

# Consultation Strategy

A WORKING GUIDE TO ENSURE OUR PLAN IS BASED ON THE VIEWS  
OF OUR COMMUNITY  
COLDEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FORUM

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The Coldean Neighbourhood Plan Forum is the group leading and coordinating efforts to create a local Neighbourhood Plan. If you wish to raise any queries regarding this document or what it includes, please contact us using the details below.

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- 1.2. The purpose of this document is to outline the Forum's Consultation Strategy to provide them with guidance and information that will assist them in preparing for, and setting up, consultations with the local community as part of the preparation of the Coldean Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.3. The document will outline when the different consultations occur and who will be consulted, provide key principles and an outline to the approach, discuss the different consultation techniques that may be used and identifies the process of collecting responses and reporting feedback.

## Aims & Objectives

- 1.4. The aim of this strategy is to support the Coldean Neighbourhood Plan Forum to:
- Create effective communication between the Forum and those who live, work, study, travel and play within the Neighbourhood Plan Area to keep them up to date with the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.
  - To positively provide those who live, work, study, travel and play within the Neighbourhood Plan Area with a platform to raise issues in the Area and provide feedback on the Neighbourhood Plan.

## Our Community

- 1.5. Coldean is a suburb of Brighton and Hove situated circa 4.5km north of Brighton city centre.
- 1.6. It was chiefly developed by the Brighton Corporation in the 1940s as one of several postwar Council estates to address the housing shortage in the area following World War II. There is also some pre-war private development on the southern fringe.
- 1.7. The area has interesting topography being both downland and afforested parkland.
- 1.8. The area is mainly urban in nature and is characterized by low density housing, much of which is semi-detached and owner-occupied. Key services include churches, a school, a library, shops, a pharmacy, bus services and student accommodation to support the University of Brighton and the University of Brighton.

## 2. WHEN WILL PEOPLE GET INVOLVED?

- 2.1. At each stage in the process, it is imperative that the community provides the information required to help develop the plan and ensure that any concerns are brought to the attention of the Forum at each stage.
- 2.2. There are several statutory consultation periods, these are:
  - Regulation 14 Consultation (minimum 6 weeks and led by the Neighbourhood Forum) when a draft plan has been prepared.
  - Regulation 16 Consultation (minimum 6 weeks and led by the Local Planning Authority) after the plan has been submitted.
- 2.3. In addition to these statutory consultations, it is envisaged that the preparation of the plan will be supported by a series of consultations to gather information, awareness of people's views and to identify key local issues and themes to establish the vision and objectives of the plan before relevant information is worked up. Consultation will also take place to gather feedback on draft documents as they are prepared and ensure that work is always in alignment with the communities' aspirations.
- 2.4. Finally, the plan will be subject to a referendum before it comes into use. The referendum will be a simple majority vote, meaning more than 50% of votes cast must be in favour of the plan being used to determine planning applications if it is to be used.

## 3. KEY PRINCIPLES

- 3.1. Continuous participation and engagement with the community and stakeholders, whilst preparing this plan, is fundamental to ensure the relevant issues are identified and covered in the plan.
- 3.2. The structure of consultations will be progressive. Therefore, each consultation will refer directly to the previous consultation(s) and cannot impugn any previously adopted proposal. The exception to this is where there has been a material change in circumstances in the Neighbourhood Area or a relevant change in planning policy; either local or national, that could impact on the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 3.3. Consultation involves clear, concise and effective communication between the Neighbourhood Plan Forum and the community of Coldean. The Neighbourhood Plan Forum will provide clear direction and guidance, instructing the community on how to respond to the consultation and the type of information that the Forum is looking for. They will do this without creating any bias.
- 3.4. The following principles will be adhered to when setting up any consultation:
  1. **Keep a constant flow of communication**
    - Keep the community up-to-date with the progress of the Plan and make them aware of any upcoming or active consultation
    - Make the community aware of how their feedback has influenced the Plan

- Respond to any queries or concerns that the community have regarding the plan or any consultation

## **2. Be open and honest**

- Let the community know why the Forum are consulting them and what the consultation is about
- Make them aware of the measures put into place to protect their personal data and how their feedback will be used
- Make them aware of what they can and cannot influence through the consultation

## **3. Include as many people as possible**

- Implement measures to reach as many people as possible and undertake fair and impartial engagement to ensure that all members of the community have an equal opportunity to participate

## **4. Work positively and proactively with the community**

- Act together with a consistent approach to community engagement
- Create a record of engagement activities to provide an overview of what consultation has and will be undertaken and use the finding where applicable to avoid consultation overload

# **4. APPROACH TO CONSULTATION**

4.1. Before any consultation commences and to ensure reasons for engagement are meaningful, typical question that will be necessary to answer when developing communications and engagement initiatives include:

- What is the purpose – what are we trying to achieve/find out?
- From what people and/or groups is the information required?
- How would stakeholders and the community prefer to respond?
- What information do stakeholders and the community need before they can respond to the consultation?
- Is more than a simply exchange of information required?
- How will the information be recorded?
- What sources are available and what resources are required within a reasonable cost?

