

Campton and Chicksands Neighbourhood Plan Campton and Chicksands Parish Council 2020-2035

Regulation 14 Engagement Strategy (Including COVID-19 Risk Mitigation)

Summer 2020

Version 1.2

1 Introduction

1.1 Reason for engagement strategy

Undertaking any formal public consultation requires significant planning. With regards to Neighbourhood Planning it is important to demonstrate that the Steering Group have established:

- A clear understanding of all stakeholders with an interest in the plan.
- A framework of timely and clear communication with all stakeholders to successfully launch the consultation.
- A clear start and end date for the consultation.
- A range of mechanisms to capture and record all feedback during the consultation that are inclusive of, and fair to, all stakeholders; including those stakeholders that do not have, or prefer not to use, the internet.
- Sufficient opportunity for stakeholder queries to be answered.
- Sufficient opportunity for stakeholders to respond.
- How the outcomes of the consultation will be reported.
- How personal data will be handled and protected to fully comply with the GDPR.

1.2 Ensuring safety during the COVID-19 health emergency

During the ongoing COVID-19 health emergency the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), along with Central Bedfordshire Council (CBC) have issued guidance to Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups regarding the impact of the health emergency on the various stages of the development of a plan and methods of engagement. Initially, the “stay at home” message associated with the Government’s coronavirus response and national lockdown impacted many stages of producing a Neighbourhood Plan and effectively stopped any opportunity to conduct a fair and inclusive public consultation.

As Government restrictions in the United Kingdom (UK) have been eased the latest guidance from MHCLG (May 2020), and reflected in further guidance issued by CBC (July 2020) continues to advise that “Community Involvement Events” and “Public Exhibitions” remain temporarily suspended. However, the guidance does not totally preclude the opportunity for public consultations to take place and offers advice on placing documents “on deposit” and the effective use of leaflets or newsletters; both methods of engagement most impacted by the health emergency restrictions.

The outcome of the guidance is that public consultations can still progress. Of particular note regarding any move to public consultation is that “it is not mandatory to engage using face to face methods, but it should be demonstrated that all groups in the community have been sufficiently engaged using more targeted methods”.

Whilst the use of “more targeted” methods like leaflet drops and telephone consultation may not be appropriate in all towns or parishes, the size of the core residential settlements of Campton village and the Chicksands Private Estate does enable use of such methods. Consultation with residents and the military on the Joint Forces Command (JFC) Base at Chicksands is organized via a Community and Civilian Engagement Officer and has relied upon a similarly “more targeted” approach throughout earlier stages of the Neighbourhood Plan.

2 Engagement Strategy

The table below provides details of the Engagement Strategy developed by the Campton and Chicksands Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group with a view to undertaking a thorough, fair and inclusive Regulation 14 Public Consultation on the Plan.

The ongoing COVID-19 health emergency introduces the further requirement that this consultation is undertaken in a safe manner with the risks associated with coronavirus mitigated wherever possible. For this reason, the strategy does not include face to face consultation methods such as “drop in” events or public exhibitions.

Should National and/or CBC guidance change during the course of the consultation then the Steering Group will take heed of that guidance and change the course of the consultation and notify interested parties accordingly.

Key to all engagement throughout the proposed consultation will be the safety of all those residents and other stakeholders taking part, including members of the NP Steering Group.

Requirement	Engagement Action
Setup engagement methods and services	Dedicated telephone number and voicemail answering COMPLETED Dedicated email address and automated acknowledgment COMPLETED Dedicated website page on Parish Council website COMPLETED Dedicated postal address via Campton Village Hall COMPLETED Dedicated Social Media Page (Facebook only) COMPLETED Dedicated “by hand” postbox via Campton Village Hall COMPLETED Publicity Leaflet (A5 colour 8 pages) READY but requires printing Publicity Posters / Banners (e.g. “Consultation Now On”) READY Follow up notification letter for Landowners READY Notification email letter for Statutory Consultees READY Consultation Response Forms (online & paper) READY Draft Plan & Supporting Documents READY but require printing A document “View by Appointment” service is proposed following detailed discussion with the Village Hall Management Committee (VHMC). The VHMC have made stringent efforts to ensure Campton Village Hall is COVID secure under both national and “Action with Communities in Rural England” (ACRE) guidelines and have re-opened the facility for bookings (permitted under current guidelines) as of 17th August 2020. This proposed service would allow the booking of morning, afternoon, or evening viewing sessions of all NP documents in the Village Hall meeting room. It is proposed that these “viewings” be made available to individuals or household groups only and abide by the COVID revised guidelines and T&Cs for using the Village Hall. A copy of all NP documents and response forms would be provided along with a “request for further information” form. These proposed sessions will not be manned, but Workgroup Chairs will telephone attendees following the session to discuss any requests for further information. Key to provision of this service will be the safety of attendees, VHMC members

