**Yarcombe and Marsh Parish Neighbourhood Plan**

**Consultation, Engagement and Communication Plan**

**Introduction**

Yarcombe and Marsh Parish is developing a Neighbourhood Plan for its area. This is a new type of plan which allows the local community to set out land use planning policies and a strategy for how the area should change (or not) in the future. When the Plan is formally agreed (or ‘made’), having gone through thorough consultation and independent scrutiny, it will become a statutory development plan and therefore have considerable ‘weight’ in the decision making process. The Neighbourhood Plan must be in ‘conformity’ with the strategic planning policies set by the local planning authority in its Local Plan and accept the levels of housing growth (as a minimum) identified by that Local Plan.

The development of the Neighbourhood Plan is being driven by both the Parish Council and the local community: the people who live and work in the area. As we share a set of common issues with some neighbouring parishes, in addition to those specific to our parish, we are working together with a number of other parishes across the East Devon part of the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty so that we can produce plans which ‘align’ or are common to with each other.

As *the community’s plan*, it is essential that there is effective consultation, engagement and communication between those steering the development of the Plan and those living and working in the area, from the start of the process through to the end.

This document sets out the relationship between the development of the Neighbourhood Plan and consultation and engagement, identifying who, when and how people, organisations and other stakeholders will be consulted.

**Our Principles**

We have set out a number of principles which underpin our desire for balanced and effective consultation, engagement and communication. These are:

* To be **‘transparent’** and open in what we do
* To **listen** to our community
* To keep people **informed** using different methods of communication as appropriate
* To make sure that information is readily **accessible**
* To **reach as many people, groups, organisations and sections of the community as possible**, to invite them to get involved, keep them informed and raise awareness
* To be **proportionate** in the amount and type of consultation we do and avoid ‘consultation fatigue’
* To share and present information to a good quality, but which respects **value for money** and availability of resources
* Keep a **record of consultation and engagement** activity and results from those exercises

**Neighbourhood Area**

The area of the Parish being planned for excludes any ‘strategic allocations’ for development being planned for and delivered through the Local Plan by East Devon District Council. The neighbourhood area has been confirmed through an application to the local authority (which included public consultation on the proposed area)[[1]](#footnote-1).

The neighbourhood area being planned for through the Neighbourhood Plan is defined by our parish boundary[[2]](#footnote-2).

**Steering Group**

The Neighbourhood Plan for Yarcombe and Marsh is being developed by a Steering Group comprising members of the local community, Parish Councillors and the Parish Clerk. This Steering Group operates flexibly, meeting if and when necessary but also dealing with key outputs during the process via email.

Other key stakeholders will be invited to provide an advisory input into the Plan’s development. These will include officers of East Devon District Council (who can provide planning and other expertise held by the Council) and officers from the Blackdown Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. These invited stakeholders, if in attendance at Steering Group meetings, will not have voting rights or decision making responsibilities, which rest with the full members of the Steering Group in consultation with the local community. Terms of Reference have been developed for the Group and can be seen on the Parish Council website www.yarcombe.net.

The Neighbourhood Plan is the community’s plan. As a Steering Group we are continuing to seek residents within the Parish to get involved during key tasks or parts of the process or in a more central role and capacity either as part of the Steering Group or its task and topic groups. (If you are interested in getting involved, please contact us via the Parish Clerk, via email at yarcombe.clerk@yahoo.com or by phone on 01404 861648

**Timetable for Producing the Neighbourhood Plan**

The development of the Neighbourhood Plan has to go through a number of preparation stages that are required to ensure that a robust strategy with appropriate policies relating to land use is developed. The key stages of the Neighbourhood Plan are reproduced in fig.1.

The ‘project plan’ in fig. 1 sets out the sequential process to be followed and a provisional timetable. It is possible that timescales could be reduced should additional volunteers and resource be identified during the process. Conversely, the timetable may need to extend depending, for instance, on the breadth and complexity of the issues that the process identifies and our capacity to undertake the required work. Our timetable will be kept under review and adjusted as necessary in the light of experience and progress.

**Figure 1 – Key Stages for the Development of the Neighbourhood Plan**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **NP Project Plan** | **2014** | **2015** |
| **Apr-Jun** | **Jul-Sep** | **Oct-Dec** | **Jan-Mar** | **Apr-Jun** |
| Getting Started |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Identify Issues and Opportunities |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Vision and Objectives |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Generate Options |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prepare draft plan |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Consultation and submission of Plan |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Independent Examination |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Referendum and Adoption |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**How we will Consult and Communicate Information**

We will consult and communicate with our community (both residents and businesses) through a variety of methods as appropriate. These will include the following:

* articles in the Parish newsletter delivered to most households in the Parish
* consultation events, exhibitions, meetings, surgeries and workshops
* face-to-face meetings with and presentations to organisations, groups and other stakeholders
* representation at existing community events
* fliers and bulletins on Parish public notice-boards
* our village website www.yarcombe.net
* press releases and articles in the local press
* by post if necessary

We are also prepared to come and talk to community groups and organisations at their meetings about the Neighbourhood Plan on request.

