



ROYAL LEAMINGTON SPA

NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND CONSULTATION





Introduction

This Consultation Statement has been prepared in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (SI No. 637) Part 5 Paragraph 15 (2)1 which defines a “consultation statement” as a document which –

- (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; and*
- (d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.*

Planning Practice Guidance provides further advice:

A qualifying body should be inclusive and open in the preparation of its neighbourhood plan or Order and ensure that the wider community:

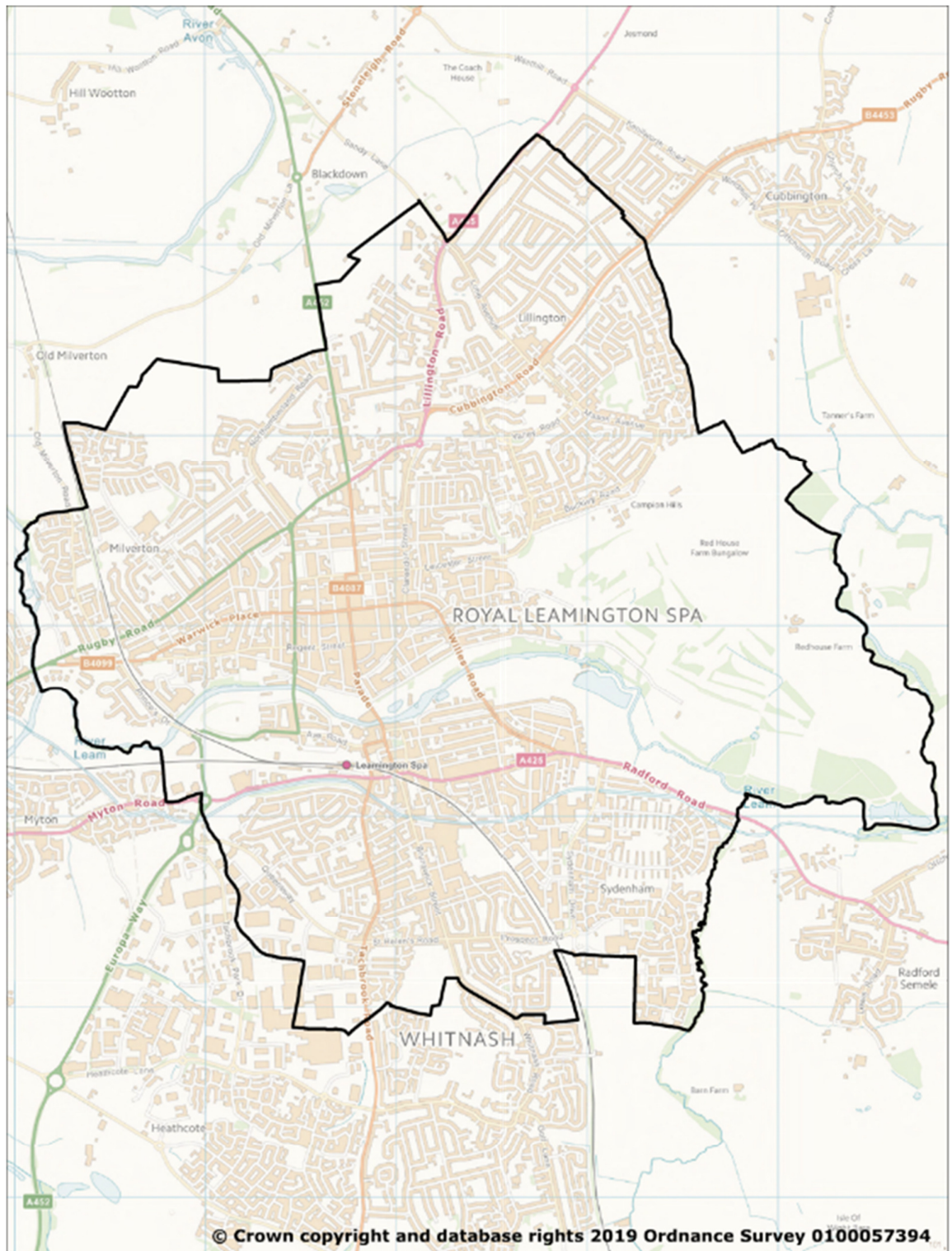
- is kept fully informed of what is being proposed*
- is able to make their views known throughout the process*
- has opportunities to be actively involved in shaping the emerging neighbourhood plan or Order*
- is made aware of how their views have informed the draft neighbourhood plan or Order. Paragraph: 047 Reference ID: 41-047-20140306 Revision date: 06 03 2014.*

This document provides a record of all the engagements that took place at the various stages of the plan’s creation, the methods used to publicise the consultation and engagement process and the main findings from the engagements. It summarises all the statutory and non-statutory consultation that has been undertaken with all stakeholders and residents in developing the Plan, and describes how concerns have been addressed and what changes made to the final version of the Plan as a result of the pre-submission consultations.

