

Approaches to writing a consultation statement

Putting the pieces together



When submitting your neighbourhood plan to your local planning authority, the [legislation](#) requires you to submit a number of other documents to accompany it. One of these is known as a [consultation statement](#).

Your consultation statement must include:

- details of the people and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood plan
- an explanation of how they were consulted
- a summary of the main issues and concerns raised by the people consulted
- a description of how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood plan

There is no set structure for a consultation statement. This document provides a structure that is commonly used by other groups and that you may wish to use.

1. Introduction

You may wish to begin by setting out why the statement has been prepared by referring to the relevant legislation; this is Regulation 15(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

Thame Neighbourhood Plan included the following:

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

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

Consultation Statement [Thame Neighbourhood Plan 2012](#)



2. Set out your aims when consulting on your neighbourhood plan

You may wish to summarise your overarching approach to consultation and what you sought to achieve. For example, how you intended to involve and engage with the wider community and the methods you would adopt to capture their views.

Your approach may have been formalised in a community engagement strategy.

The aims of the Kirdford Neighbourhood Plan consultation process were:

- To involve as much of the community as possible throughout all consultation stages of Plan development so that the Plan was informed by the views of local people and other stakeholders from the start of the Neighbourhood Planning process;
- To ensure that consultation events took place at critical points in the process where decisions needed to be taken;
- To engage with as wide a range of people as possible, using a variety of approaches and communication and consultation techniques; and
- To ensure that results of consultation were fed back to local people and available to read (in both hard copy and via the Steering Group's website) as soon as possible after the consultation events.

[Consultation Statement](#), Kirdford Neighbourhood Plan 2013

3. Provide the background to your consultation on the neighbourhood plan

Briefly explain why you decided to produce a neighbourhood plan. You could summarise how you initially consulted with the community and publicised your intention to develop a neighbourhood plan. This may include reference to existing documents and associated consultation that assisted in this process, such as, a [Parish Plan](#) or a [Village Design Statement](#).

It is helpful to provide a short summary statement on each stage of consultation.



Consultation was undertaken by Thame Town Council in partnership with its consultants, Tibbalds Planning & Urban Design and Jeff Bishop of BDOR.

Consultation events took place at the following stages in the neighbourhood planning process:

- an initial consultation weekend in October 2011 at the very start of the process;
- a second consultation weekend in November 2011 around objectives and initial approaches;
- option development and testing from February to April 2012;
- consultation on the preferred option in between 28th May and 22nd June 2012; and
- the statutory consultation stage in accordance with Regulation 14 from 21st August to 3rd October 2012.

[Thame Neighbourhood Plan](#) 2012

Alternatively you may wish to present this information in the form of a time-table as Cuckfield Parish Council chose to do in their [consultation statement](#) 2014.



| Date | Activity |
|--|--|
| 15th February- 29th March 2013. | Draft plan issued for 6 weeks public consultation. |
| | Static display and information area in Queens Hall public area |
| | Communication; Mid Sussex Times and Cuckfield Life article, Parish magazine, Posters, Web Site, Facebook, Twitter, email to registered users on web site. |
| | Meeting with Manor drive residents to discuss allocations and understand their comments and feedback. |
| Wednesday 27th February- Saturday 2nd March 2013 | Two public days open consultations at Queens Hall. |
| 2 nd March- June 5 th 2013 | Review of Consultee response and feedback from public sessions Edits and revisions made to Plan and subject to review by Neighbourhood Plan team at Monthly meetings in March, April, May, June.(Minutes available) |
| June 6 th 2013 | Proposed Submission Neighbourhood Plan and supporting evidence recommended for adoption by Parish Planning committee Council. |
| June 13 th 2013 | Proposed Submission plan and Evidence adopted by full Parish Council. |
| July 23 rd 2013 | Submitted to MSDC with Basic Conditions Statement, Map of Plan area, Sustainability Assessment and Statement of Consultation. |



4. List all those that you consulted

Your consultation statement has to include details of the people and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood plan. It can be helpful to list these in a separate section of your consultation statement.

