

# COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

## Introduction

**For a Neighbourhood Plan to reach its full potential in delivering sustainable development as part of the statutory planning framework, and have real local credibility, it must be prepared by the community that lives in, works in and uses the Neighbourhood**

*'Consultation and community engagement is a fundamental requirement of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, the process of plan making being almost as important as the plan itself'*

Jeremy Edge, Independent Examiner Tettenhall Neighbourhood Plan

*'The most important stage of community engagement is at the beginning. This should be undertaken before the plan's vision and aims are developed; the purpose is to identify key issues and themes and to inform the vision and aims'*

Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide, Locality 2012

*'...ongoing community engagement should be designed to provide information needed to develop the detail of the neighbourhood Plan...*

*Ongoing community engagement can include consultation on the draft vision and aims and also workshop events or discussions to examine specific issues/themes. This is an interactive process and should be flexible to respond to issues being raised. A useful mechanism to take this forward can be to set up working groups tasked with exploring a particular issue or idea in more depth'*

Neighbourhood Plans Roadmap Guide, Locality 2012

The Looe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has therefore prepared a strategy for engaging with and involving all sectors the community in the preparation and adoption of the Plan.

The Looe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group is conscious of the difference between community engagement and participation, and simple consultation. The intention is therefore to encourage an active dialogue with the community during the engagement stages, using a mix of approaches that will ensure that community understanding of issues is promoted, opinions and ideas are recorded effectively, and feedback to the community is ensured.

Community interest and engagement will also be promoted through the encouragement of active participation in the work of producing the NP.

The Looe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group will also ensure that in addition to the engagement of local residents from within the town, those that live outside the town boundary but work, shop or use services within the town are involved.

The engagement and participation process will also include measures to ensure that local commercial businesses, social enterprises, voluntary and community organisations and groups, schools, faith groups, official bodies and special interest groups are all involved.

Councillors will have an important role to play both in expressing the concerns of residents and interested parties and in the distribution of information to their community.

## Why we need an Engagement Strategy?

We need an Engagement Strategy because

- it explains the steps we intend to take from the start to the end of the process
- it describes the processes and methods that we will employ in community engagement
- it specifies how we will inform, communicate with and involve the community throughout the project.
- Effective community involvement is both best practice and a requirement of the regulations governing Neighbourhood Plans (see appendix 1)

The Engagement Strategy will follow these stages:

**Stage 1** - Awareness raising of the purpose and value of the Neighbourhood Plan process, how it works, what can or cannot be done through the process, and how to become involved

**Stage 2** - Community engagement in the analysis of local issues, creating the vision, and scoping of the Looe Neighbourhood Plan objectives and themes

**Stage 3** - Community engagement in the development of the policy and proposal options to be considered

**Stage 4** – Formal consultation on the draft plan.

**Stage 5** - Promotion of the final plan and awareness raising for the local referendum.

### The objectives of the strategy

- to make sure that we communicate with and engage with the entire Looe community so that we achieve a sound plan whose policies fully reflect the community's views and aspirations

- to make sure that the local community becomes more aware of how planning works and understands what can and cannot be done through the different parts of the planning system.
- to promote community interest and engagement through active participation in the work of producing a Neighbourhood Plan
- to encourage and include volunteers in taking part in working groups to collect and analyse information, investigating opportunities and working up ideas into creative new policy proposals.

To meet these objectives we will:

- ensure everyone can take part by overcoming barriers that some individuals may face
- be clear on what we are trying to achieve
- make engagement easy to understand
- analyse and evaluate all responses and views
- share engagement responses and views in a timely manner
- review the methods we have used and reflect on which elements worked well and where there are gaps and why
- analyse our engagement process and adapt it as necessary
- comply with the Data Protection Act when handling personal information

## Methodology

**As a fundamental principle we shall design our engagement and consultation to be fully embracing of the community of Looe.**

As a first step we will analyse the demographic, organisational and business make up of Looe using the 2011 Census and local knowledge. This will inform us of which of several methods of engagements is most

appropriate, and if there are any special requirements (language for example) (See Appendix 2).

A campaign combining the most appropriate forms of engagement will then be designed and implemented. We will ask ourselves the following questions before embarking on a chosen method:

- How would they prefer to respond?
- What information do they need before they can respond?
- Is something more than a simple exchange of information required?
- How will this information be recorded?
- What resources are needed and what resources do we have?
- How much time is needed and how much time do we have?

### **Evaluation**

Following each stage of engagement and consultation we shall evaluate the techniques used, events etc., to ensure that any learning points and possible improvements are recorded.

