

Consultation Strategy for the preparation of the Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan:

‘Newhaven to 2030’



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1.0 Purpose of Strategy

- 1.1 The purpose of this document is to set out the broad strategy the Town Council and its consultants will follow when consulting with the community in preparing the Town Council's Neighbourhood Plan for Newhaven. This strategy has been prepared and set out in order to:
- i) Ensure that the consultation process complies with the Town Council's adopted Statement of Intent as to Community Engagement and will meet statutory requirements as set out in the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations 2012 for the Plans preparation.
 - ii) Provide a framework that can be viewed and commented on to ensure that as many elements of the local community can contribute to the process.
 - iii) Establish a clear reference for the consultants when preparing the programme of consultation.
 - iv) Help enable the community to understand the programme and target timetable for consultation so that they may most effectively contribute to the process.

2.0 Scope of the Neighbourhood Plan and key processes

- 2.1 Under the Localism Act 2011 town and parish councils can now prepare Neighbourhood Plans. They are a means by which local communities can have more of a say in the establishment of detailed planning policies and the development of land in their community – for instance by saying where new homes should be built, where more open spaces are needed or where it would be best to put new shops or manufacturing businesses.
- 2.2 The finished Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan will become a statutory document which forms part of Lewes District Councils (LDC) 'Local Development Framework' (LDF), and will be used by LDC when making decisions on planning applications for the town. However the Neighbourhood Plan must comply with both national planning policy and with the policies and strategies laid down in LDC's Core Strategy (Local Plan Part 1).
- 2.3 In addition to the opportunity for local people to shape the area in which they live, there is a real incentive for Newhaven Town Council to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, as parishes that produce a Neighbourhood Plan will receive 25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) arising from developments in their area, whereas parishes without a plan will receive 15%. This will assist the Town Council in delivering additional facilities and infrastructure for the town, from revenue accrued from CIL funding.
- 2.4 As a first step, the Town Council submitted its formal application to LDC to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan covering the whole of Newhaven. On 8th July 2013, LDC granted permission for the preparation of the Plan, but at the request of the Port Authority, the area owned by Newhaven Port and Properties (NPP) was excluded.

The Port Authority is subject to different planning legislation than the rest of the town and NPP has prepared its own non statutory plan for this area¹. However the Town Council continues to be committed to supporting the future retention and development of the port. It will therefore seek to ensure that its Neighbourhood Plan complements the NPP Plan, and will work in close liaison with the Port Authority as part of the consultation process to achieve this.

- 2.5 The next step is for the Town Council to prepare ideas on how the town could evolve and develop over the next 16 years till 2030, by consultation with the local community. These will primarily take the form of:
- i) a profile of the town identifying the issues it currently faces,
 - ii) a vision for the future, with objectives to deal with the issues identified to include
 - iii) sites identified for development in Lewes District Councils Local Plan Part 2, consulted upon in November 2013 and
 - iv) a call for sites to establish whether there are any other landowners who wish to submit their land to be considered for development.
- 2.6 The vision and objectives for consultation, will be based on all the previous relevant work and consultations that have been undertaken in looking at the future of the town, especially the 'Big Planning Event' and 'Peoples Report' published in 2012.
- 2.7 The Town Council will then develop policies which will deliver the vision and objectives in line with community aspirations identified through the consultation process. The draft Neighbourhood Plan will then go out to a further period of consultation (under Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations) to obtain further feedback from the community.
- 2.8 Throughout the production of the Neighbourhood Plan, in order to achieve sustainable development and meet the basic conditions of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) will be carried out. This will test the objectives and policies of the emerging plan.
- 2.9 Using consultation responses and evidence (including the Sustainability Appraisal), a final draft of the Neighbourhood Plan will be produced. The Plan will then need to go through the following process:
- i) to ensure the Neighbourhood Plan complies with the statutory regulations it will need to be validated and consulted upon under Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations by LDC.
 - ii) the Neighbourhood Plan will be examined by an independent examiner. The exact way in which this is done will depend on the size and complexity of the Neighbourhood Plan, but could range from written representations to public hearings.
 - iii) if passed by the independent examiner, a local referendum will be held. Those that live within the area designation will be entitled to vote unless the referendum area is extended by the examiner. For the final Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted it will need to receive a simple majority at the referendum.

