

# Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan

## Communication and consultation strategy

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### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 The preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan gives those who live and work in Droitwich Spa the opportunity to shape the development and growth of the town. Effective community engagement is crucial to realise this and to ensure that the Plan is supported at the referendum stage.
- 1.2 This document has been prepared for the Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to set out a strategy to guide community engagement as the Plan is prepared.
- Section 2 sets out the **aim and objectives** for community engagement.
  - Section 3 identifies the various **methods** which will be used to communicate and consult.
  - Section 4 details **who** will be consulted.
  - Section 5 deals with **when** communication and consultation will take place, from ongoing information-giving throughout the process to specific engagement exercises.

### 2. Aim and objectives

- 2.1 The overall aim of the communications and consultation strategy is to ensure that in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan, to meet statutory requirements and in line with national planning guidance<sup>1</sup>, the community and other interested parties:
- Are kept fully informed of what is being proposed.
  - Can make their views known throughout the process.
  - Have opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the Neighbourhood Plan.
  - Are made aware of how their views have informed the draft Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2 This will be achieved by:
1. **Using a range of methods to engage and consult with relevant parties**, including online and printed media as well as face-to-face discussions, with the methods chosen for any given stage of consultation being relevant and appropriate.
  2. **Identifying relevant audiences**, including residents, groups in the community, stakeholder organisations, landowners, and businesses, as well as national and other bodies whose interests may be affected by plan proposals.
  3. **Undertaking specific consultation exercises** at relevant stages of plan preparation, to provide opportunities for active involvement on substantive planning issues.
  4. **Providing feedback** as to how the consultation responses have been taken into account and shaped the Neighbourhood Plan.
  5. **Collecting evidence** for inclusion in the Consultation Statement at submission, to demonstrate who was consulted; how they were consulted; the main issues and

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<sup>1</sup> Planning Practice Guidance paragraph: 047 Reference ID: 41-047-20140306

concerns raised; and how these were considered and addressed in the Neighbourhood Plan.

- 2.3 This document will be kept under review and updated as needed in the light of experience and requirements.

### **3. Communication and consultation methods**

- 3.1 The methods which will be used to inform the community, businesses and other stakeholders about the Neighbourhood Plan, and to consult with them at identified points in the preparation process, will be drawn from the following.

- Regular monthly updates uploaded to the Town Council website and linked to social media.
- Town Council website, including consultation and questionnaire survey documents, supporting technical information, and Steering Group minutes.
- Social media.
- Stake Holder support through Websites and Media – Wychavon District Council.
- Letters/flyers to all households (residents) in the Neighbourhood area.
- Letters and/or emails to businesses, local community groups/stakeholders and other organisations including the statutory consultees.
- Questionnaire surveys of residents and businesses.
- Posters in public notice boards, shop window display, public sites including the Library and Council for Voluntary Services. Standing display in Library during consultation periods.
- Banners.
- Drop-in/open day consultation events for public and stakeholder groups in the Droitwich Spa Community Hall and/or St. Richard's House.
- Use of established community events to inform or consult about the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Local press for major announcements:
  - BBC Hereford and Worcester
  - Worcester News
  - Droitwich Standard.

- 3.2 In designing consultation events, care will be taken to ensure that those without internet access are not excluded and that all groups in the community have the chance to be involved. Responses to surveys, consultations and other requests for information will be able to be made both online and via printed forms or other paper-based methods.

## 4. Audiences: who will we communicate and consult with?

4.1 The strategy provides for communication and consultation with the following key groups, as appropriate. The timing and form of communication/consultation will be determined by the stage reached and the information being presented, as explained in section 5.

- Local residents and businesses.
- Local groups and stakeholder organisations
- The statutory ‘consultation bodies’.

4.2 **Local residents and businesses:** the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations require that plan proposals are publicised so as to bring them to the attention of ‘people who live, work or carry out business in the Neighbourhood Area’.<sup>2</sup> The Census 2021 gives the population of the Neighbourhood Area as 25,041, living in 10,973 households and some communal establishments. The Neighbourhood Area is also a trading base for many businesses, including those operating in and around the town centre and Berry Hill. In January 2023 it was resolved by the Wychavon District Council Place Board for Droitwich Spa to support the NDP with a platform for business and commerce representation and engagement for the project. Wychavon Area

4.3 **Local groups and stakeholder organisations:** the following have been identified as potentially having an interest in the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Droitwich Spa Civic Society
- Town Centre Place Board
- [The following – to cover Schedule 1 m to q consultation bodies – see Appendix 1].

Civic Society, History & Archaeology, CVS, SOBBS, FODSL, the WDC Place Board, Parochial Church Council, RBL, WDC & WCC. Neighbouring Parish Councils, Schools, Youth Council, Police SNT, Fire & Rescue, Youth Groups and Cadets (Fire, Air and Army), Sports Clubs (e.g St Peters Pavilion, King George V Pavilion, Lido and Leisure Centre connections), Friends of Railway Station, Traders Groups and U3A.

4.4 **Statutory consultation bodies:** The Regulations<sup>3</sup> specify a set of ‘consultation bodies’ who must be consulted at the draft Plan (Regulation 14) stage when it is considered their interest may be affected (see Appendix 1 for an extract from the Regulations). The Town Council will agree a list of such bodies relevant to the Neighbourhood Area and the NDP in liaison with Wychavon District Council.

4.5 The following adjoining parish councils will be consulted on the draft plan:

- Hampton Lovett and Westwood Parish Council.
- Dodderhill Parish Council.
- Hanbury Parish Council.
- Saleway Parish Council (Hadzor and Oddingley parishes).
- Hindlip, Martin Hussingtree and Salwarpe Parish Council (Salwarpe parish).

