

1. Introduction and Summary Overview.

The decision to consult on whether to go ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan for Roecliffe and Westwick was taken at a Parish Council meeting in September 2014. It was decided that the Parish Council would circulate a flyer to all residents in the community, in order to gauge their interest. The response was good and it was decided to take the idea of a Neighbourhood Plan further with a visit to Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) to consult with their Neighbourhood Plan Team in December 2014. The decision to proceed was made at a Parish Council meeting in December 2014 after which volunteers were asked to make up a Forum (Steering Group) that would report to the Parish Council. Members included Parish Cllrs, head mistress of the local primary school, retired and employed residents and a business man from outside the village but working in Roecliffe. It was considered this would be a varied and representative team, with others dipping in and out where and when required for specialist contribution.

The first meeting of the Steering Group took place on the 20th February 2015. The area to which the Neighbourhood Plan would apply was decided to be the boundary of Roecliffe & Westwick Parishes. A Mission Statement was developed and it was agreed to put together questions in the form of a survey that would be circulated to all residents and businesses in Roecliffe.

Harrogate Borough Council (HBC) accepted our proposal for the boundary and it went out to a six week consultation which was approved by residents and HBC in September 2015. We wanted the Roecliffe & Westwick Neighbourhood Plan that would fully represent the views of the Parish. A survey was developed and sent out to all residents and business leaders and was completed in time for a Parish Assembly meeting in April 2016. The community laid out a pragmatic yet ambitious direction of action focussing on the desire for sustainability and an enhancement and preservation of its present character and its environment and well managed future development.

The Neighbourhood Plan steering group sought to complete and capture the communities views and was determined to ensure that the forward agenda for Roecliffe and Westwick was one that delivered a positive future in line with national strategies and policies and the Roecliffe and Westwick Conservation Area Appraisal of 2008, carried out by HBC.

What now follows, is a description of the nature, tone and style of that consultation. It outlines the actions and the efforts that the Steering Group made; it lays out the timings and methods of engagement and it describes the conclusions and conclusions of the process.

This Consultation Statement has been prepared in order to fulfil the legal obligation of the Neighbourhood Regulations 2012, Section 15 (2). Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain. Namely it should:

- *provide details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan,*
- *Explain how they were consulted*
- *Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted.*
- *Describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.*

So, this Consultation Statement will describe the statutory and non-statutory consultation that has taken place with the community, with other bodies and with stakeholders in the course of the developing the Plan, including where changes have been made following comments and further proposals.

The appendices to the Consultation Statement form the Evidence File which offers a more detailed breakdown of facts, figures, meetings, questionnaires, correspondence and conservation.

Finally, by way of introduction, we have sought to ensure that less well represented groups were equally⁷ part of the consultation process and we followed up on those areas where there might, in larger communities, have been a tendency to dismiss. As a small community this was perfectly possible.

2. Aims of the Consultation

We had a number of aims underpinning the development of our consultation approach together with the translation of that consultation into a viable and relevant Plan.

Those were:

- Ensuring that the community voice was heard and that the Plan was suitably and strongly informed through a positive, open ended and effective process of direct engagement.
- Ensuring that the Plan was compliant with local and national regulations in respect of planning and other specific development proposals.
- Ensuring that the Plan met the future needs of the population – both the current residents and those who might wish to live in this Parish.
- Ensuring that small group and sectional interests were properly considered.
- Ensuring that the village community fully understood what the Plan looked like and recognised how their views had added shape to the future of Roecliffe and Westwick.
- Ensuring complete transparency in the processes and procedures that underpinned the development of the Plan.

In short, we wanted to deliver a Plan which secured a sustainable future for Roecliffe and Westwick, making it even a better place for those who live in it, for those who work in it and for those who would visit it.

To further these aims, we focussed on engagement methods which:

- Encouraged and created face to face conversations and discussions through meetings and open meetings.
- Ensured full and effective village coverage with supporting questionnaires and village mail drops.
- Ensured that questions were open ended and not simply designed to achieve a preferred option.
- Ensured that feedback on the results was provided.
- Ensured that small group interests were treated as important and significant.

Our external; network of stakeholders was based on advice and informed judgement and the list of those contacted externally, together with the details of our community engagement activity is laid out in the Evidence File.

3. Background to the Consultation and the first Plan

Once the Parish Council had decided to move ahead with a Neighbourhood Plan, a Steering Group of 11 people was put together. As mentioned earlier these core members were made up of those living in, or working in the Parish. It incorporated a strong and direct Parish Council voice. Meetings of the Steering Group averaged 7 attendees.

In June 2015 Roecliffe & Westwick Parish Council submitted a formal application for designation as a Neighbourhood Area to Harrogate Borough Council which was duly designated by Harrogate Borough Council on 2nd September 2015.