### **Who we will engage with and consult**

Based on the demographic assessment, the following broad strands of community will guide our work:

- Schoolchildren (aged 7-16)
- Young adults 16 -30
- General Public 30 – 65
- General Public 65+
- Commuters (people living in the community but working outside and vice versa)
- Housing estate representatives
- Community groups and societies
- People with caring responsibilities and young parents

- Single parent families
- People with physical needs
- People with learning needs
- People with long term activity restrictions (health etc.)
- Faith groups
- Business community (Town and surrounding area)
- Developers/landowners/agents
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- LGBTQ
- Migrant workers
- Voluntary bodies acting in the area
- Visitors/tourists
- Local amenity groups (e.g., representing environment / conservation / heritage concerns.)

### **Other bodies**

- Cornwall Council
- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England
- The Police
- Adjoining Towns and Parishes
- Highways Agency

### **When we will engage and consult**

Opportunities to be involved or comment will be offered at times that are most appropriate for the different strands in our community so as to achieve as wide a coverage of the general population as possible. Events will be timed to allow as wide as possible access whether working or taking into account public and school holidays.

### **How we will engage and consult**

- Self-completion questionnaires
- 'Drop-in' exhibition
- In depth interviews / face to face
- Stakeholder seminars
- Ward councillor contact
- Social Media – Facebook/Twitter

### **Where we will consult**

Opportunities to be involved or comment will be offered in locations and formats that are most appropriate to help reach the whole community, for example:

- Council Chamber/Offices
- Community centres
- Schools
- Churches
- Supermarket foyer
- Library/other public buildings
- On the street
- Community/festival events
- Clubs/society meeting rooms

All events will be held at venues that have good access for everybody, including people with disabilities.

### **IT and Social Media**

#### **Website**

Linked with the existing Town Council website will provide a standing resource of full and clear information about the Neighbourhood Plan

process, enhance opportunities to take part and be the repository of evidential material.

The key elements of the website will be:

#### **Explanation**

- An overview of what neighbourhood planning is about generally
- What Looe is doing about making Plan, how it has organised
- Who is currently on the Looe Neighbourhood Plan Team
- How they can find out more
- Publication of formal notices
- Links to other helpful sites

#### **Participation**

- Information as to how people can become involved to make comments or to actively volunteer support
- Notice and promotion of forthcoming events
- Preparatory information, guidance and materials for engagement events, survey events etc
- Ability to collect comments, do surveys etc (Survey Monkey)
- Library
- A library of all the background guidance documents
- Data recording local information, community and organisational views, statistical and policy analysis
- A record of completed work

#### **Accessibility**

- Users will include people with disabilities and learning difficulties, so easily accessible areas should be provided, with appropriate adjustments to type size, colours and language etc
- Use of colours/layout that are colour vision deficiency friendly.

#### **Media**

- Ability to download and open .pdf files with easy navigation back to website
- Short video clips of interviews, people making comments etc

### **Facebook**

Will be used primarily as a 'landing page' essentially to direct Facebook users to the website and enable sharing.

### **Twitter**

Will be used to make announcements, enable sharing and answer queries, but not to receive comments.

### **Analysis**

Analysis of engagement and consultation responses will be conducted in a way that looks at the depth and range of comments received. This will include a numerical analysis identifying key theme, gender and age group information given by respondents, related to the demographic make-up of the population, so that further targeted engagement activity can be carried out if necessary. The analysis of the comments received will aim to draw out any issues that qualify the respondents support for themes, the links between the themes that respondents perceive, and respondent's suggestions as to how particular themes might be tackled. Any non-land-use issues identified by respondents will also be analysed and reported to the Town Council.

### **Statistical Significance**

Given the adult population (16 and above) of 18,592, using a confidence level of 95% and a confidence interval of 4 points, the necessary sample size is 582. Increasing the confidence level to 99% would require a sample of 985. A good target to aim for in terms of questionnaire returns is therefore around 1000, although a number between that and 600 will still be statistically significant.

## **Our commitment to you**

### **Data protection**

When we deal with feedback we will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. Details will be held by Looe Town Council and will remain secure and confidential. Details will only be used for research purposes and will not be passed on to any third parties or used for marketing purposes in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. In all our dealings with the public, we are committed to following the Human Rights Act 1998.

### **Freedom of Information Act**

When we deal with feedback we will comply with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. We will publish a summary of the information gathered and detail how the results are being used to help shape Looe's Neighbourhood Plan.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We will comply with Equal Opportunity legislation. We recognise that the provision of equal opportunities in all our activities will benefit Looe. All members of the public will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against.

### **Health and Safety Act 1974**

We will ensure any Neighbourhood Planning events and activities take into consideration the health and safety of everyone involved. Risk assessment will be carried out as and when required.

### **Safeguarding**

We are committed to safeguarding the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and will ensure that appropriate safeguarding

measures are built into the design of events involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. Where necessary, DBS checks will be carried

out on anyone working directly with this section of our community.