## 5. When will we communicate and consult?

5.1 Communication will be ongoing during the process of preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. Monthly updates will be provided to the Town Council (TC) website to keep the community

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<sup>2</sup> The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, SI2012/637 as amended, Regulation 14.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., Regulation 14 and Schedule 1.

and other stakeholders informed of progress. Steering Group minutes will be posted to the Town Council website as they arise.

- 5.2 Wychavon District Council (Planning policy team) will be kept informed of progress on the Neighbourhood Plan and their advice and guidance sought at key stages of the preparation process.
- 5.3 Local groups and stakeholders will be engaged as required and/or indicated by their responses to consultations undertaken.
- 5.4 At this stage, it is intended that planned consultations prior to submission will be carried out as follows. The need for further consultations, which may be on specific topics, issues or policy options, will be kept under review.

Ref	Stage	Main methods
1	The launch of the NDP March 2023.	Launch of the NDP project, undertaken by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Flyer to all households and businesses</li> <li>• Letter/email to local groups and stakeholders</li> <li>• TC website, social media and press release</li> <li>• Drop-in event to collect views on key issues.</li> </ul>
2	Community questionnaire survey Summer 2023.	Questionnaire survey undertaken by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing online and printed questionnaire options</li> <li>• Flyer to all households</li> <li>• Publicity on TC website, social media and press release</li> <li>• Publicity to relevant community stakeholder groups.</li> </ul>
3	Business questionnaire survey Summer 2023.	Questionnaire survey undertaken by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing online and printed questionnaire options</li> <li>• Flyer to all businesses</li> <li>• Publicity on TC website, social media and press release</li> <li>• Publicity via business stakeholder groups.</li> </ul>
4	Draft NDP (Regulation 14) Winter 2023/24.	Minimum six weeks consultation on the draft NDP, undertaken by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation documents posted to TC website</li> <li>• Publicity via social media and press release</li> <li>• Letter/email to all consultees</li> <li>• Flyer to households and businesses</li> <li>• Comments form available to be completed online or via paper copy</li> <li>• Printed copies on deposit/available for purchase</li> <li>• Posters, banner, standing display</li> <li>• Drop-in event(s)/public meeting</li> <li>• Stakeholder meetings.</li> </ul>

- 5.5 Feedback will be provided on each of the consultation stages listed above. Reports will be prepared following each of stages 1-3 inclusive. These will summarise the consultation

undertaken, the numbers and volume of response, the representations received, and consider the implications for the next stage of development of the Neighbourhood Plan. These reports will be discussed in the Steering Group and made available on the Town Council website, and publicised on social media. Summary information providing feedback will be made available via the regular NDP updates to be provided (see para. 5.1).

- 5.6 For the Regulation 14 consultation on the draft NDP (consultation stage 4), feedback will be provided in a detailed response log setting out representations made and how these have been taken into account in the final submission Neighbourhood Plan. The response log will be included in the submitted Consultation Statement.
- 5.7 Following submission, a further round of consultation will be undertaken by Wychavon District Council (Regulation 16). Representations made at that stage will be considered by the independent Examiner.

DJN Planning Ltd for Droitwich Spa Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group December 2022

## Appendix 1 Consultation bodies

### Extracts from the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2021, SI2012/637 as amended.

#### 1. Regulation 14

##### Pre-submission consultation and publicity

14. Before submitting a plan proposal or a modification proposal to the local planning authority, a qualifying body must—
- (a) publicise, in a manner that is likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area—
    - (i) details of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan or modification proposal;
    - (ii) details of where and when the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan or modification proposal may be inspected;
    - (iii) details of how to make representations;
    - (iv) the date by which those representations must be received, being not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the draft proposal is first publicised; and
    - (v) in relation to a modification proposal, a statement setting out whether or not the qualifying body consider that the modifications contained in the modification proposal are so significant or substantial as to change the nature of the neighbourhood development plan which the modification proposal would modify, giving reasons for why the qualifying body is of this opinion;
  - (b) consult any consultation body referred to in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan or modification proposal; and
  - (c) send a copy of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan or modification proposal to the local planning authority.

#### 2. Schedule 1 Consultation Bodies

##### Neighbourhood development plans

1. For the purposes of regulations 14 and 16, a “consultation body” means—
- (a) where the local planning authority is a London borough council, the Mayor of London;
  - (b) a local planning authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority;
  - (c) the Coal Authority;
  - (d) the Homes and Communities Agency;
  - (e) Natural England;
  - (f) the Environment Agency;
  - (g) the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage);
  - (h) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited (company number 2904587);
  - (i) a strategic highways company any part of whose area is in or adjoins the neighbourhood area;
  - (ia) where the Secretary of State is the highway authority for any road in the area of a local planning authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the neighbourhood area, the Secretary of State for Transport;

- (j) the Marine Management Organisation;
- (k) any person—
  - (i) to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003; and
  - (ii) who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local planning authority;
- (l) where it exercises functions in any part of the neighbourhood area—
  - (i) an integrated care board established under Chapter A3 of Part 2 of the National Health Service Act 2006;
  - (ia) the National Health Service Commissioning Board;
  - (ii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) and (c) of the Electricity Act 1989;
  - (iii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986;
  - (iv) a sewerage undertaker; and
  - (v) a water undertaker;
- (m) voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit all or any part of the neighbourhood area;
- (n) bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the neighbourhood area;
- (o) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the neighbourhood area;
- (p) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the neighbourhood area; and
- (q) bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the neighbourhood area.