suggestions by providing posting notes which were placed in a ballot box and analysed by the committee. Shears Parish Council Chair gave a presentation outlining the main features of a Neighbourhood Development Plan. After discussion of parishioners with councillors a detailed questionnaire concerned with housing policy was presented to be completed at the event and additional copies were posted to parishioners who were unable to attend the event for return by 30th February 2015. A total of 65 completed questionnaires were returned on the day followed by a further 27 postal questionnaires.

Parishioners were invited to an open, single agenda meeting (Minute 7th July 2015) with a view of establishing an Neighbourhood Development Plan committee with the remit of furthering the Neighbourhood Development Plan. Six parishioners attended and a chair and secretary were elected. Four theme groups were stipulated and after general discussions parishioners chose or were allotted membership to one of the following groups:

Group 1 Character of Shearsby

Group 2 Land use

Group 3 Housing

Group 4 Business Activity

Attendees were made aware of the format of the committee and its operating parameters. The Council constitution and standing orders were shared and declaration of interest were commented upon. Committee members were asked to sign a procedures agreement.

The Character of Shearsby group (1)

produced a Draft Character Statement and obtained a Historic England Assessment in October 2015. It held two Committee meetings on 14th and 23rd July 2015

The Land Use group (2)

held a committee meeting on July 9th 2015, July 10th 2015 and August 19th 2015.

Housing group (3)

Committee meeting 20th July 2015 and 2nd September 2015 and PowerPoint presentation 2nd September 2015

Business Activity group (4)

Minutes of committee meetings on 9th July and 21st July 2015, 13th August 2015 and 3rd September 2015. Analysis of Business Activity from the Business Questionnaire

Nature Preservation

An additional group concerned with Nature Preservation was established in September 2015. The group published details of three areas which it believed to be worthy of preservation. These are: The few remaining Ridge and Furrow Pastures, Burtons Spinney and the field on the Southern perimeter of the village including Bear's Hole.

Consultation 2nd Butty Day 30th January 2016

The aim of this event was to help inform the community on progress of the Neighbourhood Development Plan and to seek comments on emerging policy areas including those initiated by the above theme groups.

Communications

Village Notice board

All parish council committee agendas were posted as well as all invitations to join the NDP committee and subcommittees and to take part in the major consultation events on Butty days 1 and 2.

The Parish Council Website

Agendas and Minutes of Shearsby Parish Council Committee meetings were posted as well as invitations to the major consultation events.

Stakeholders

Both local and all statutory stake holders were informed by letters.

Fliers

Invitations to parishioners and questionnaires were delivered by hand to addresses in the village as well as to outlying farms and businesses.

Consultation

Eight consultations have taken as listed below. These include three open events, a comprehensive questionnaire, three further questionnaires from the theme groups, letters to all stakeholders and an open meeting to form the NDP committee.

Original 13 page Questionnaire issued 11th October 2013 to all Households

Open event held at St Mary Magdalene Church 1st April 2014

Open Event 1st Butty Day 7th February 2015

Stakeholder Letter 7th August 2015

Open Event 2nd Butty Day 30th January 2016

Establishment of the Shearsby Neighbourhood Development Plan Committee
Open Meeting minutes 7th July 2015

Three of the NDP Theme Groups land use, Housing and Business also issued and evaluated questionnaires. The theme group committees met on the following dates:-

Character of Shearsby : 14th July 2015 and 23rd July 2015

Land Use group: 9th July 2015, 23rd July 2015 and 19th August 2015

Housing group: 20th July 2015 and 2nd September 2015

Business group: 9th July 2015, 21st July 2015, 13th August 2015, 03 September 2015

Presentation by a member of Harborough District Council May 2015.

Regulation 14 consultation took place on?????

Consultation Methodology

To inform as many people as possible of the existence of the neighbourhood planning process

To seek the views of people from the community on proposals being developed by the council

Activities

As well as meetings of the Shearsby Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Development Committee and its Theme groups the following activities were undertaken:-

The parishioners were notified by fliers, poster on the Village Notice board and the Village Website of the intention to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan and invited to contribute to the process

Villagers were invited to presentations by Councillors and speakers from Harborough District Council about the aims and objectives of neighbourhood planning.

All committee meeting minutes and agendas were posted on the website.

A good relationship with Harborough District Council including meetings and regular dialogue were maintained.

Community questionnaires were undertaken on October 2013, 7th February (Housing survey) as well as by three of the theme groups.