4.2. The Neighbourhood Plan Forum must always make sure that there is:

- Publicity at all stages so that the voting population know about the plan
- Close working with local stakeholders and the community
- Robust community and stakeholder engagement through the plan-making process, engaging with as many people as possible, including minority groups

- Providing feedback on the outcomes of community and stakeholder engagement explaining how this has informed the content of the plan
  - Basing decisions on the content of the plan on a robust, proportionate and relevant evidence base
  - Openness and transparency in decision making, based on clear and transparent methodology and planning criteria
  - Clearly explaining the choices and compromises made in the plan
  - Addressing the diverse range of local needs and wants
- 4.3. Due to changing habits following the Covid-19 pandemic, some people may be reluctant to meeting and engaging in person. To ensure that everyone in the community has an equal opportunity to participate in consultations, all consultations will be available to respond to online and other means that avoid in-person meetings.

## 5. WHO WILL WE CONSULT?

- 5.1. The following groups and organisations will be contacted during each consultation, where relevant:
- Residents, businesses and Forum members
  - Other community groups and associations active within the Neighbourhood Area
  - Farmers of agricultural land within the Neighbourhood Area
  - Statutory and non-statutory consultees including:
    - Brighton and Hove City Council
    - Southdowns National Park Authority
    - Stanmer Park Preservation Society
    - Natural England
    - Historic England
    - Local Highways Authority
  - Academic bodies including:
    - University of Brighton
    - University of Sussex
    - Coldean Primary School
  - Planning Forums or community groups in neighbouring wards
- 5.2. The neighbourhood forum recognises that there are a wide range of groups who live, work and visit the neighbourhood area, some of which will be hard to reach for various reasons. We will actively seek to engage with these people. Hard to reach groups often include:
- Primary school children (aged 5 to 11)
  - Secondary school children (aged 12 to 16)
  - Young adults (aged 16 to 30)
  - Older groups

- People with physical needs
- People with learning needs
- Single parent families
- Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic groups (BAME)
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-gendered communities (LGBT)
- Faith and believed groups
- Travelers and gypsies
- Migrant workers

## 6. HOW WILL WE CONSULT

- 6.1. As well as the usual formal methods to gain information and present information, it is recognized that fun and inspiring techniques such as art, music, storytelling, humour and hands-on practical activities, has proved a fantastic way to involve people in influencing the future of where they live.
- 6.2. Several methods will be used to involve the whole community; some of which are as follows but are not restricted to, depending on the information or consultation required to complete the plan:

### Public Meetings

- 6.3. Through the use of public meetings, large groups can be accessed regarding a single issue, or range of issues in one event. They will form a vital point of communication and involvement with the community and should be linked to project milestones.

### Surveys & Questionnaires

- 6.4. Large scale surveys and questionnaires can provide quantitative data for easy comparisons of opinions alongside in-depth qualitative data to support research.
- 6.5. The delivery method of the surveys and questionnaires will be thoroughly thought through to ensure that the hard to reach groups discussed above are approached and encouraged to engage.
- 6.6. This method is vital in gaining opinions of the community but it must be ensures that they are not overused ass overtime the community may get tired of them.

### Interactive exercises

- 6.7. By hosting interactive exercises, it is hoped that both the wider community and the smaller, harder to reach, groups can be involved in the plan making process.

- 6.8. One group that can be involved using this method are the young. With cooperation from local schools and youth groups, this method will enable the views of the young to be heard and incorporated into the plan. Anticipated activities include photo competitions and school projects.

## Community Presentations

- 6.9. Presentations at Local Group meetings will keep the community up-to-date with the progress of the preparation of the plan and will invite feedback that will encourage further involvement and engagement.

## Individual / Group Meetings

- 6.10. Where specific groups, bodies, individuals, or commercial enterprises have a stake in the Neighbourhood Plan they may be invited to attend an individual meeting with the Neighbourhood Plan Team.

# 7. COLLATION OF RESPONSES

- 7.1. Any online survey responses from survey websites (if used) will be downloaded and inputted into a spreadsheet.
- 7.2. Written responses that have been posted to the Forum or left in a specified location, will be collected by a member of the Forum following the closure of the consultation. These will be scanned and kept digitally. They will then be typed up and inserted into the spreadsheet alongside the other responses.
- 7.3. Responses typed into Microsoft Word will be emailed to a member of the Forum. They will then be typed up and inserted into the spreadsheet alongside the other responses.
- 7.4. This method will ensure that all responses are kept within the same document, making them easier to track and compare with one another.

# 8. REPORTING AND FEEDBACK

- 8.1. Any feedback from the consultation events will be made available to the general public on our website. The feedback will influence the creation of the Coldean Neighbourhood Plan.
- 8.2. Following the collation of the responses, a report will be prepared for each consultation event and will cover (but not limited to):
- The purpose of the consultation report



- How the consultation was carried out in accordance with this strategy
- The results and analysis of the consultation results
- Commentary and conclusions