



Consultation and Engagement Strategy Report
Bierton with Broughton Neighbourhood Development
Plan

September 2018



Mike King
Director
People and Places Insight Ltd
Lakeview
37 Wadesmill Lane
Walton Park
Milton Keynes
MK7 7HY
mike.king@people-places.co.uk
07788286337

1. Introduction

This consultation statement to date has been prepared to meet the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 in respect of the Bierton with Broughton Neighbourhood Plan.

The legal basis of the statement is provided by section 15(2) of part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which require that a consultation statement should:

- ❖ contain details of the persons and bodies that 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 those issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

The following Consultation and Engagement Strategy Report sets out best practice in Neighbourhood Plan consultation and engagement, alongside statutory requirements, with the detailed design of the consultation events. From the outset the Steering Group systematically adopted a 'funnel approach' to the research, essentially ensuring that issues and information would emerge from the widespread consultation rather than be pre-defined.

2. Background

The Steering Group

In 2017, Bierton with Broughton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was appointed in accordance with the Localism Act 2011, to represent the interests of the community in the future development of the neighbourhood. The Steering Group consisted of a combination of Parish Councillors and local residents with a very good understanding of the local area.

In order to provide a structure for future consultation events, a vision was developed:

“To ensure Bierton with Broughton Parish maintains its historic identity whilst being a social and forward-looking community with amenities and facilities for all”

From the outset the Steering Group were aware that drawing together the evidence for the Neighbourhood Plan would be labour intensive and actively tried to recruit new members during the process. The Steering Group assessed the specific skills within the team to identify gaps in skills that would be useful to help progress the Neighbourhood Plan, and in order to inform specific volunteer requirements. Once volunteer requirements were assessed by the Steering Group, attracting volunteers formed part of the launch events and as part of sharing information about the Plan.

Clear Terms of Reference which explain accountability to the Parish Council and the community were posted onto the Neighbourhood Plan website <http://biertonvillage.org.uk/plan/np-information/> to ensure transparency in the process and to provide the community with assurance that the process is being managed effectively.

Early meetings held by the Steering Group helped to identify stakeholders to be engaged throughout the process, including those often considered harder to reach or engage in the process. The overall consultation aim was to engage as widely as possible to deliver a positive outcome at referendum.

Relationship with the Local Planning Authority

The Steering Group looked to build their relationship with AVDC through regular discussion and information sharing to ensure that both the Local Plan and the developing Neighbourhood plan take full account of each other. The Neighbourhood Plan is due to run until 2033, bringing it in line with the Local Plan once adopted.

At the start of the process the Steering Group clarified the support that AVDC could lend to consultation with communities, for example, maps, printing, publicity and communications, in addition to the planning authority's statutory duties in supporting development of a Neighbourhood Plan, i.e.

- ❖ Agreeing and designating the area of the NDP/NDO
- ❖ Agreeing and designating a forum (where relevant)
- ❖ Preparation – Support
- ❖ Submission
- ❖ Examination
- ❖ Referendum

3. Consultation on the Neighbourhood Plan

Engagement and consultation ran throughout every stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process. It was agreed that adopting a consultation strategy and programme would maximise the use of existing capacity within the Steering Group to effectively manage consultation requirements, both statutory and non-statutory, through an agreed approach that evidenced how issues raised through consultation have been addressed.

A list of Key Principles underlying the consultation and engagement programme were drawn up to govern the process:

- ❖ Effective use of resources and targeting consultations in such a way as achieves maximum feedback and involvement from the wider community, including neighbouring parish councils
- ❖ Building on any consultation that has already taken place.
- ❖ Focussing more specifically on the use of land within the plan area, as opposed to wider community aspirations not addressed through a neighbourhood plan (but captured through the Community Action Plan)
- ❖ Ensuring those that might be considered “harder to reach”, or “harder to engage” are a focus of attention in engaging the community in discussion and ascertaining views
- ❖ Maximising the potential for volunteer support
- ❖ Maximising the use of existing communication mediums
- ❖ Aligning consultation activities where appropriate to deliver the best outcomes for the plan, avoiding delays to the plan process where timing is an issue

In order to ensure a robust methodology a clearly pre-defined Consultation and Engagement Strategy Report was developed through two Steering Group Workshops facilitated by independent research specialists People and Places Insight Limited. The workshops mapped out how to most effectively reach all residents, businesses and community groups in the Parish to maximise the opportunity for all who wanted to engage in the process to become involved in shaping the Neighbourhood Plan.

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The Consultation Strategy document acted as a project management toolkit for the Steering Group with detailed sections on:

- ❖ Resources
- ❖ Budget
- ❖ Key Timescales
- ❖ Stakeholders
- ❖ Consultation techniques; including advantages and disadvantages of each technique
- ❖ Engaging with 'Harder to Reach' Groups
- ❖ Consultation Events and Dates
- ❖ Event Planning Document

Each section was interlinked allowing the Steering Group for example to discuss and plan out which consultation techniques were most suitable for specific groups and information gathering and what resources would be required.

The Steering Group identified tasks to complete before a Launch Event in order to place the work required to produce a plan on a sound footing. These tasks included:

- ❖ Contact with AVDC, with support from a planning specialist Jenny Lampert Associates to discuss the neighbourhood plan ambitions/ objectives and how these align with the current development of AVDC's Local Plan
- ❖ Developing a comprehensive database of all community stakeholders e.g. local interest groups, community groups, businesses, landowners etc. with whom to be consulting, including statutory bodies and utilities (see section 5 below).
- ❖ Reviewing census data to establish demographics and sectors of the community that may be harder to reach.
- ❖ Completing the main elements of website design, uploading all relevant and available key documentation at this stage
- ❖ Completing Terms of Reference endorsed by the Parish Council for publicising on the website.