¹ Newhaven Port MasterPlan 2012

3.0 Broad Consultation Framework

- 3.1 Extensive work and consultation has previously taken place on examining the potential future for Newhaven including seeking the community's views and aspirations (a list of these is available in the document 'A Profile of Newhaven'). The Town Council intend to build on these previous consultations, particularly in regard to the 'Big Planning Event' and resultant 'Peoples Report' which gave a summary of the community's views at the time.
- 3.2 For clarity of this consultation framework, there are a number of consultation approaches that are intended to be used in the production of the Neighbourhood Plan and their role, membership and method is set out in Table 1:
- 3.3 The process has also been designed to facilitate the involvement of as many local residents and businesses as possible, particularly with regard to the areas in which they live and work. To facilitate this three principle approaches will be adopted:
- i) Direct consultation with interested stakeholder groups and individuals – primarily in relation to specific topic themes (see section 5); and
 - ii) Direct consultation with residents in various areas of the town – covering both general and related localised proposals (see section 6).
 - iii) A questionnaire delivered to all households within the town with the Town Council's "Newhaven Matters" newsletter.
- 3.5 Consultations will also take place with established partnership groups on the themes in which they have an interest. These will include:
- i) Newhaven Steering Network - Open Spaces Group
 - ii) Newhaven Strategic Network - Tourism Group
- 3.6 In addition the Town Council will also consult with appropriate statutory bodies and key stakeholder organisations. The Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Neighbourhood Plan will involve consultation with the Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage.

4.0 Related Consultations

- 4.1 As part of the consultation exercise views will also be sought on the possible use of Section 106 money set aside for mitigation measures in respect of the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF). The County Council has now completed an extensive planting programme to mitigate the landscape impact of the ERF and under the terms of the Section 106 Agreement is seeking the views of the local community as to how the residual money may be spent. This element will form an integral part of the Town Council's consultation on the open space requirements and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan and its potential opportunity to contribute to meeting the shortfall of recreation facilities for the town.
- 4.2 Lewes District Council is also consulting on part two of its Core Strategy and particularly revised housing requirements. Presentations on this will be part of the consultation process of the Neighbourhood Plan. The final Neighbourhood Plan will have to indicate how this housing requirement is met and the opportunities to achieve this will again be an integral part of the consultations under the Housing theme (see Section 5).

**Table One: Consultation Framework Key Elements
Main Roles, Membership and consultation method**

Group and Role	Membership	Method
<p>Newhaven Town Council</p> <p>To formally direct, approve and adopt the preparation, policies and proposals of the Neighbourhood Plan for Newhaven and the community consultation process with its residents and key stakeholders.</p>	<p>Town Councillors</p>	<p>Formal process through full Town Council meetings schedule, with extraordinary meetings called as necessary.</p>
<p>Steering Group</p> <p>To oversee the preparation, presentation and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan to facilitate the establishment, in the long term, of a balanced, sustainable community with the appropriate facilities, services and infrastructure within a quality environment accessible to all.</p>	<p>Town Councillors nominated by full Council</p>	<p>Regular programme of daytime meetings with officers and stakeholders as appropriate.</p>
<p>Focus Groups</p> <p>To assist the Town Council in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan by advising and responding to consultations on various proposed broad aspects and policies of the neighbourhood Plan, to gauge broad direction and community requirements and aspirations.</p>	<p>By invitation to key stakeholders, relevant community representatives and members of the Citizens Panel.</p>	<p>Written requests, individual meetings, presentations and group “sounding board” sessions.</p>
<p>Citizens Panel</p> <p>To assist the Town Council in the preparation of the Neighbourhood plan by contributing views and responding to consultations on policies and local area based aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Individuals (living or working within the town) who have expressed interest in all or particular aspects of the Neighbourhood Plan.</p>	<p>Written requests, presentations and area meetings.</p>
<p>Lewes District Council</p> <p>To assist the Town Council in the preparation and adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan by advising and responding to consultations on every aspect and policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and required supporting documentation and processes.</p>	<p>Relevant officers as appropriate</p>	<p>Written requests and individual meetings.</p>

