

Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan - Consultation Statement

DRONFIELD TOWN COUNCIL – JANUARY 2019

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1. Introduction

This document provides a summary of the engagement that took place in developing the draft Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan.

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

According to the Regulations, a Consultation Statement:

- 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 Plan.

The Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was established under the auspices of Dronfield Town Council to oversee the development of the Plan. The Group identified that strong and effective consultation was key to the successful development and implementation of the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, the consultation aimed to:

- Inform as many local people, community groups and other relevant bodies and stakeholders as possible of the existence of the Neighbourhood Plan and its development and;
- Seek their views on the policies and proposals being developed by the Working Group.

2. Designation of Neighbourhood Plan Area

Dronfield Town Council applied to North East Derbyshire District Council to designate the Town as a Neighbourhood Plan Area. Following the requisite statutory consultation period, the area was designated by North East Derbyshire District Council as Dronfield Parish Neighbourhood Plan Area on 23 September 2017 (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the Record of Designation).

3. Timeline of Events

Timeline and Summary of Activities

Date	Event or action	Purpose/Outcome
July 2016 and onwards	Working Group established comprising town councillors and non-councillor members of the community.	To drive the development of the Plan and ensure that it reflects local needs and priorities.

August – September 2016	The Town Council formally applies to North East Derbyshire District Council for designation as a Neighbourhood Plan Area.	Following consultation, the Town was designated by North East Derbyshire District Council as a Neighbourhood Plan Area on 23 September 2016.
August 2016	A web page, dedicated to Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan was incorporated on to the Town Council website.	The webpage provided background information on the Plan, contact details and how to get involved, and progress on the Plan. This can be found at http://www.dronfield.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html .
March 2017	Four community consultation drop-in events/exhibitions took place in the Civic Hall	To raise awareness of the Plan, help understand the community's key concerns and potential opportunities and priorities for inclusion in the Plan. A summary of the findings can be found at http://www.dronfield.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html .
May to June 2017	Special Advisory Group Meetings took place with key stakeholders including Rykneld Homes, Hallam Land Management, Dawson Architects LSP Developments and Derbyshire County Council.	To raise awareness of the Plan, help understand stakeholders key concerns and potential opportunities and priorities for inclusion in the Plan, with a particular focus on the Town Centre, housing and transport.
July 2017	Exhibition at the 'Nature Fest' ('A Lea Brook Valley Festival') community event at Gosforth Drive, Dronfield.	To raise awareness of the Plan and help understand the community's key concerns and potential opportunities and priorities for inclusion in the Plan, with a particular focus on environmental issues.
November 2017	Advisory Group meetings with representatives from the Civic Society working on the heritage section in the Plan.	To raise awareness of the Plan and help understand the community's key concerns and potential opportunities and priorities for inclusion in the Plan, with a focus on design and heritage issues.
February 2018	Drop-in events/Exhibition at the Civic Centre.	To consult with the community and community groups on the emerging policies and receive feedback. A summary of the findings can be found at http://www.dronfield.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html .
17 July to 11 September 2018	Regulation 14 Consultation	Statutory six-week consultation to receive feedback on the draft Plan.
January 2019	SEA and HRA Screening	To meet basic conditions

January 2019	Submission of Plan to North East Derbyshire District Council	In accordance with Regulation 15
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4. Publicity

4.1 The Steering Group was established which undertook a proactive publicity campaign throughout the development of the Neighbourhood Plan. The community and stakeholders were kept informed on the progress of the Plan and encouraged to get involved through the following methods:

4.2 Dronfield Town Council Website

A section, dedicated to the Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan was added to the Dronfield Town Council website (see <http://www.dronfield.gov.uk/neighbourhood-plan.html>). News items were also included on the website.

The webpage provided background information on the Plan, contact details and how to get involved and general progress on the Plan.

4.3 Town Council Notice Boards

Regular notices were placed on the Town Council notice boards preceding key consultation events and outlining progress on the Plan.