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Consultation started with the resident of Bierton with Broughton residents from October 2017 and sought to understand more clearly the issues, concerns and aspirations for local people, both residents and business owners in the Parish, creating clear objective for the Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan consultation process was launched on two separate dates to ensure widespread coverage and the opportunity for residents to attend:

- ❖ Monday 2nd October 2017, 18.00-22.00 at Bierton Sports Centre at which 52 people attended
- ❖ Saturday 7th October 2017, 10.00-16.00 at Jubilee Hall which 71 people attended

The key aims of the Launch Events were to build awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan, understand local views to help shape the objectives of the plan and get buy-in to the plan from the community from the start.

The Steering Group was keen to ensure that everyone living, working and running a business in the Parish was made aware of the events to maximise the numbers attending and the opportunity to consult. The Launch Events also provided a good opportunity to attract volunteers to assist with the Plan.

At each event Steering Group members provided a formal presentation and a rolling PowerPoint outlining what a Neighbourhood Plan could and could not achieve. Attendees (whose contact details were recorded at the event and can be accessed in the NP Consultation Attendance Microsoft Excel Document) were then asked to provide comments on a number of suggestion boards with topic headings. To ensure the consultation was not 'leading' the topic boards had general headings and delegates could write their comments and drop in a suggestion box.

The Topic Heading Boards were:

- ❖ Village Identity
- ❖ Environment and Green Spaces
- ❖ Conservation and Heritage
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Healthcare
- ❖ Transport
- ❖ Business
- ❖ Infrastructure and Connectivity
- ❖ Community Facilities
- ❖ Leisure

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An ‘Other’ Topic Heading Board was also included, following the ethos of the ‘funnel approach’ to allow non-pre-meditated issues to emerge.

At the end of the Launch Event, and each Consultation Event, Steering Group members held a meeting to review the successes and failures of the events. The aim of the meeting was to evaluate the consultation on the following questions:

- ❖ *Number of people reached*
- ❖ *Successes as an engagement process*
- ❖ *Improving reach into the community?*
- ❖ *Event promotion*
- ❖ *Timings impacting overall project plan?*
- ❖ *Priorities changing as a result of the engagement / consultation process?*

The Launch Events were followed a by a series of more targeted consultations with sectors of the communities:

Event	Date
General Public Consultation Event 1: St James Church	14 th October 2017
General Public Consultation Event 2: The Doghouse	17 th October 2017
General Public Consultation Event 3: The Barn	25 th October 2017
General Public Consultation Event 4: Bierton Sports Centre	5 th November 2017
Church Council	30 th November 2017
School Staff and Governors	20 th November 2017
Elderly Persons Consultation	23 rd October 2017

Event	Attendance
General Public Consultation Event 1: St James Church	44
General Public Consultation Event 2: The Doghouse	38
General Public Consultation Event 3: The Barn	25
General Public Consultation Event 4: Bierton Sports Centre	60
School Staff and Governors	12
Elderly Persons Consultation	4

In total 317 different people attended one or a number of the Launch/ Consultation Events which were held.

The opportunity for general feedback was also available to the public by e-mail and letter correspondence.

Section 4: Understanding the Issues

Following each consultation activity designated members of the Steering Group began entering all the collected data onto the Master Neighbourhood Planning Feedback Microsoft Excel Document. The document headings allowed for the data to be sorted by:

- ❖ Event
- ❖ Location
- ❖ Category

An example of a comment from the Launch Event being recorded is provided below:

02/10/2017	NHP Launch Event	Bierton Sports Centre, Bierton	Healthcare	B3	Concern over the already strained local healthcare. Appointments are already hard to get at a suitable time. New developments should consider ensuring adequate facilities are in place prior to residential development
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In total 688 individual comments were supplied by those consulted. A full list of all the comments provided at the Launch Events and Consultation Event is available in the Master Neighbourhood Planning Feedback Microsoft Excel Document.

Following the Launch and Consultation Events the Steering Group reviewed the Master Neighbourhood Planning Feedback Microsoft Excel Document and deploying the ‘funnel approach’ began to sub categorise the comments supplied under the broad ‘Topic Headings’. For example, on the ‘Village Identity’ Topic Heading Board, 45 comments were regarding whether the Parish should remain a village with its own identity and history as highlighted in the example below.

Board No	Board	Question No	Suggested Questions	No of comments
A1	Village Identity	1	Should Bierton remain a village with its own identity and history?	45

A full list of how the emerging issues were categories is available in the ‘Surveys Question’ tab of the Master Neighbourhood Planning Feedback Microsoft Excel Document.

Once the sub categories of the qualitative feedback had been finalised the Steering Group worked with research specialists People and Places Insight Limited to develop a questionnaire based on the consultation findings. People and Places Insight Limited provided a workshop on good practice in questionnaire design and examples of recent Neighbourhood Plan questionnaires used across England.

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The comprehensive questionnaire was designed with both paper-based and online options available for all Bierton with Broughton residents to complete. The questionnaire was designed around the issues which emerged from the comprehensive community consultations. Section Headings were:

- ❖ About Your Household; Demographics and Post Code qualification question
- ❖ Parish Identity
- ❖ Environment and Green Spaces
- ❖ History and Heritage
- ❖ Education
- ❖ Housing
- ❖ Healthcare
- ❖ Transport
- ❖ Business
- ❖ Infrastructure and Connectivity
- ❖ Community Facilities

To garner a strong response rate, the hard copies of the questionnaire were hand delivered with an accompanying freepost envelope. To ensure the data and evidence was gathered effectively the Steering Group commissioned People and Places Insight Limited to aid with the construction, data entry, analysis and report writing of the questionnaire.

In total 447 paper-based and online Surveys were returned by residents in Bierton with Broughton.