Steering Group meetings were held regularly and use was made of the village notice board to update on progress. A survey was conducted and an analysis of findings was produced and publicised.

The Steering Group has consistently worked closely with Harrogate Borough Council and has met at least seven times with head or deputy of the Neighbourhood Plan team. This has helped keep us on track. As well as these meetings a Consultant, David Gluck, was appointed in November 2017, and with his considerable help this has helped us move ahead more quickly.

A draft Neighbourhood Plan was developed and submitted to Harrogate Borough Council for their comments, which were then discussed by the Steering Group, and some actions taken.

Once this had been achieved then work continued putting together list of Stakeholders, so that in April 2019 it was possible to submit our Revision 14 Document to Harrogate Borough Council, and a questionnaire based on it to all residents, businesses and Stakeholders for their comment. These have now been received and acted upon.

The chronology of this work was:

- September 2014, Parish Council first discusses the possibility of developing a Roecliffe & Westwick Neighbourhood Plan.
- December 2014, After gaining encouragement from a flyer around the villages a visit was made to HBC to discuss with Gill Richie.
- December 2014, Parish Council agreement and commitment to develop a Roecliffe & Westwick Neighbourhood Plan.
- February 2015, A Steering Group set up reporting to the Parish Council.
- February 2014 – October 2019 41 Steering Group meetings
- Open meetings every year at Parish Assemblies, plus additional open meeting in October 2016.
- September 2015, The proposed boundary of Roecliffe and Westwick Parishes accepted by HBC after a six week Consultation.
- January 2016, A Survey carried out with all residents and businesses in Roecliffe & Westwick, the results of which were presented to the villagers at an open meeting in April 2016.
- May 2016 start of analysis of the results of the survey, and a start made to putting the Plan together
- November 2017, David Gluck appointed as Consultant.
- September 2018, Draft Plan submitted to Harrogate Borough Council and their responses received in October.
- April 2019 – June 2019, pre-submission Regulation 14 sent to Harrogate Borough Council, A questionnaire and draft Neighbourhood Plan made available to all residents in Roecliffe and Westwick, all Businesses and Stakeholders.
- July 2019-September, all issues addressed.

4. The Consultation Journey

Between December 2014 and November 2019, the engagement and consultation journey comprised 12 phases, in line with our wish to be inclusive and transparent.

Building the Picture September 2014 to January 2015

An initial flyer was circulated amongst the village adult population to gauge interest in a possible NDP project. This provided a positive response leading to a meeting with Gill Ritchie (HBC) in December 2014.

Volunteers for membership of the steering group were sought and the first meeting was held in February 2015.

Broad subdivisions were identified and allocated to group members.

Setting the Boundaries September 2015

These were agreed after an 8 week consultation period with HBC and approved in September 2015

Corresponding mapping was provided by HBC

Setting the questions and outcome of consultation September 2015 to April 2016.

The questions were set under consultation with HBC and fed into Monkey Survey such that appropriate analysis of the responses could be undertaken.

Outcomes for the consultation were published at the April 2016 Parish Assembly when an open discussion took place by way of the key points explanation.

Creation of the Initial Draft

Creation of the initial draft included a Vision Statement. Consultations were held with villagers, and other stakeholders to identify and explain the issues underlying the received responses from the questionnaire. A picture was being developed of how the draft document could be built.

Identification and communication with Stakeholders May to August 2016

The majority of stakeholders were communicated with via e-mail, with physical hard copy delivery, for those who did not have e-mail.

Creation of Draft Plan and informal comments (HBC) Nov 2016 to July 2017

The draft plan was finished in April 2017 having been edited by the steering group and was submitted to Janet Entwistle at HBC

Appointment of consultant November 2017.

Various avenues were explored for locating a suitable consultant to assist us in the preparation of our plan. David Gluck was chosen after being recommended by Knaresborough TC. in November 2017.

Website redesign December 2018 to July 2019.

It had gradually become evident that the Roecliffe Village website was becoming obsolete and with this in mind, as well as the clear need for modern electronic communications and publication facilities, the decision was taken by the Parish Council to commission the creation of a new website.

The Parish Clerk kindly agreed to do this.

Informal submission to HBC September 2018

The pre-submission draft was presented to HBC after completion of a long list of items needing clarification. (*Attach reference to list.*)

Launch of Reg14 submission April - November 2019

Reg. 14 submission was made to HBC for their feedback, accompanied by a simultaneous circulation of a stakeholder questionnaire, both by email and physically.

Stakeholder questionnaire April- November 2019

At the same time as the Reg. 14 submission was made to HBC a questionnaire was sent to all residents and stakeholders.

Refinement further to feedback.

Further refinement was then made to the draft Neighbourhood Plan