The aims of the consultation process were to be inclusive and wide-ranging throughout the Plan’s development and to ensure that the following objectives were adhered to:

- To provide clear, direct, comprehensive communications
- To ensure that the implications of the development and adoption of the NDP are understood by all stakeholders
- To ensure all have equal access to relevant information
- To have equal opportunity to voice and share opinions
- To use understandable and appropriate consultation processes, and ensure accurate reporting of results
- To be clear on what the NDP can and cannot achieve
- To provide a legally compliant and comprehensive Consultation Statement setting out how consultation was carried out and evidencing the engagement within the community.

Map of designated Neighbourhood Plan area



Designated Neighbourhood Area

Scale 0 150 300 450 600 750 m 1:25000 @A4 Date: 15/03/2019 

Our Phases of Consultation

1. [Decision to make a Neighbourhood Plan for Royal Leamington Spa](#)

The Town Council of Royal Leamington Spa formally decided to undertake an NDP on 9th September 2015. Warwick District Council (WDC) as the local planning authority was subsequently informed of this decision.

2. [Defining the Neighbourhood](#)

The Town Council applied to WDC for the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 7th June 2016. The proposed area was the civil parish boundary of the town. WDC checked the application was appropriate and undertook the necessary notification process. The NDP Area was approved by WDC on 14th September 2016. The map of the designated area can be seen on the previous page and the designation decision can be seen here:

https://www.warwickdc.gov.uk/info/20444/neighbourhood_plans

3. [Creating the Steering Group](#)

Following initial presentations to the North and South Leamington Community Forums, a stakeholder meeting was arranged for 7th September 2016. Stakeholders included statutory bodies such as Warwickshire County Council, the Canal & Rivers Trust, Chiltern Rail and Stagecoach Bus operator, special interest groups such as the Leamington Society, Cycleways and Neighbourhood Watch, community groups such as Leamington in Bloom, the Polish Centre and allotment societies, faith representatives including those from the Gurdwara, the Hindu Centre and the Ahmadiyah Muslims, and business groups such as BID and Old Town Traders.

Forty-three people attended and discussed current issues, a Vision for the NDP and getting started (see appendix 1). They were asked to complete a form if they were interested in joining the Steering Group. Twenty people did so and also completed a skills audit which outlined the mix of skills the group needed to take the NDP forward. From this, the NDP Steering Group was formed and comprised of 4 town councillors, 3 business representatives, 2 Warwick University representatives, 5 residents and 2 town council officers.

The Steering Group is a working group of the Town Council and progress reports are given regularly to full Council every two months. The group has an elected chair and Council approved terms of reference. Meetings of the Steering Group have taken place as follows:

| <u>Date</u> | <u>Guests (if any)</u> |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 11 th October 2016 | |
| 24 th November 2016 | |
| 14 th February 2017 | |
| 21 st March 2017 | |

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| 16 th May 2017 | |
| 20 th June 2017 | |
| 12 th September 2017 | |
| 17 th October 2017 | |
| 21 st November 2017 | |
| 17 th April 2018 | Graham Hines, Transport Manager, Warwick University |
| 15 th May 2018 | Roger Beckett, WDC Canal Conservation officer |
| 10 th June 2018 | |
| 17 th July 2018 | Margaret Smith, WCC Transport Planning team leader |
| 18 th September 2018 | Steve Burd, Managing Director, Stagecoach Midlands |
| 20 th November 2018 | |
| 15 th January 2019 | |
| 19 th March 2019 | |
| 14 th May 2019 | |
| 10 th September 2019 | |
| 15 th October 2019 | |
| 12 th November 2019 | |

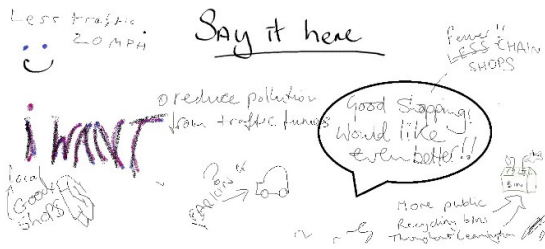
4. [Launch of the NDP process](#)

A Communications and Engagement Strategy was created and approved for the NDP by the Town Council on 7th November 2016 (see [appendix 2](#)).