### Community Engagement Action Plan

Who are we engaging with?	Methods to use for this group:	Where and when:	Method of feedback:	Comments
Schoolchildren (under 16)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Posters and announcements through schools, pre-schools, children centre</li> <li>2. 'Satchel Mail'</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Posters to schools re NP and drop In events(s) DATE</li> <li>• Leaflet on same for Satchel Mail DATE</li> </ul>	Questionnaire	
Young adults 17 - 24	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Door to Door Leaflet &amp; Questionnaire</li> <li>4. Posters</li> <li>5. Interactive website</li> <li>6. Facebook</li> <li>7. Twitter</li> <li>8. Drop-in stall at Supermarket and TC sites</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fathom published DATE</li> <li>• Posters published DATE</li> <li>• Website (see brief)</li> <li>• Facebook Page from DATE</li> <li>• Twitter from DATE</li> <li>• Drop in events DATES &amp; LOCATIONS</li> </ul>	Questionnaire (Physical and Online) Comments via Website form Post it notes at drop in.	
General Public 25 - 40	9. As above	As above	As above	
General Public 41 - 64	10. As above	As above	As above	
General Public 65 - 75	11. As above	As above	As above	
General Public 76+	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>12. Large print Leaflets</li> <li>13. Visit to care homes</li> </ol>	LP Leaflets available on request Notify care homes with offer	As above Via discussion	
Commuters (people living in the community but	14. Workplace delivery of leaflets	Fathom to local employers. Leaflet re drop-in sessions	As above	

<b>Who are we engaging with?</b>	<b>Methods to use for this group:</b>	<b>Where and when:</b>	<b>Method of feedback:</b>	<b>Comments</b>
working outside and vice versa)	15. Railway station distribution of leaflets 16. Drivetime radio 17. Parish Magazines	handed out at station during commute period (7.30 to 8.30 AM and 5 to 6.30 PM)		
Adjacent Parish Councils	18. Letter 19. Leaflet 20. Community network presentation 21. Conference event	TBA		
Housing estate representatives	22. As above 23. Via Residents Associations	Event with RAs on request.		
People with caring responsibilities and young parents	24. As with young adults above, plus through contact organisations such as Health Visitors, preschools, support groups, Doctors Surgeries etc.)	Supply leaflets and posters to GPs, Health Visitors, preschools, support groups.		
Single parent families	25. As above	As above		
People with physical needs	26. As above	As above		
People with learning needs	27. As above	As above		
People with long term activity restrictions (health etc.)	28. As above	As above		



Who are we engaging with?	Methods to use for this group:	Where and when:	Method of feedback:	Comments
Faith groups	29. Leaflets, posters etc. delivered to faith group locations 30. Via Churches Together	Supply leaflets, posters.		
Business community (Town and surrounding area)	31. Letter 32. Leaflet 33. Business Breakfast 34. Individual meetings where appropriate	Business breakfast DATE		
Developers/landowners/agents	35. Letter 36. Individual meetings where appropriate	Letter DATE		
Black and minority ethnic groups (inc travellers and gypsies, migrant workers, etc.)	37. As with young adults above 38. Through networking groups where they exist. 39. Translation of leaflets.			
LGBTQ	40. As with young adults above, plus through contact organisations such as Cornwall L&G Christian Movement,			

Who are we engaging with?	Methods to use for this group:	Where and when:	Method of feedback:	Comments
	Cornwall Pride, LGBTQ Youth Cornwall etc			
Visitors/tourists	41. Leaflet			
Local amenity or social interest groups	42. Letter 43. Leaflet 44. Conference event 45. Individual meetings where appropriate			
Service providers and utilities	46. Letter 47. Leaflet			
Government Agencies	48. Letter 49. Leaflet			

### STAGE ONE AWARENESS RAISING SUMMARY

Records the initial scoping work.....

### STAGE TWO ENGAGEMENT PLAN SUMMARY day by day plan

## **Appendix 1**

### **OFFICIAL GUIDANCE AND STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**

Public engagement in a Neighbourhood Development Plan is advised in the National Planning Policy Framework, para 155 and 1833 , the Localism Act 2011 which amends the various planning Acts to incorporate Neighbourhood Development Plans into the statutory planning system and The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 20124 ('Regulations').

The Regulations require two Statements to accompany completed Neighbourhood Development Plans for submission to the Independent Examiner and subsequent Referendum. These are:

- Basic Conditions Statement and;
- Consultation Statement

The Basic Conditions Statement includes a requirement for compatibility with EU obligations, including human rights requirements. Therefore public engagement must be undertaken from the outset and recorded in a logical manner to form an audit trail. Specifically the Regulations state: -

“(2) In this regulation “consultation statement” means a document which—(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; and (d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.”

## **Appendix 2**

### **KEY DATA FROM 2011 CENSUS**

