

North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan

COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

January 2017

Introduction

This Strategy has been prepared to help guide the process of community and stakeholder engagement needed to produce an informed and relevant community-led Neighbourhood Plan for North Crawley. It sets out a range of activities and actions that ensure community participation and involvement. Effective engagement with local residents, community groups, businesses, and service providers in North Crawley and adjoining areas is a crucial aspect in creating a credible plan.

The Localism Act 2011 introduced statutory Neighbourhood Planning in England. It enables communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area and it is intended to give communities more say in the development of their local area.

Neighbourhood planning is an inclusive approach to considering how land should best be used or developed to meet community needs. It extends beyond traditional 'land-use' planning activity, which tends to focus on regulation and control of development. Neighbourhood planning allows greater scope for plan makers, acting with the community, relevant agencies and service providers to promote and manage change in an area. This is why extensive, appropriate and well-planned engagement must take place at all stages of the plan-making process.

There is significant responsibility in terms of producing a Plan that is representative of the community. The way in which the process is led and implemented will need to secure confidence from the community in the North Crawley; confidence in the process and support for the outcomes will be more certain by starting this process in a demonstrably transparent way and continuing in that way through all stages of plan preparation.

This can be achieved by showing a willingness to openly encourage opinions and suggestions from all individuals and organisations within the community whether or not these present potentially conflicting, challenging or critical views of the Plan or the process. Key aspects are:

- making every effort to understand all views expressed from all individuals and groups;
- ensuring information is readily accessible and easily understood by the whole community to demonstrate how the Neighbourhood Plan reflects the views and opinions expressed during each stage of engagement and, where those views cannot legitimately be taken into account, explaining why that is the case; and
- presenting a reasonable, realistic, evidence based Plan at each stage of its preparation.

The Community Engagement Strategy is a way of explaining how these steps should be taken, from the start to the end of the process. The Strategy has been prepared to demonstrate from the start that this is a process that needs effective community involvement and that the community is aware of it. The established Steering Group is committed to effective community engagement at all stages of the process.

This document provides some background to community-led planning, describes the processes and methods that may be employed in community engagement activities and presents a set of commitments about how the Steering Group will seek to inform, communicate with and involve the community throughout the project.

Effective project planning is important to successful neighbourhood planning; this should identify the key stages, actions, an indicative timetable and the allocation of responsibilities for key tasks. A Project Plan has been prepared to organise activities in pursuance of an effective Neighbourhood Plan for North Crawley. It sets out a schedule of the proposed programme of community engagement activity and various actions needed to deliver that programme. The Project Plan will evolve as the project develops over time.

Community-led Neighbourhood Planning

The North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan will have legal status and will be used to make decisions on planning matters coming forward in North Crawley. The Plan can say what type of development is to be encouraged, how much development should take place (subject to conforming with higher level strategic plans), where and when that development should take place, and what should be protected in the long term.

Preparation of plans within a statutory framework will need to follow certain steps. These are normally prescribed in national regulations, policy and guidance from the Government. These regulations will need to be followed at appropriate stages in the process and Milton Keynes Council will provide guidance to ensure compliance.

Participation and Engagement

The Community Engagement Strategy sets out a framework to show how the task of securing participation and involvement will be approached at all stages of the project. Community and stakeholder participation in any planned activity can take place on a number of different levels.

The objective of the Community Engagement Strategy is to ensure effective communication and engagement with North Crawley community at all stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process to ensure that the final Plan incorporates sound community policies. Effective community participation in plan-making is most likely to happen by:

- Providing information about processes, events, issues and proposals;
- Obtaining feedback and analysis on options and proposals;
- Working directly with the community throughout the process to ensure that their issues and concerns are consistently understood and considered;
- Creating partnerships with the community in each aspect of decision making including the development of options and the analysis of alternative.

Each stage of the Plan is dependent upon previous activity having been carried out. The purpose of encouraging continuous participation and engagement in preparing a locally-based plan is fundamental in ensuring that the issues identified by the community are covered in the plan.