The Steering Group agreed to organise and support a launch event at the Town Hall on Saturday 14th January 2017 between 12 and 5pm. A short-term Communications and Events sub group was formed with 1 town council officer and 4 other Steering Group members to plan and publicise the event. Activities included to engage and begin pinpointing priority areas for consideration:

- Ideas cards
- Graffiti wall
- Wish Trees
- Display boards showing the stages of the process and relevant maps
- Examples of ‘made’ NDPs
- Quiz re. what do you know about Leamington Spa?
- Children’s modelling activities to recreate their favourite place in town

6 Steering Group members, 7 town councillors, 2 town council officers and volunteers from the Co-op and Teatro Theatre Company manned the event. Around two hundred and fifty members of the public attended with over 150 comments/suggestions recorded (examples of evidence from the Launch Day is included in [appendix 3](#)).



5. Subsequent community engagement opportunities – 2017

Our engagement activities have been many and varied, and we strove hard to engage with as many sections of Leamington Spa’s large and diverse community as possible to ensure that the NDP has been shaped by those who live in, work in, carry out business and regularly use the town.

We held 8 drop-in sessions in central, accessible locations in each of the 8 Town Council wards, had stalls at popular events across town, asked students at Warwick University to complete comments cards in the Students Union, organised 3 Local Democracy Days with Leamington Spa secondary schools and visited the Hindu Centre and the Gurdwara.

At the drop-ins and events, we used display boards, visual aids, comments cards and children’s crafts to engage and interest people. We also made sure our message was clear to see on pop-up banners, Correx boards, t-shirts and balloons. A total of 82 young people and their teachers participated in the Local Democracy Days at the Town Hall towards the end of 2017; a large part of which focussed on their current priorities for their town and ideas for the future ([appendix 4](#)).

Following a recruitment process led on by the Steering Group, Kirkwells was appointed by the Town Council as planning consultants to help create the NDP on 7th September 2017.

6. Theme Group sessions

Five theme group sessions were held in January and February 2018, each focussing on one of the final five themes arising from the previous consultations (Roads and Transport, Community and Culture, Housing and Development, Business Support and Town Centre and Green Spaces and Parks). All Steering Group members, Town Councillors, relevant WDC and WCC officers, stakeholders and members of the public who had expressed an interest in being involved were invited to attend.

Each session lasted 3 hours and included breakout groups looking at consultation priorities and draft objectives. A Vision was also created. Numbers attending the theme group sessions varied from 20 to 25. Outcomes from each session can be seen in [appendix 5](#).

7. Further community engagement – 2018

Attendance at 5 public events over the summer – raising the profile of the NDP and consulting on potential Local Green Space Designations as well as potential brownfield sites.

Local Democracy Days in November – eight Year 6 classes attended and one exercise focussed on the use and protection of green spaces ([appendix 5](#)).

8. Local Green Space Designation Consultation

A sub-group was formed to collect and collate evidence for those spaces and parks shortlisted from the consultations for Local Green Space Designation in the NDP. 2 Steering Group members, 2 Friends of... Members, 1 town councillor and 1 town council officer sat on the sub-group. The group met monthly from August – December 2018 and created evidence bases for each space allocated to them. This included letters/emails of support, photographs, condition reports, interviews with park users, school info sessions and a vlog ([appendix 6](#)).

9. Informal Draft Consultation – February and March 2019

The first completed draft of the NDP came out in January 2019 and was followed by 14 drop-in sessions in locations such as shopping centres, the leisure centre, the Town Hall, the main library, Jephson Gardens and Warwick University campus. 7 of the drop-ins this time were conducted in the open air under a gazebo whilst 7 were indoors. We also attended the North and South Leamington Community Forums again to report on progress made to date and next steps.

As a result, we engaged nearly 700 people; improving awareness of the NDP and reinforcing the objectives and policies in it. This consultation lasted six weeks and the draft was also available online at the NDP and Town Council websites ([feedback in appendix 7](#)).



10. Regulation 14 Draft Consultation – June – August 2019

The public consultation on the draft Neighbourhood Plan for Leamington Spa was carried out in accordance with The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (SI No. 637) Part 5 Pre-submission consultation and publicity, paragraph 14. This states that:

Before submitting a plan 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;
 - (ii) details of where and when the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan may be inspected;
 - (iii) details of how to make representations; and
 - (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;
- (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; and
- (c) send a copy of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan to the local planning authority.