This could be separated into:

- the [consultation bodies](#)
- other local groups and organisations
- other individuals

5. Outline the different stages of your consultation

You may wish to summarise each stage of your consultation, from deciding on the extent of your neighbourhood area all the way through to pre-submission consultation and publicity, and explain who you consulted, when and how.

Here is a list of different consultation stages that you and your group may have gone through:

- Deciding on the **extent of your neighbourhood area** and (if appropriate) **the make up of your neighbourhood forum**.
 - When you decided to start work on a neighbourhood plan you may have publicised your intentions and asked for views on what should (or should not) be included in the neighbourhood area. This information may have been included as part of your statement in support of your application for [your neighbourhood area to be designated](#).
 - In areas not covered (either in part or in whole) by a town or parish council a neighbourhood forum must be formed to lead the neighbourhood plan process. If this applies to you then your consultation statement can include details of how you involved the community in this process. [Further information is available within How to set up a neighbourhood forum](#).
- **Developing your vision and objectives**. The wider community should be involved in developing the vision for your plan and its objectives (see [How to develop a vision and objectives](#)).

You may have also re-consulted your wider community to check that you reflected their views, hopes and aspirations for the plan. Details of both these activities can be recorded in your consultation statement.

- **Consulting on the issues and options**. As your neighbourhood plan developed you may have identified a number of alternative options for how your plan could address the issues that you want to address in your area. You may have had to make choices or prioritise what



your plan would try to achieve. For example, you may have had to make choices about the specific sites that your plan allocates for development or you may have looked at different ways of identifying the characteristics of your area that make it distinctive.

- **Pre-submission consultation and publicity.** The legislation requires that before you submit your neighbourhood plan to your local planning authority you publicise your plan to those who live, work and carry out business within the neighbourhood area and invite representations (comments). As part of this pre-submission consultation and publicity you must also consult any of the [consultation bodies](#) whose interest you consider may be affected by the draft neighbourhood plan.

6. Summarise the main issues and concerns raised during the consultation.

You need to summarise the main issues and concerns raised during the consultation and, where relevant, how you addressed these in your proposed neighbourhood plan.

You may wish to summarise this information by policy area as Tattenhall Parish Council did in their [Consultation Statement](#) 2014.



| Policy area | Summary of the key issues / concerns | How the issues have been addressed |
|--|---|--|
| Housing growth – homes to meet the needs of local people | <p>Any new development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect the current village character • Add value and vitality to the community • Add housing choice and meet local needs • Comply with Village Design Statement • Include 35% affordable homes | <p>The housing policies that have been drafted include the following (among others) ensuring the issues raised are addressed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development should be of proportionate and appropriate scale. Housing growth is supported which is in keeping with the village, so that Tattenhall meets local housing need and responds positively to national requirements for the supply of new homes but retains its village character. • Delivery of affordable housing to meet local need – this should include a range of housing opportunities, including an ideal 35% of all housing being affordable. • Securing the highest quality design. |
| Local character | <p>Any new development should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match the grain and quality of the Character Zones • Not to spoil the views into and out of the Village and Parish • Enhance the Character Zones • Utilise brownfield sites as a priority • Be at a measured pace to enable infrastructure expansion | <p>Policies developed under 'local character' proposed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a scale and pace compatible with the grain of the village over the plan period to see a steady and comfortable growth. • Utilise previously developed land and buildings where possible to bring them back into economic use. • Early ratification of the revised Conservation Area Appraisal document • Full and thorough use of the VDS by developers and this to be clearly |

7. Appendices

Additional information that would be unhelpful to the flow of the main text or might mean that the consultation statement is repetitive could be included as appendices. The relevant appendices should be cross-referenced from the text.

Relevant information you may wish to include in an appendix could include:

- copies of questionnaires, survey and engagement techniques
- copies of leaflets
- copies of newspaper cuttings, press coverage of the plan



- details of all comments received and how they have been addressed
- photographs of engagement events
- list of the consultation bodies you engaged with
- minutes from meetings at which you discussed consultation, consultation responses and amendments to be made to the plan.

8. Conclusions

Your consultation statement is your opportunity to explain and demonstrate how engagement with your community and others has shaped the development of your neighbourhood plan. There is no set structure for the consultation statement. We recommend that it is set out in a logical and concise manner; this document provides one approach that can achieve this.

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