The process of policy development at the neighbourhood level should respect and respond to locally expressed needs. This gives focus and purpose to the process of plan-making. Participation and engagement is an important component in achieving a good level of local understanding and an acceptance of the aims, objectives and outcomes expected of the plan.

Stakeholders

Engagement activities seek to create opportunities to bring together the views of the community and other stakeholders who have an interest in how the area might be protected, changed or grow over time. The intention ultimately will be to develop a shared view about the range of issues affecting the local area.

From this activity, a Neighbourhood Plan can be developed that presents a comprehensive and co-ordinated approach, showing how development that is required to address these matters can be delivered.

It is also important to recognise the diversity of people in the community to ensure that everyone has a chance to engage in this process. Grouping residents and businesses into stakeholder groups will help identify what methods are needed to ensure that all their views are obtained.

Typical stakeholder groups include:

- Residents
- Businesses
- Landowners
- Service providers
- Education
- Clubs and Organisations

Other bodies may also need to be consulted as the Neighbourhood Plan may affect their interests. This would include Milton Keynes Council, The Environment Agency, English Heritage, Natural England, Police, The Highways Agency and adjoining Parishes.

It is the intention of this project to promote and encourage appropriate collaboration with the community and stakeholders to produce a plan based on their knowledge, needs, and aspirations for North Crawley.

Our Commitment

It is intended that this Community Engagement Strategy will focus action on ensuring as much public participation and community engagement as possible is achieved. In designing each event there will be a need to ensure that involvement is encouraged by embedding all of the following features in the process:

- awareness raising: to secure maximum participation;
- timely engagement: when involvement can make a difference;
- inclusive engagement: everyone is to be included;
- feedback: to show how participation makes a difference.

North Crawley Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have agreed to adopt a set of key commitments on community and stakeholder engagement revolving around transparency and inclusivity. These are presented as an agreed set of actions and approaches to engagement that will be offered to the community as part of this project and are set out in the table below.

Activity	About	Frequency	By Whom	Target Audience
e-Mailing List	Direct engagement with everyone who had provided us with their email address	Monthly and as required	Steering Group	Residents, organisations, clubs, businesses
Website	Dedicated page on Parish Council website. Links to documents, dates of meetings, minutes and news including progress reports and up and coming events and details of how to get in touch	Monthly and as required	Steering Group	All Stakeholders
Social Media	Dedicated Facebook page and regular updates on Community Facebook page.	As required	Steering Group	Residents

	Main target: younger audience. Allows for feedback from residents			
Community Events	Held at key points in process. Workshops will allow face-to-face-communication with stakeholders and allow collection of feedback	At least 2 – to be added as milestone events on project plan	Steering Group	All Stakeholders
SCAN Reports	Advertisements of events, progress report to maintain dialogue	Monthly	Steering Group	Residents
Press Releases	Event advertising or report of an event that's taken place	As required	Steering Group	All Stakeholders
Notice Boards / Posters	Advertise events	As required	Steering Group	Residents
Steering Group Minutes	Minutes from each meeting sent to mailing list and available on website	Monthly	Steering Group	All Stakeholders
Leaflets / Newsletters	Events, new and general Plan information and updates	As required	Steering Group	All Stakeholders
Face-to-face Discussions	Planned meetings to update stakeholders and obtain direct feedback. Door to door.	Every 3 to 6 month or more if required	Steering Group Taskforces	Clubs, organisations, businesses, landowners etc
Surveys / Questionnaires	Ensure they are accessible and well publicised to maximise responses	2 or more	Steering Group	All Stakeholders
Public Meetings	Steering Group Meetings always open to the public. Date, time and location available in SCAN, on website and in minutes	Monthly	Steering Group	All Stakeholders
Parish Council	Regular updates and progress report at public meetings. Published in minutes which are available in SCAN	Monthly	Councillors / Parish Council	All Stakeholders
Drop in Sessions	Assistance or information for completing surveys or questionnaires	As required	Steering Group	Residents