

Newhaven Neighbourhood Plan



Topic Paper 1 Introduction and Background Information

June 2014



Introduction

Newhaven Town Council are preparing a Neighbourhood Plan for the town and are consulting with the community, so that they can make their views known on how they would like to see Newhaven grow and change in the future, and what they would like to keep and protect. The framework for this consultation process is set out in the “Newhaven to 2030 Consultation Strategy”.

The Town Council took the first steps a while ago with the Big Planning Event in 2012 and the resulting “People’s Report” which has been used, along with the “A Profile of Newhaven”, to prepare this and the other Topic Papers. You can view these and all the other documents related to the Neighbourhood Plan, on the Town Council’s website www.newhaventowncouncil.gov.uk, or you can call in at the Town Council offices at 18 Fort Road, or at the library in the town centre.

To aid the consultation process and provide a focus for discussion, the Town Council have put together a number of Topic Papers that cover a range of themes considered relevant for the town.

This Topic Paper 1 – Introduction and Background, sets out the general background as to what a Neighbourhood Plan is, the process for its preparation and the progress the Town Council has made to date.

The full range of Topic Papers are as follows:

Topic Paper 1. Introduction and Background

Topic Paper 2. Vision and Objectives

Topic Paper 3. Housing

Topic Paper 4. Facilities and Services

Topic Paper 5. Environment and Open Space

Topic Paper 6. Employment and Tourism

Topic Paper 7. Transport and Access

What are Neighbourhood Plans?

A Neighbourhood Plan is a community led document which guides future development, regeneration and improvements of an area. It focuses on the use of land so can contain proposals and planning policies for improving the area or providing facilities, or it can allocate land for specific kinds of development.

The legal framework for producing Neighbourhood Plans was introduced in the Localism Act 2011, so it is a relatively new process. Many communities are taking on the challenge of planning for their local area, in the belief that as local people, they know what is good about the area in which they live, what they want to protect and what they want to make better!

In addition, with a Neighbourhood Plan in place, it means that local communities are able to receive a larger proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (25% rather than 15%) which comes from new development. The Town Council will therefore have more money to provide better facilities and infrastructure for new development and the existing community.

Once adopted, the Neighbourhood Plan becomes part of the statutory local planning framework and will be used by Lewes District Council to determine planning applications but there are certain rules that need to be followed when producing a Neighbourhood Plan and certain constraints on what it can say.

The Neighbourhood Plan must also have appropriate regard to National policy and be compatible with EU obligations. Recent Planning Practice Guidance (2014) sets out the role and procedure of Neighbourhood Plans.

The Town Council also needs to make sure that the Neighbourhood Plan is in general conformity with planning policy at the District Council level and not promote less development than the District Council has planned in the local area.

In the case of Newhaven this means that it will have to plan for a minimum of 830 new homes in addition to the 609 (net) dwellings already committed through existing planning permissions (see Topic Paper 3 – Housing).

The Neighbourhood Plan will also need to have regard to the emerging planning policy from the South Downs National Park Authority, as part of the Neighbourhood Plan area falls within the Park. By contrast the area of the town controlled by the port authority (Newhaven Port and Properties) has been excluded from the Neighbourhood Plan as it is subject to different planning controls.

What community issues Neighbourhood Plans cannot solve

During consultation there are likely to be a number of local issues raised, that will not be able to be dealt with by the 'planning' element of the Neighbourhood Plan. The following examples are things that the Neighbourhood Plan cannot directly solve:

- Improving road surfaces
- Removal of litter
- Grass cutting, bin collection
- Provide more school, doctor and dentist places on the respective lists

However if such local issues are brought to our attention, we will keep a record so that the service providers can be informed of problem areas and we can press for the things that the local community needs.

How is a Neighbourhood Plan Prepared?

The process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan is divided into a number of regulated stages and the table below sets out the timetable for producing the plan that the Town Council is working to. This includes the next steps and the key stages for community involvement in the Plans preparation.

Once completed, the Plan will be subject to an examination to make sure the proper legal process has been followed. If the examiner is confident that the Neighbourhood Planning process has been followed correctly, the community will then have the opportunity to vote at a local referendum on adopting the Neighbourhood Plan so that it can be used to determine

planning applications submitted to the District Council. If more than 50% of local people who vote at the referendum say “yes” to the Neighbourhood Plan, it will come into force.

As you can see, producing a Neighbourhood Plan is not for the faint hearted but the Town Council consider it worth it, so that the local people of Newhaven can have a proper say on how they would like to see their town develop and change over the next 15 years.