4.4 Dronfield Eye

Communication with residents during the process of producing the Plan was provided in the Dronfield Eye via a combination of adverts and editorial. The publication is distributed to all households in the Parish.

4.5 Town Council Meeting

Any minutes from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group meetings were presented at full council meetings.

4.6 Twitter

Any news items added to the Dronfield Town Council website about the Neighbourhood Plan were also pushed out on the Town Council Twitter account.

4.7 Other

Other bodies such as the Dronfield Civic Society helped in promoting the Plan (see p.4 of Appendix B for example).

5.0 Getting Started

5.1 A Steering Group

A Steering Group was established in July 2016 to drive the development of the Plan and ensure that it reflects local needs and priorities. This Group comprised of Town Councillors and other members of the community. The members of the Group are listed below.

Cllr Angelique Foster

Cllr Alex Dale

Cllr Mark Foster

Cllr Alan Powell

Cllr Christine Smith

Cllr Richard Welton

John Hinchliffe - Dronfield Civic Society

John Harvey - Dronfield Civic Society

6.0 Preparing the Draft Plan

6.1 Members of the Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group undertook four consultation exercises over March 2017. These all took place in the conveniently and centrally located Civic Hall in Dronfield Town Centre.

The aim of the consultation activity was to further inform the community about the Plan and get some initial thoughts on priorities that it should address.

A map of the Plan area was on display together with a series of headline questions. Attendees were asked to complete one or more questionnaires each focusing on a key topic:

- Green Belt & Open Spaces
- Community
- Heritage
- Economy
- Housing
- Transport

All the questions relating to the above topics were open-ended, asking for people's comments. In answer to some of the questions, respondents gave multiple responses. 196 residents completed one or more of the questionnaires.

The results of the survey were interesting, with a clear consensus in a number of areas and some strong views, highlighting the strong sense of pride the community have for the town and the desire to protect its distinctive qualities and characteristics.

The key findings were:

- That the Green Belt around the town should remain as it is and protected for future generations.
- Residents would like to see important community facilities protected and where possible enhanced. The provision of health-related facilities was especially seen as an improvement priority.
- There were mixed views on the Town Centre. With a roughly 50/50% split between respondents who considered the town centre to be good or adequate and those that considered it to be poor or could be improved.
- Many residents believed that Dronfield was in danger of becoming overstretched/overdeveloped, with the associated issues/risks of loss of identity, congestion and stretching of already limited services such as roads, schools and medical facilities.
- More could be done to enhance the Town's distinctive character and heritage.
- In the case of new housing development, respondents feel that the greatest need is for 'small/starter homes followed by retirement or sheltered housing.
- New housing development should be limited, and not built on land presently in the Green Belt.
- Transport is a major issue especially traffic levels and parking provision.

The full analysis of findings and copy of the questionnaires are shown at Appendix C and D respectively.

6.2 Special Advisory Group Meetings

A series of Special Advisory Group Meetings took place with key stakeholders. The aims of these meetings were to raise awareness of the Plan, help understand stakeholders key concerns and potential opportunities and priorities for inclusion in the Plan. The meetings consisted of a detailed discussion with a specialist consultee representative and lasted for about an hour. Members of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group also attended. Each meeting focused on a key issue/theme which the earlier community consultation had highlighted as being important to the community and which the key Plan could make an important contribution to improving.

The following Specialist Consultees Representatives took place. The key area of discussion is also indicated.

- Rykneld Homes (Housing).
- Hallam Land Management (Housing).
- Dixon Dawson Architects (Town Centre).
- LSP Developments (Housing).
- Council for Preservation of Rural England (Natural Environment).
- Derbyshire County Council Transport Policy & Programmes (Transport).
- Derbyshire County Council Planning Department (Planning).
- Dronfield Civic Society (Built Heritage).

The findings were used to shape the emerging Plan.