Following the feedback received from the informal draft consultation, appropriate changes were agreed by the Steering Group and reported to the Town Council. The amended draft became the Regulation 14 draft and this went out to public consultation between 17th June and 12th August 2019. It was available to view online at our Neighbourhood Plan website (www.leamingtonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk) along with a response form, the Policies Map and the Strategic Environmental Assessment.

The Regulation 14 draft was also available to view and download on the Town Council website (www.leafingtonspatowncouncil.gov.uk) and Warwick District Council's website (www.warwickdc.gov.uk).

Hard copies and summaries were made available at Leafington Library, Newbold Comyn Leisure Centre, the Town Hall, Lillington Library and Riverside House. All relevant Schedule 1 consultation bodies were contacted (see appendix 8) and we also had stalls at the Peace Festival (15th June), at Lillington Fun Day (20th July), outside the Town Hall (23rd July) and at Art in the Park (3rd and 4th August) to talk to people about the draft and signpost them to make comments (see appendix 8). Responses could be made via the response form online, via email direct to the town council or by post to the town council.

11. Regulation 16 Draft Consultation

All comments received in response to the Regulation 14 draft consultation were considered and changes made where appropriate and agreed, and reported to the Town Council. This became the Regulation 16 draft which was signed off by the Steering Group on 12th November 2019 and by the Town Council on 2nd December 2019. It was then submitted to WDC.

Communications and Promotion

The Steering Group has been proactive and creative in promoting the developing NP and all its associated activities and involvement opportunities. These are outlined here:

Social and print media

Facebook – Leafington Neighbourhood Plan page

Twitter - @leafneighplan, @RLSTownClerk

Leafington Courier

Leafington Observer

Primary Times

Leafington Society newsletter

Posters/flyers

Posters created and displayed around town for the launch event, the 2018 drop-ins and the 2019 drop-ins. Comments cards/flyers distributed in shops in the town centre and in Old Town, at Warwick University, at the Town Hall, at the main library and at all events attended.

Website

A dedicated website was created by a local company following invitations to tender – www.leafingtonneighbourhoodplan.org.uk.

Reports, minutes, updates and feedback forms are posted here. Regulation 14 consultation was available here during its 8-week consultation period. Updates and the Regulation 14 consultation were also available on the Town and District Council websites.

Presentations

Powerpoint presentations were created and given at the North and South Community Forums attended, the launch event, the 5 theme group sessions and the Local Democracy Days. Verbal presentations were given to the Leafington Society, the Hindu Centre, the Gurdwara and the Art in the Park committee.

Letters/emails

Letters/emails were sent to relevant stakeholders at the beginning of the process and during the informal and Regulation 14 consultations. They were also sent to relevant stakeholders during the Local Green Space Designation working group outreach work.

Other Methods of Engagement

- Members of Teatro Theatre Group in NP t shirts gave out invitations and balloons for the launch event throughout the town centre on 14th January 2017.
- Wish Trees – used at the launch event and the 2018 drop-ins – people completed tags with their priorities or ideas on and hung them on the trees
- Graffiti Wall – large whitescreen written on by attendees at the launch event
- Branding – consistent on printed publicity materials, banners, signs, social media and website.
- Inclusion in programmes for Art in the Park 2018 and 2019
- Face to face chats with people at all events attended and organised
- Flyers in goody bags for Networking Mummies Autumn Fair October 2016.



All comments submitted to date in response to the informal and Regulation 14 consultations have been considered and, where appropriate and achievable, have been included within the Policies or within the supporting information.

A comprehensive schedule of our consultation with the community in Leamington Spa is [appendix 9](#).

Conclusion

The draft Neighbourhood Plan is now ready to be submitted for Regulation 16 consultation to Warwick District Council who will publicise it for a further six weeks and then forward it, with accompanying documents and representations made during the publicity period, to an Independent Examiner who will review it and check it meets the 'Basic Conditions'. If the Plan successfully passes this stage, with any modifications, it will be put forward for referendum.

The referendum will be a simple "yes" or "no" on the Plan as set out by Neighbourhood Planning Regulations. If 50% or more of those who vote, vote "yes", then the Plan will be 'made' officially by Warwick District Council and become part of planning policy for Leamington Spa.

This Statement of Community Involvement and Consultation plus supporting appendices are provided in compliance with Section 15 (2), part 5, Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

12th November 2019

