

# MELTON VILLAGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN



## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

## Introduction

This Strategy has been prepared to help guide the process of community and stakeholder engagement needed to produce a fully focused community-led Neighbourhood Plan for Melton. It sets out a range of activities and actions that can be taken to draw information from the community in and around Melton.

Effective engagement with local residents, community groups, businesses, and service providers and adjoining Parish areas, including Woodbridge Town is a crucial aspect in creating a well-informed plan and a sense of community ownership.

We need to secure confidence from the community and those organisations and businesses that serve our needs. 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.

We will do this by:

1. 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 itself
2. Making every effort to understand all views expressed from all individuals and groups and respond clearly on all matters raised in a timely manner
3. Demonstrating, in a form that is readily accessible and easily understood by the whole community, how the 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

## Why do we need an Engagement Strategy?

The Engagement Strategy is a way of explaining the steps we intend to take, from the start to the end of the process, it has been prepared to demonstrate from the start that this is a process that **needs** community involvement and that the community knows this.

It describes the processes and methods that may be employed in community engagement activity and presents a set of commitments to the community about how we will seek to inform, communicate with and involve them throughout the project.

The Objective of the Melton Neighbourhood Plan Working Group is to:

*“Ensure rigorous and effective communication, engagement and consultation with all members of the Melton Community. This includes Residents, Landowners, Businesses, Service Providers and Neighbours. We need to work towards creating a Neighbourhood Plan based entirely on the weight of evidence gathered through this process and resulting in a document that contains effective and strategic Policies*

*agreed by the community as a whole.”*

## **When to consult?**

The Project Plan defines some of the key times to consult i.e.

- The consultation about agreeing the Parish Boundary as the boundary for the Neighbourhood Plan
- The beginning of the evidence gathering process to glean views about Melton and it's pressures, problems and needs
- Through a Questionnaire to every household and business
- At the stage before Policies are written so that we know we are focusing on the right things
- After the first DRAFT plan is made so that everyone can check we are still on the right course

Best practice suggests that we need to consider the following when organizing events:

- think about the time of year – what else is happening - try to avoid major holiday times such as Christmas or school holidays
- are there any other local events planned which might clash with an event or could they be used to complement the event?
- be clear about when decisions will be taken and plan back from that
- be prepared to offer a range of dates and time of day / evening for events to ensure
- that all groups can take part
- build in sufficient time for analyzing what has been learnt and for feedback and
- evaluation

## **Who to consult?**

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

Typical stakeholders groups include:

- Schoolchildren (aged 5-16)
- Young people (aged 16 – 30)
- Older groups
- Commuters (people living in the community but working outside)

- Housing estate representatives
- Community groups and societies
- Single parent families
- People with physical needs
- People with learning needs
- Faith groups
- People employed in the community
- Local businesses
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Travellers and gypsies
- Families
- Migrant workers
- Voluntary bodies acting in the area
- Farmers
- Visitors/tourists
- Landowners
- Developers

Other bodies may also need to be consulted, those whose interests may be affected by the Neighbourhood Plan. These include:

- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- Natural England
- The Police
- Adjoining parishes
- Highways Agency

## **How to consult?**

There are a range of methods that are particularly suited to Neighbourhood planning and that we intend to use but this list is not to be regarded as exhaustive:

- Questionnaires
- Public meetings / Exhibitions / Open Days
- Focus groups
- In depth interviews / face to face
- Telephone conversations / surveys
- Stakeholder meetings
- Website
- Local e-news and Magazine articles
- Workshop or group events
- Photo surveys
- Social Media – Facebook/Twitter ??
- Using other local events to showcase.

Several methods will more than likely have to be used to get the whole community involved. The following questions need to be asked before embarking on a chosen method:

- What are we trying to find out?
- From whom is the information required?
- How would they prefer to respond?
- What information do they need before they can respond?
- Is something more than a simple exchange of information required?
- How will this information be recorded?
- What resources are needed and what resources do we have?
- How much time is needed and how much time do we have?

### **Where to consult?**

Consideration needs to be given to using different venues to help reach the whole community. Often an effective way is to “piggy back” on other events, meetings or gatherings where people will already be in attendance.

Possible venues include:

- Community Centre’s such as Lindos / Burness
- Primary School
- Pub
- Church
- Shops
- On the street
- Community/festival events such as School Christmas Fair / Fete
- Clubs/society meeting rooms