6.3 Consultation on the Initial Draft - February 2018

A two-day drop-in event was held at the Civic Hall on Friday 2 February and 3 February in order to get community feedback on the initial draft Plan. The sessions ran for a period of four hours between 4:00pm and 8.00 pm on Friday and 11.00am. and 3.00pm on Saturday.

The location, timing and dates of these events were purposefully selected to maximise attendance by members of the community and stakeholders spanning as they do weekdays and weekends as well as daytime and evenings.

The events were advertised widely across the community. This included posters, flyers, Town Council website, Town Council Notice Board, social media and word of mouth.

Each event comprised a series of display boards that detailed the background to the Plan and emerging policy proposals. Supporting information including maps was also presented.

The events were well attended with an estimated over 50 people taking part.

In order to gauge the level of community support for the draft Plan, participants were asked to complete a form incorporating two questions:

- Do you support or oppose the policies in the Plan?
- Please tell us why?

45 response forms were received.

Verbal and written feedback was positive. There was overwhelming support for the policies across all the six theme areas, with a 90% approval rate for each one. The Heritage policies had the highest approval rate at 98% and Transport and Access the lowest at 91%.

A report detailing the key outcomes from these consultation events is available at Appendix E.

6.4 Other Meetings and Discussions

The Steering Group liaised with planning officers at North East Derbyshire to clarify a number of matters in the emerging Local Plan.

The Group also engaged with relevant bodies and individuals in the development of specific policies and supporting studies. The group contacted Derbyshire Wildlife Trust to request assistance with local environmental data to inform the environmental policies in the Plan. Lea Brook Valley project was consulted regarding the natural meeting, and representatives from the Steering Group attended their annual fair to promote the Plan. Derbyshire Civic Trust assisted with information and policies for the Town Centre and the Built Heritage.

7.0 Regulation 14 Consultation

Following initial consultation with the community of the draft Plan and subsequent consideration by the Town Council, it was agreed to proceed with the formal pre-submission consultation in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations.

The consultation period commenced on the 17 July and ended on the 11 September 2018. This ensured there were at least 6 weeks available for consultation responses to be made as required by Neighbourhood Plan regulations.

The draft Plan was publicised effectively in the local community and to wider stakeholders. This included where the plan could be viewed and the methods by which a response could be given.

The draft Plan was made available:

- On the Town Council website.
- Paper copies of the Plan could be requested from the Town Council Offices.
- Paper copies of the Plan were available to view in Dronfield Library and Town Council Office.

The community were informed about the consultation via:

- Posters in locations around the town.
- Notice, and supporting evidence, placed on the Dronfield Town Council website.
- Information on the North East Derbyshire District Council website.
- Town Councillors and other Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group members, as well as officers of the Town Council, encouraged people to respond.
- The Dronfield Eye which goes out to all properties in the town (see Appendix F)
- The Dronfield Civic Society Newsletter which is circulated widely (see Appendix G, p.6)
- Social media including Twitter.
- Other websites such as Dronfield Civic Society.

Statutory consultees and relevant bodies were informed via:

- Email or letter (the full list of consultees is set out in Appendix H)

Responses could be made via:

- Email joanne.mitchell@dronfield.gov.uk at the Town Council.

- Online form on the Town Council website.
- Or in writing to the Town Council.

Responses

A total of 59 responses were received, spanning a wide range of issues. Many were supportive of the Plan and its aims. The most notable issues were the relationship of the Draft Plan with the emerging North East Derbyshire Local Plan, the need to protect important allotment sites, design considerations and housing provision. North East Derbyshire District Council made detail comments on the wording of several policies. Several additional local character buildings and sites and important community assets were also put forward.

The responses received were considered by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group. The Plan was then amended accordingly.

A summary and analysis of consultation responses received was produced setting out the main comments received and the Steering Group/Town Council's response to these (see Appendix I).

The amendments and the revised Plan were considered by the Town Council, and the Plan amended accordingly. The Town Council formally agreed to the submission of the draft Dronfield Neighbourhood Plan to North East Derbyshire District Council. The Plan was submitted to the District Council in January 2019.