

Planning Division Briefing Note: PARISH PLANS

What is a Parish Plan?

A Parish Plan is prepared by local people and brings together the views, needs and aspirations of the whole community covering a wide range of social, economic and environmental issues. It usually takes the form of an “action plan” which highlights issues raised during consultation with local residents, and sets out how they might be addressed.

Many parishes within Harrogate District intend to prepare, are preparing or have already completed a Parish Plan for their area. Some local representatives have contacted the HBC Planning Division for advice and help in preparing their Parish Plan.

The Borough Council views the decision to produce a Parish Plan as a positive step for local communities. Through consultation, important local issues are identified and a clear plan emerges for what local residents value and what they want to see changed or improved.

From the Parish Plans already prepared it is clear that a wide range of issues will emerge from the process. But only a small proportion of them fall within the remit of the Planning Service. Many issues concern housing, leisure and recreation, roads, healthcare, community facilities and the environment. These issues are of interest not only to planners,

but also to other Harrogate Council departments and, indeed, many other organisations including the Harrogate District Strategic Partnership, North Yorkshire County Council, the Police, the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency and the North Yorkshire Primary Care Trust.

Harrogate Borough Council is currently looking at the best way of linking Parish Plans in with the range of services it provides. One way of doing this would be to relate Parish Plan production to the Community Planning process so that issues emerging can feed into the Community Plans for the area.

Parish Plans and the Planning System

Parish Plans currently have no legal or formal status in the Town and Country Planning system. It is not possible for a Parish Plan to be formally adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) within the Local Development Framework (LDF) because many of the actions that emerge from the process cannot be delivered through the planning system. However, the information in a Parish Plan can be of benefit in two main ways by:

- guiding and influencing local development proposals;
- contributing to the review of broader planning policy.

The parts of the Parish Plan that do relate to planning can form part of the “evidence base” for Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and SPDs. The Council will keep a database of Parish Plans and refer to them as part of the evidence base for the LDF where relevant. For example, where the Parish Plan has identified an important piece of open space, the Council may recommend that it be allocated formally within a Local Development Document (LDD).

Parish Plans can also be a useful tool for developers and the Council in considering potential issues before a planning application is submitted. In some cases, it may be a “material consideration” when determining a planning application. However, the weight attached to a Parish Plan is limited because, as stated earlier, it does not form part of the statutory development plan.

The Council will encourage Parish Councils to use Parish Plans as a mandate for the views of the local community and, where appropriate, to refer to the Parish Plan when submitting comments on planning applications and during consultations on LDDs.

continued overleaf

How we can help you prepare your Parish Plan

The Planning Division can:

- be a consultee on Parish Plans via written correspondence at an early stage in their preparation;
- suggest useful background information, documents and studies;
- for the questionnaire stage of consultation, suggest questions that are relevant to the development plan and that could feed into its preparation;
- provide an A0 sized map (84cm x 115cm) for each parish to aid consultation events;
- encourage representatives to attend the meetings regularly held to discuss issues relevant to the preparation of particular LDDs;
- encourage anyone preparing a Parish Plan to visit the Council's website, particularly the Planning Policy webpage and the LDF webpage, for up to date information on issues relevant to planning. You can find out our progress on the new LDF for Harrogate District and view all draft documents, adopted documents and consultation material and results. This may be useful as background information e.g. the district-wide Housing Need Survey, Employment Land Review, Conservation Area Appraisals, draft Land Allocations (homes and jobs) DPD, Submission Core Strategy DPD etc.

Other relevant departments within the Council (and outside bodies), should also be made aware of your Parish Plan and the views of your local community so that they can consider local opinions in their decision-making.

Useful Information:

- The Yorkshire Rural Community Council (YRCC) provide advice and support to rural groups through a team of development officers on a wide range of issues, including Parish Plans. You can contact the YRCC for advice on preparation and funding of Parish Plans by calling (01904) 645271 or by email: yrc@williamhouse.co.uk
- The DEFRA website provides some examples of Parish Plans and links to useful sources of information and guidance: www.defra.gov.uk/rural/communities/parish-planning.htm
- Harrogate District Community Plan ("Your Plan Your Future", February 2004) can be viewed on the Council's website at: www.harrogate.gov.uk/harrogate-41
- You can read the Harrogate District Local Plan and view Proposals Maps on the Planning Policy web page: www.harrogate.gov.uk/planningpolicy
- You can get up to date information on the new Local Development Framework at: www.harrogate.gov.uk/ldf
- You can speak to a planning officer in the Planning Policy Team to ask for advice on planning matters and to request maps (you will need to collect these from the Council Offices at Knapping Mount) on (01423) 556583 or email: ldf@harrogate.gov.uk
- You can contact the Council's Customer Services Team for general enquiries or to find out who to speak to about issues arising from developing parish plans which are not planning issues: (01423) 500600, email: customerservices@harrogate.gov.uk The Council's website is also a good source of information on services: www.harrogate.gov.uk
- You can contact the Council's Emergency Team if you need information and advice on developing a Community Emergency Plan in your parish: call Robin Derry on 01423 556018 or email: Robin.Derry@harrogate.gov.uk
- North Yorkshire County Council's switchboard number is (01609) 780780.

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www.harrogate.gov.uk/planning