

Communications and Engagement Strategy

Looe NDP Steering Group

June 2016



Looe Neighbourhood Plan

Looe Neighbourhood Development Plan

Communications and Engagement Strategy

INTRODUCTION

Involving the community is central to Neighbourhood planning as a matter of principle and also of law (See Appendix 1).

This strategy has been prepared by the Looe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Committee to help guide the process of engaging with the community and stakeholders to ensure that Looe has a robust and well-informed Neighbourhood Plan that has community ownership at its heart.

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 OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

Our objectives are

- 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.

BEING INCLUSIVE

It is imperative that engagement with the community is not a one-off event and it is vital that people continue to be involved in the whole process. To do this we will embrace five key principles of community engagement:

1. **INFORM:** provide balanced and objective information
2. **CONSULT:** actively seek community views, input and feedback
3. **INVOLVE:** work with the community so concerns and aspirations are understood
4. **COLLABORATE:** work with the community to identify solutions
5. **EMPOWER:** present the draft plan to the community for their approval

To help us fulfil this purpose we will:

- ensure everyone can take part by overcoming barriers that some individuals have
- 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

WHEN WE WILL ENGAGE AND CONSULT?

We will aim to set up public events at appropriate times of the year. We will attend meetings of target groups at times convenient to them. We will use various methods of engaging the public in places at a variety of times to achieve as wide a coverage of the general population as possible.

We will engage and consult at the following stages:

Stage 1 – Awareness raising and community engagement in the analysis of local issues, creating the vision, and scoping of the Looe Parish Neighbourhood Plan objectives and themes.

Stage 2 - Community engagement in the development of the policy and proposal options to be considered

Stage 3 – Formal consultation on the draft plan.

Stage 4 - Promotion of the final plan and awareness raising for the local referendum.

WHO WE WILL CONSULT?

- Schoolchildren (aged 7-16)
- Young people (aged 16 – 25)
- Working age people
- Pensioners
- Commuters (people living in the community but working outside)
- LGBTQ+ people and groups
- Community groups and societies
- Single parent families
- People with physical needs
- People with learning needs
- Faith groups
- People employed in the community
- Local businesses
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Families
- Migrant workers
- Voluntary bodies acting in the area

Official Bodies as required by Neighbourhood Planning Regulations and local bodies, including :

- Cornwall Council
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Natural England
- Devon & Cornwall Police
- Adjoining parishes
- Highways Agency
- Network Rail

WHAT DO WE KNOW OF THE COMMUNITY OF LOOE THAT SHOULD BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN OUR ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION STRATEGY?

We know from our assessment of local demographics (see <http://www.futurelooe.town/data/uploads/584.pdf>) that Looe is different from other places because it has:

- an ageing population with about 32% over 65 by 2018
- a declining population of younger people: the number of young people [15 to 34] fell by 10.4% between 2011 and 2018)
- A much higher proportion of white people than the national average, and fewer people of the black and multi-ethnic community
- A religious structure similar to the SW but with fewer minority beliefs than nationally
- A slightly higher proportion of people with limiting long term illness than the national average
- As many as 1300 people who are LGBTQ¹
- A slight preponderance of females over males in the population
- A lower proportion of lone parent households than typical.

From this it can be seen that there is a risk that some small communities could be hidden in the largely homogenous wider community. Therefore methods must be adopted that take account of the diversity of the whole community, so all members of the community can inform the Plan making process.

HOW WE WILL ENGAGE & CONSULT

Several methods of engagement will be used, taking account of the diversity of the whole community, in order to get the whole community involved. We will ask ourselves the following questions before embarking on a chosen method:

- What are we trying to find out?
- From whom is the information required?
- 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?

The methods will consist of:

¹No census data on sexual orientation and gender preference is available. The ONS Integrated Household Survey 2011 found 1.9% to be lesbian, gay or bisexual. However, Stonewall says that the UK Government estimate, used for policy making, that around 5% to 7% of the population is lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender or questioning (LGBTQ), is reasonable. This implies that between 250 and 365 of the usually resident population may describe themselves as LGBTQ.

- Self-completion questionnaires
- Summary leaflets explaining the process and how people can be involved.
- Drop-in Sessions to discuss the candidate issues to be covered in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (see Appendix 2).
- Summary leaflets describing the content of the pre-submission draft Neighbourhood Development Plan and how people can make representations.
- Drop-in Sessions to give more information and discuss the draft policies and proposals in the Neighbourhood Development Plan (see Appendix 3).
- Press advertising
- Town Councilors contact
- Letters to statutory consultees and local organisations
- Letters to representative organisations of groups such as LGBT+ group, the Polish and South Asian communities.
- Through a dedicated 'FutureLooe' website (see Appendix 3)
- By the use of Facebook and Twitter social media tools
- Community membership of the Steering Group, all meetings of which will be open to the public
- Special 'Visioning Events' at appropriate stages to analyze the data collected and gather a consensus of views, and agree the content of the NDP

WHERE WE WILL CONSULT?