5.0 Topic Themes

5.1 The following topic themes have been identified:

- i) Facilities and Services – to include shopping, education and health;
- ii) Housing – to include detail of how the town can meet the required allocations set by the LDC Core Strategy;
- iii) Environment and Open Spaces – to include detail of how the town will meet the existing shortfall of facilities and provide for those needed for the new development as well as protection and enhancement of the built environment;
- iv) Transport and Access – to include the gateway aspects, public transport and new transport interchange, parking facilities and controls, footpath and cycleway access within the town and to open spaces and long distance routes;
- v) Employment and Tourism – to include details of retaining employment areas and facilities within the plan area for visitors.

5.2 These themes will be the focus for the discussions and consultation with the Focus Groups, although they will also be considered at Area Meetings (see section 7). Focus Groups will be generated through invitations to local groups and organisations that cover and/or are stakeholders in the subject areas such as business, conservation, retail, children's services etc. These groups and stakeholders will be informed of the various themed meetings and those members of the Citizens Panel that have expressed an interest in a specific topic will also be informed.

6.0 Areas

7.1 The different discrete areas of the town which have been identified are:

- i) Coast and Countryside
- ii) Denton and Mount Pleasant
- iii) Avis Way and New Road Employment Area
- iv) Eastside
- v) Denton Island
- vi) Town Centre
- vii) The Valley
- viii) Meeching and Harbour Heights

6.2 These have been drawn up to group together areas with similar characteristics and likely concerns, in order to most efficiently engage with the community. It is recognised that particularly in Eastside, Meeching and Harbour Heights, there are many diverse areas, but it is considered that these form appropriate community groupings for the purposes of the consultation exercise.

- 6.3 Separate open public open meetings will be sought in respect of each area, although matters relating to the countryside and coast will be considered at each meeting and meetings relating to a) Avis Way, New Road and East side and b) the Town Centre and Denton Island will be considered together due to the similar character and issues that each display. In the case of the larger populated area of Meeching and Harbour Heights two meetings will be held. Each meeting will be preceded by wide advertising within the town and specific invitation to members of the Citizens Panel resident in that area. These meetings will generally be held in the evenings to more readily enable local residents to attend.
- 6.4 The format of the meetings will generally take the form of a broad presentation on the plan preparation process, the restrictions under which the Neighbourhood Plan is being prepared and then an explanation of the broad vision for the town followed by the more detailed vision, issues and proposals proposed for each area.
- 6.5 Primarily the aim of the meetings will be to encourage public participation but will also aim to:
- i) Increase awareness and understanding of the plans preparation process, scope and restrictions;
 - ii) Identify issues of concern to local residents;
 - iii) Explore solutions and opportunities to these issues and the wider needs of the town;
 - iv) Answer questions
- 6.6 The meetings will include various methods of information capture to facilitate maximum involvement and interest.
- 6.7 Specific separate methods will also be employed to engage with hard to reach groups. The Town Council wishes to ensure that the views are sought from as wide a spectrum of stakeholders groups and interests as possible.

7.0 Consultation Involvement and Updates

- 7.1 A key part of the consultation process will be to ensure that the local community knows when and how it can contribute to the Neighbourhood Plan preparation. This will be achieved primarily through regular updates on the Town Council's website, notice boards and via its newsletter 'Newhaven Matters', which is circulated to every household in the town every quarter.
- 7.2 The initial broad sequence of involvement, prior to the formal Regulation 14 consultations (see paragraph 2.7) will be through:
- Initial launch of the Neighbourhood Plans preparation with the re-launch and invitation to join the Citizens Panel – as part of Annual Fish Festival
 - Citizens Panel support meeting
 - Public Engagement Meetings – in the three main areas of the town
 - Questionnaire to all households
 - Area meetings
 - Focus meetings