Stages of Preparing a Neighbourhood Plan

Stages	Dates
1) Start producing the Neighbourhood Plan and seek designation of the Neighbourhood Plan area.	Designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area July 2013 by Lewes District Council
2) Gather evidence and produce ‘A Profile of Newhaven’	January – May 2014 (Document published June 2014)
3) Develop the vision and objectives and carry out a ‘call for sites’.	February – May 2014 Call for sites carried out 17 th May 2014 till 2 nd June 2014
4) Consult with the community and stakeholders on the vision and objectives and preference of sites for development.	July 2014
5) Further develop the vision and objectives and produce policies from community feedback.	August 2014 – January 2015
6) Consult with the community and stakeholders on the draft Neighbourhood Plan (regulation 14 consultation)	January – February 2015
7) Submit Neighbourhood Plan to Lewes District Council to ensure conformity (Lewes District Council carry out statutory consultation under regulation 16).	April – May 2015
8) Neighbourhood Plan is examined by an independent examiner.	July 2015
9) Local Community within the Neighbourhood Plan area vote on plan at a local referendum	September 2015

The Town Council is currently at Stage 4. There will be other opportunities for local people to have their say and additional consultation carried out at Stage 6 (see how to get involved below).

The Newhaven Context and Challenges – A Profile of Newhaven

The Town Council has already sought the views of the local community on its aspirations and priorities as to how it would like to see the town develop in the future. The result of this Big Planning Event was the preparation of the “Peoples Report 2012” which summarised these views and informed the Town Council’s representations on major planning applications at the time and provided a starting point for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Town Council has now collated a variety of statistical information on Newhaven, to help understand what makes the town ‘tick’. Information has been collected on a range of subjects such as; population and employment statistics, education opportunities, availability of recreation facilities and availability of services, anything in fact that impacts on the local community.

The information has been obtained from a variety of sources including the 2011 Census and has been recorded in a separate document titled ‘**A Profile of Newhaven**’. By recording the characteristics of the town and combining these with the views expressed by the local community in the “Peoples Report”, the Town Council has been able to identify a number of key emerging issues, which the Neighbourhood Plan can focus on and seek to improve upon.

However, the Town Council would like to hear from you if you think we have missed any important information that should be recorded in the ‘Profile of Newhaven’ and most importantly if there are any key issues that you feel have not consequently been identified. Details on where to view the document and how to let us know your views, are set out at the end of this Topic Paper.

Sustainability Appraisal – Scoping Report and Framework

As well as developing the Neighbourhood Plan to reflect the views of the community, the Town Council will also need to take account of economic, social and environmental effects of the Plan in accordance with national and European legislation. This is done by a formal process called Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment. It is a process for understanding whether proposals and policies promote sustainable development and for seeking the most sustainable outcomes.

To do this the Town Council has produced a “Scoping Report and Framework” to enable emerging policies to be appraised against a set of sustainability objectives, and these are also available on the Town Council’s website.

Similarly, existing social, economic and environmental indicators such as information on population, housing need and recreation space will be taken from the ‘Profile of Newhaven’ to enable the Town Council to identify and monitor the impact of the Neighbourhood Plan.

How to get involved

Local communities **really do** have power to shape the places in which they live. As the Neighbourhood Plan will be a community led document, your views and support are **really**

important to the Town Council and are essential, if we are to deliver a Plan that truly reflects the needs and aspirations of those that live and work in the town.

There are a number of ways that you can make your views known and the community can get involved.

- You can **complete the questionnaire** that will be delivered to each household in the town and return it to the Town Council. The questionnaire will also be available from the Town Council offices at 18 Fort Road, or can be posted to you, simply phone 01273 516100, email admin@newhaventowncouncil.gov.uk, or download from the Town Council's website www.newhaventowncouncil.gov.uk; **We would be grateful if you would submit your comments in the questionnaire by Friday 1st August**
- Comment on the **Profile of Newhaven** which is available to read on line at the address above or is available to view at the Town Council's offices or the local library.
- You can **sign up to the Citizens Panel**, which will be used to continue with this and the other stages of the Neighbourhood Plan's consultation and other plans of the Town Council.
A "Citizens Panel Membership Form"* is available from the Town Council offices in Fort Road, can be posted to you simply phone 01273 516100, or are available to download from the Town Council's website www.newhaventowncouncil.gov.uk;
- You, or your group/organisation, can **be involved in one or more of the Focus Groups*** that are being established to look at the topics covered in the Neighbourhood Plan in more detail;
- You can **attend one of the exhibitions** below, which have been organised to provide information and opportunities to discuss the Neighbourhood Plan and how it might affect the community where you live;

Exhibition dates

8th July at Meeching Hall, Fort Road, 10am – 3pm

8th July at Lewes Road Hut, 5pm – 8pm

15th July at Denton and Mount Pleasant Social Centre, 10am – 2pm