**Who we will Consult**

The list of those who we wish to consult is extensive and will not be restricted. Our initial list of consultees is set out in Appendix 1. It includes both those with a local and those with a more strategic interest or role in the parish. This list is not intended to be finite and other stakeholders and consultees will be added during the development of the Plan. We will be contacting these ‘stakeholders’ to inform them of what we are doing and ask for their thoughts on the key issues they see for the parish as relevant to them.

An example of a letter or email we will send to specific local organisations, clubs and societies and more ‘strategic’ agencies and bodies is attached as Appendix 2.

Individuals are not identified in this list, but where possible, individual contact officers and representatives of stakeholder organisations will be contacted rather than using generic contact details. When we are undertaking formal consultation on the submission draft of the Plan we will notify all statutory consultees on the Government’s regulations at the time of submission, although many of those are already included in Appendix 1.

Consultees will initially be notified in writing that we have commenced the process of developing our Neighbourhood Plan and that we will contact them again during the process. Appendix 1 will be maintained as a checklist to help ensure that we have consulted and communicated as widely as possible.

Our consultation list will be kept under review and updated periodically. If your organisation or group is not on the list above and would like to be, please contact the Parish Council Clerk via email at yarcombe.clerk@yahoo.com or by phone on 01404 861648

**When we will Consult (key periods of consultation)**

We will use an ‘open door’ principle and approach to consultation and engagement with the local community in developing the Neighbourhood Plan. We will encourage and welcome comment and opinion throughout the plan development process.

There are however several key points of consultation and community engagement which are highlighted on the key milestones diagram. These are set out as we anticipate in accordance with the overall project plan. However, as the plan develops, there could be changes to some of the timings as explained above.

**Figure 2 - Key Points of Consultation and Engagement**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | **2014** | **2015** |
| **Apr-Jun** | **Jul-Sep** | **Oct-Dec** | **Jan-Mar** | **Apr-Jun** |
| Getting Started |  |  | Launch Events |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Identify Issues and Opportunities | Surveys |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Vision and Objectives |  | Themes |  |  |  | Priorities |  |  |  |
| Generate Options |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Prepare draft plan |  |  |  |  |  |  | Draft Plan |  |  |
| Consultation and Submission of Plan |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Independent Examination |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Referendum and Adoption |  |  |  |  | Approval |  |  |

***Neighbourhood Area Designation***

What: This is a formal part of the process. The ‘Neighbourhood Area’ must be confirmed by the local planning authority following an application by the Parish Council to have the ‘right’ to develop a Neighbourhood Plan in its area. A 6 week consultation period follows the application during which responses of support, comment or objection to the area proposed can be submitted. The local authority has to have ‘sound planning reasons’ to amend the area applied for.

When: June2014

***Launch Publicity***

What: We will publicise the start of the neighbourhood planning process. Our purpose is to:

* show the plan-making timetable and explain the process in simple form
* confirm that the planning process is to be community-owned and led
* explain the role of the Steering Group and who is on it and why
* emphasise the commitment to consult at key stages in the process
* give details of how to find out information, keep in touch with progress and make contact
* make a call for volunteers

Method: We will use the widest variety of mediums and outlets to get the message out, that this is a plan for the whole community, which should involve the whole community.

When: June and July 2014

***Launch Event***

What: We will ‘launch’ the neighbourhood plan process by holding an exhibition at which we will:

* explain the neighbourhood planning process and progress so far
* give local people an opportunity to ask questions
* encourage people to tell us what they think are the key issues and opportunities that neighbourhood planning should focus on
* encourage people to get involved and come and help

Method: Exhibition boards will be prepared and put on display in an accessible location within the parish. The exhibition will be ‘manned’ at all times by someone who can provide visitors with information and explanation.

When: 12th & 26th July 2014

***Community Survey***

What: We will issue a community questionnaire which will:

* provide feedback from the work we have done on understanding the key issues and opportunities for the area (i.e. help to provide some context)
* ask opinion about the local issues which have come to light so far during the process
* ask questions to help fill gaps in our understanding of key local issues and problems

Method: A questionnaire will be delivered to every household in the Parish by post and can be returned by post, email, online or dropped off at a local collection point.