A staffed exhibition about the Neighbourhood Plan was undertaken on February 2015. The SPC chair person gave a presentation about the major aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan.

A second staffed exhibition took place on January 2016 with the help of G Kirk of YourLocale.

Statutory and other stakeholders were informed by letter of the start of the Neighbourhood Planning process and were invited to submit their comments by letter or email.

Local businesses;-

Chris Allen
Keith Beeson
Rachel Burton
The Chandlers Arms
Nigel Davies
Barry Jones
Phil Poncelet
Phil Stanley
Sally Timms
Richard Houghton
Phil Beesley
Robert Ball
Begleys Joinery
K9 Dog training
Fishing Lakes

External stakeholders:-

Leicestershire County Council
Harborough District Council
Fleeced Parish Council
Arnesby PC
Bruntingthorpe PC
The Coal Authority
Homes and Community Agency
Natural England
Environment Agency
Historic England
Network Rail Infrastructure
Highways Agency
British Telecommunications PLC
Post Point
East Leicestershire and Rutland CCG
National Grid
British Gas Properties
Severn Trent Water Ltd
Anglian Water LTD
Voluntary Action Leicestershire
Age UK Leicestershire and Rutland
CPRE
Leicestershire Ethnic Minority Partnership

National Federation of Gypsy Liaison Groups
Interfaith Forum for Leicestershire
Market Harborough Chamber of Commerce
Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living
Harborough District Disability Access Group
Leicestershire Police Force Headquarters
Leicestershire Fire and Rescue
Seven Locks Housing
County Councillor
District Councillor

Land Owners:-

Mrs Janet Allen
R Baker and Sons
Mr Alan Barnacle
Mr Phillip Beesley
Mr Keith Beeson
Mr Ben Brice
Mr John Briggs
Mr John Burton
Mr Cowen
Mr Nick Davies
Mr David Durran
Mr. J Freckingham
Mr Neville Hall
Mr Alwyn Houghton
Mr Kang
Mr Bernard Labram
Mr Martin Littlejones
Mr Paul Mummery
Mr Robert Munton
Mr Dean Pallett
Mr Peter Parsons
Mr and Mrs Carl Roberts
Mr Michael Roberts
Mr Simon Smith
Mr Nigel Walker
Welford Church C/OQ2
Mr Richard Whitting
Mr Wills
Mr Woodward
Mr James Wright

The same groups, individuals and organisations have been consulted as part of the Regulation 14 consultation.

Summary of findings of the first questionnaire (October 2013)

Only answers to questions of relevance to development are considered here.

The complete response to the questionnaire is shown in Appendix SPS 5.

Q` (i) 30% of respondents wanted to see improvements to footpaths. 31% wanted to improve or develop the village green and 43% wanted see improvements to the verges within the village and 14% wanted to see more allotments but only 19% wanted to improve or develop open spaces. Q2(i) 45% wanted improved parking facilities and Q2(iii) 56% wanted more access to cycle routes. Q2(vi) 24% would use more buses if these were available. Q6(i) 25% thought drains and flood control good or excellent. Q7(ii) (100% believed the village green to be important or very important compared with 74% for the pub. Q9(i) 100% agreed that new builds must be infill. Q9(iii) 3% wanted to see more 4+ bedrooms houses while 65% wanted to see more starter homes. Q10(ii) 27% were in favour of providing suitable business premises. 78% favoured Saddington Rd as a suitable location for business premises. Q10(iii) 87% supported a community enterprise for selling local produce and products. Q11(i) 90% supported better insulation of buildings. Q11(ii) 65% support investigating the possibility of installing community based sustainable energy sources. Photo voltaic energy was most favoured and wind power was least favoured with bio gas coming in at 45%.

Consultation 1st Butty Day 07 02 2015

In late 2014 it was decided that the council should make arrangements to hold a consultation event to gather data that will eventually form the basis of a Development Plan which expresses the view of the community on all matters pertaining to the use of land within the parish. The event to be held on 7th February 2015 was advertised by poster, the website and fliers delivered to all households. Parishioners were offered a free bacon butty and the event was commonly referred to as First Butty Day. The parishioners were informed of the basic features of a neighbourhood development plan in particular that it must provide proof that it truly represents the views of the parishioners and not those of the council. It was emphasised that planning policies in the development plan carry significant legal weight when decisions on planning applications are made. 65 parishioners attended and 27 sent their apologies. The attendees were asked to complete a questionnaire and copies of the questionnaire were posted to those who were unable to attend for return by February 22 2015. Parishioners were encouraged to write down additional comments to clarify their views.