We will use different venues to help reach the whole community, for example:

- The Guildhall Hall, Looe, and during other events held there
- At other community venues such as the Millpool Centre and Looe Community School
- On street at community/festival events such as the West Looe May Fayre and the Festival of the Sea
- By invitation to the meetings of the many local organisations active in Looe

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.

DATA QUALITY

Given the adult population (16 and above) of 18,592, using a confidence interval of 3 points, the necessary sample size is 600 to 1000 to give a confidence level of between 95% and 99%). 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.

Whenever possible quantitative questions will be employed, using ‘multiple choice’ of responses within a ‘Likert Scale’ to gain a sense of the strength of feeling for each response, but also allowing for qualitative responses to ensure that respondents are able to ‘speak their mind’.

DATA PROTECTION

When we deal with feedback we will comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. Any personal details submitted will be held by Looe Council and will remain secure and confidential. Personal 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.

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, in the Consultation Statement that will accompany the version of the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan that is submitted to Cornwall Council and later published by them.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

In all our dealings with the public, we are committed to following the Human Rights Act 1998 and 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. An Equalities Impact Assessment of the Neighbourhood Development Plan will be carried out and submitted to Cornwall Council alongside the Plan.

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.

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. Drop in Session Format

Drop-In Exhibition

- More details of NP purpose and process
- Encourages involvement, discussion and questionnaire completion
- Must 'tell a story' and have a logical flow through to questionnaire e.g. 'this is what it was like...this is like it is now....what does the future hold?' or 'This is the overall vision and strategy of the NDP, and these are the policies to deliver it'
- Text no less than 36-point font, verdana or other font, and colours that are friendly to visually impaired

Panels (Scoping)

- Introduction – What it's all about, what is a Neighbourhood Plan, why it's important to take part
- What is Sustainable Development? – in plain English
- How a Neighbourhood Plan fits in with the existing planning framework
- The CIC Plan etc - side panel on previous Looe plans
- Cornwall Local Plan Objectives for Looe
- Expectation management – its not about stopping development, not a panacea!
- About Looe – key local statistics and facts, side bars with comments from people on the town, diagrams, pictures etc
- The Spatial Angle – maps & pictures capturing the 'essential' history, character, neighbourhoods of the town
- The Key Themes – list of possible themes, more side bars with comments, pictures etc
- Ideas wall – space for visitors to write up their thoughts on key themes/objectives, and specific policies or projects they would like examined.
Thought bubbles as clues

Panels (Regulation 14 Drop In Sessions)

- Introduction – What it's all about, what is a Neighbourhood Plan, why it's important to take part
- What is the process, what stage are we at?
- How a Neighbourhood Plan fits in with the existing planning framework
- The vision and objectives of the draft NDP
- A panel for each NDP Objective/Theme
- Plenty of maps and photographs
- Invitation to visitors to talk to member of the team, to stay and complete their response form etc,
- Ideas wall – space for visitors to write up their thoughts on key themes/objectives, and specific policies or projects they would like examined.
Thought bubbles as clues

Layout is important

- Meet and Greet desk
- Circulation clockwise, along exhibition panels, returning to entrance
- Tables to sit at and chat, complete questionnaires in centre
- Leaflets and spare copies of the NDP at each table
- Ballot box like receptacle for Questionnaires/Response Forms
- Remember H&S – do risk assessment 5 minutes prior to opening and repeat hourly
- Keep a tally! Use the IIII system, broken down into hour long portions
- Supply of soft drinks, tea from flasks/boilers if possible, biscuits
- Staffing
 - 3 or more team members at all times
 - Remember Safeguarding – nobody alone with child or vulnerable adult
- Script – be proactive, every visitor should be engaged with:
 - Hello and welcome, what its all about, how the exhibition works, briefly summarise what panels say
 - Lead through, hand visitors post-its/pens etc, stand back but remain attentive
 - Lead through to table and questionnaire
 - Answer queries, judge if visitor unwilling (or unable) to write, do it for them, interpret what they say and check back

Mobile Stall and Mobile Exhibition Trailer – for use at networking sessions and at events.

- Must be able to be staffed or unstaffed, or as presentation kit
- Folding table with three panel display board assembly
- ‘Exhibition’ text to explain purpose of LNP, why community views sought, how to take part, type of information/views needed.
- Very visual in appearance, lots of colour, photos which included people, maps etc
- To include ‘interactive display’ flipchart, which can be used freestanding for smaller venues

Appendix 3. Website and Social Media Specification

Linked with the existing Town Council website the 'FutureLooe' 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.