When: July 2014

***Vision and Objectives Consultation***

What: We will hold a consultation which draws together all that we have found out from gathering evidence and other consultations and set out the key issues presented to us to date.

* To share the response from consultations and surveys to date
* To share the main findings and conclusions from the evidence base
* To test our conclusions on the bigger issues and main themes
* share a draft vision and objectives for the Portland Neighbourhood Plan
* To encourage and facilitate debate where it is need
* To carry out specific consultations with interest groups to fill in the gaps in our knowledge and understanding

Method: *This will be designed and detailed in due course to suit the purpose and situation and taking into account the effectiveness of previous consultation methods.*

When: September / October 2014

***Options Consultation / Event(s)***

What: Having determined the Vision and Objectives and confirmed the main themes for the Plan we will present options for the plan’s policies and proposals to the community to get views on which option is the most appropriate. This will be particularly important if the Plan deals with development issues and land allocations for things like housing. We will seek confirmation during this process of the community’s preferred option for the Plan.

Method: *This will be designed and detailed in due course to suit the purpose and situation and taking into account the effectiveness of previous consultation methods.* The options consultation may not be additional to that held for the Vision and Objectives if there are only a few options to consider and the plan does not propose to deal with development allocations.

When: December / January (if necessary)

***Pre-submission Consultation***

What: We will carry-out the formally required minimum 6 week consultation on the Plan that we wish to see examined prior to approval and referendum. This will be a chance to submit formal written ‘representations’ on the Plan and strategic and statutory consultees to the planning system will also be asked for their views. Following this, we will consider comments submitted and decide if they require changes to be made to the Plan as it proceeds to Examination by an independent Inspector.

Method:

When: to commence at a point between January and March 2015 depending on content and preceding process.

**Next Steps**

This Consultation and Engagement Plan will be kept under review during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. It will be supplemented during the development of the Neighbourhood Plan by details of consultations held and summaries of findings from those consultations, so that a statement of consultation and engagement undertaken can be submitted for Examination as part of the evidence behind the Neighbourhood Plan.

**Yarcombe and Marsh Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group 7th July 2014 (Version 1)**

**Appendix 1**

**List of Consultees**

This list is not an exhaustive list of those we will consult with and may be added to and updated during the process.

| **Local** |
| --- |
| All residents |
| Resident ‘groups’ or cohorts: |
| Elderly |
| People with disabilities |
| Young people and children |
| People with special needs  |
| Farmers |
| Registered social landlords/housing associations  |
| Schools  |
| Nurseries / pre-school  |
| Local businesses (retail, office, industrial)  |
| Neighbouring parish councils  |
| Blackdown Hills AONB |
| Village Hall committee |
| Church and Chapel |
| Tuesday Club |
| Maggie’s Men |
| Saturday Market |
| Land owners |
| NFU |
| Yarcombe Children’s fund |
| Political associations |
| British Legion |
| Handbells |
| Short mat bowls |
| Cricket club |
| Skittles league |
| Croquet club |
| Horticultural society |
| Craft Club |
| PCSO  |
| Local charities  |
| GP surgeries |
| Heritage groups |
| Young Farmers |
| Yarcombe Amenities club |
| Reading group |
|  |

| **Strategic** |
| --- |
| EDDC (Planning) |
| EDDC (Housing) |
| EDDC (Environmental Services) |
| DCC (Libraries) |
| Environment Agency |
| DCC (Social Services) |
| DCC (Public Transport) |
| DCC (Highways) |
| DCC Council (Education) |
| Natural England |
| Highways Agency |
| English Heritage |
| Canals and Rivers Trust |
| Home Builders’ Federation |
| Sport England |
| Police |
| NFU |
| Housing Associations / RSLs |
| Fire and Rescue |
| Ambulance Service |
| Homes and Communities Agency |
| National Housing Federation |
| Devon Wildlife Trust |
| RSPB |
| Ramblers’ Association |
| Network Rail |
| Transco (Gas) |
| Electricity service infrastructure provider  |
| Water service infrastructure provider |
| BT |
| Bus providers |
| Disability Network |
| Local Enterprise Partnership |
| Sustrans |
| Racial Equality Council |
| Faith and Beliefs Forum |
| Health and Wellbeing Board |
| Partnership NHS Trust |
| NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups |
| CAA / Airports |
| MoD / Military Base Commanders |
| Home Builders Federation |
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1. See the following link for further details <http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood_plans> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. A map of this boundary can be viewed via the following link <http://www.eastdevon.gov.uk/planning-neighbourhood_plans> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)