The responses (presented in full in Appendix 4a and 4b) from the questionnaire were collated and combined with verbal and written comments thereby enabling the following threads to be identified:-

Types of Housing

Preference given to smaller houses, bungalows, mews and terrace houses, housing association homes, assisted housing and refurbishments of redundant buildings and barns.

Location

Keep within the village curtilage, There was some support for development along Saddington road and the far North East corner of the parish near Fleckney.

Size of development:-

Small scale maximum 5 homes, individual plots

Method of construction:-

Traditional materials, environmentally friendly, high insulation standard, off road parking

Village appearance and amenities (The character of Shearsby):-

Protect wild life habitats, land for recreation, value the pub, village hall.

It was decided how best to group these themes so that committees could be formed to discuss ideas, collect information and ways to progress the development plan.

Another group concerned with **Business Activity** in the parish was formed shortly after the event when the names and addresses of stake holders had been obtained from Harborough District Council.

The village green and communications consultations are not strictly part of the development plan and were not discussed at this stage.

To formalise the ideas which arose from the First Butty meeting and help progressing the development plan the Shearsby Neighbourhood Development Committee was formed at a meeting of the Parish Council on 7th July 2015.

The terms of reference and governance of the Neighbourhood Committee and of all subcommittees and theme groups were established. Details can be found in Appendix 5.

Consultation 2nd Butty Day

This consultation was promoted in a number of ways including posters for the village notice board, Parish Council website fliers posted to all households and businesses as well as conversations with councillors and members of the working parties. Yourlocale was commissioned by Shearsby Parish Council to assist in the delivery of a drop in event on Neighbourhood Planning on 30th January 2016. The aim was to inform the community on the progress of the neighbourhood development plan and elicit comments on the emerging policy areas in particular, Housing, Community Facilities, Business, Local Green Space and Environment. 65 persons attended and a further 36 letters were sent out of which three were returned with comments. A number of display boards were arranged around the room. Nearest the entrance was a board illustrating the Neighbourhood Planning process followed by boards each concerned with one of the major topics related to neighbourhood planning. Maps, diagrams and photographs were displayed and note pads and stickers were provided for comments and suggestions to be recorded or attached to maps or posters. For example sticky coloured disks were provided to enable parishioners to indicate the position of new houses or potential green spaces on the map. All displays were manned by councillors and or members of the theme groups. As in the case of the earlier consultation event, 1st Butty Day, the event was held in the Village Hall equipped with tables and chairs which enabled participants

to rest, take refreshments to discuss matters with fellow parishioners and exhibitors. The responses of the consultation for each of the above policy areas are presented in the detailed report produced by Yourlocale and reproduced in Appendix 6 .

Regulation 14 Consultation.

This consultation took place over the period 5th July to August 2017. The resultant comments were tabulated and are presented in Appendix 7. The committee met on 12th January 2018 to consider its responses and make amendments to the draft plan. There were three outstanding questions raised by Harborough District Council Planning Officers:-

Ref.49 What protection the Village Green has already? to which the answer is that the Green was purchased from a resident in parcels of £100 by parishioners the shortfall being made up by grants so that the Green is effectively owned by the parishioners.

Ref.35 Do we need a housing needs report to back up the policy on the housing mix? The committee decided that this was not required because of the relatively small number of houses and the considerable expense involved.

Ref.24 Do we want a policy on rural exception sites? The answer was no because there are no appropriate sites.

Conclusion

Comments from HDC Planning Officers helped to shape the pre-submission version.

The draft Neighbourhood Plan is now ready to be submitted to Harborough District Council who will publicise it for a further six weeks and then forward it, with accompanying documents and all representations made during the publicity period, to an independent Examiner who will review it and check that it meets the Basic Conditions. If the plan successfully passes this stage, with any modifications, it will be put forward for referendum.

The referendum question will be a straight "yes" or "no" on the entire Plan, as set out by Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. People will not be able to vote for or against individual policies. If 50% of those voting vote for the Plan, it will be brought into force (Made) and become part of District-wide planning policy.

This Consultation Statement and the supporting Appendices are provided to comply with Section 15(2) of part 5 of the 2012 Neighbouring Planning Regulations.

Appendices