	and NP Steering Group members setting and collecting paperwork. Strict adherence to COVID secure protocols should ensure this. All returned paperwork will be held for 72 hours before re-use or processing. Hand washing/sanitiser, disposable gloves and social distancing will be employed by those setting out and collecting documents for these sessions. TO BE ADVISED A document “View at Home/Office” service is also proposed based upon telephone or email request. Only the Plan, supporting documents specifically requested, and response forms will be provided with delivery “by hand” or “post” and a pickup / SAE return date agreed in advance allowing a maximum of 10 days before return. All returned paperwork will be held for 72 hours before re-use or processing. Hand washing/sanitiser, disposable gloves and social distancing will be employed by those delivering and picking up documents by hand. TO BE ADVISED <i>(PLEASE NOTE THAT HAND DELIVERY WILL NOT BE POSSIBLE AT JFC CHICKSANDS. IF A REQUEST FOR “VIEW AT HOME/OFFICE” IS RECEIVED FROM JFC THE USE OF A COMMERCIAL POSTAL SERVICE WILL BE ADOPTED FOR DELIVERY & SAE RETURN)</i>
Publicity ahead of consultation launch	Once the NP consultation launch date is agreed the following publicity steps will be taken in order to promote the publication of the draft NP and all supporting documents together with the ways residents and all other stakeholders may engage with the consultation, access the documents, request further information and provide feedback. • Test all dedicated engagement services e.g. email, telephone, and automated acknowledgements. 15 days before launch date. • Re-engage with LGS Landowners and notify them of the launch date and duration of Regulation 14. Include details of how to access documents and the mechanisms available for providing feedback. By Royal Mail letter (signed for) 10-15 days before launch date. • Start local publicity for launch including a hand delivered leaflet drop to every household (Campton & Chicksands Private Estate), Website, Social Media Posts and Posters. At JFC Chicksands request promotion of NP including launch date on “Electronic Notice Boards” at the Base and deliver by post copies of promotional leaflets and response forms to the Community & Civilian Engagement Officer requesting they be made available in public areas on site (depending on current MOD guidelines). Include details of how to access documents and the mechanisms available for providing feedback. 5-7 days before launch date. • Send out Regulation 14 notification to all recipients on the CBC Consultee list plus additional local consultees identified by the NP Steering Group. Include details of how to access documents and the mechanisms available for providing feedback. By email (or letter if no email address) 5 days before launch date.

	• Refresh Website and Social Media Posts reminding readers of the consultation start date and duration. 2 days before launch date. • Populate Parish Council Website NP page with full details on how to engage with the consultation either online (Preferred Option) or via the view by appt or view at home/office options. Provide links to downloadable .PDF copies of the Plan, all supporting documents and the consultation response form (Also in MS Word format for electronic completion). 1 day before launch date. • Final test of all dedicated engagement services e.g. email, telephone, and automated acknowledgements. Test access to and download functionality of all website NP documentation and response forms. Make paper copies of the response form available as outlined in the promotional materials. 1 day before launch date. • Refresh Website Pages and Social Media Posts to officially launch the consultation. Include details of how to access documents and the mechanisms available for providing feedback. Also provide information on the duration (close time/date) and what happens after the consultation including information on Parish Council's privacy statement and how individual's data is protected. Early am. Launch date. • Subject to publication timings the launch and/or the on-going consultation will be promoted in the Parish Council Newsletter, both online and via door to door distribution (subject to any changing COVID-19 guidelines throughout the consultation).
Active services during consultation	Once the Draft Plan consultation has been launched the Steering Group undertake to maintain all engagement methods and services throughout the eight-week period of the consultation. This includes: • All Website and Social Media services including further promotional and reminder postings. • Email services including automated acknowledgements of queries or completed feedback forms. Follow up responses as appropriate by email. • Telephone services including voicemail services when phone cannot be answered. Follow up responses to any queries by telephone. • Postal Query Feedback. Follow up responses as necessary and appropriate. • Manage the view by appt and view at home/office service in lieu of face to face and public events being suspended during the COVID-19 health emergency. Ensure all feedback from these services is collected or returned <u>before</u> the consultation period closes. • Ensure the name and contact details of all respondents are recorded in preparation for submission of the Plan to CBC at Regulation 15. • Ensure all feedback received is captured and transcribed to a

	database for detailed consideration as the Plan is reviewed and amended, as appropriate, in preparation for submission to CBC at Regulation 15. • The use of an on-line platform (e.g. Zoom) may be considered should similar queries require addressing by the Steering Group with multiple parties. This would be by invitation only and secured via a “waiting room”
After the consultation	As the Draft Plan consultation period concludes the following actions will be taken: • All Website and Social Media pages will be modified to indicate that the consultation is now closed and what happens next. Whilst the Draft Plan and supporting documents will still be available for review or download all response forms will be withdrawn. Retain information on what happens after the consultation including links to the Parish Council’s privacy statement and how individual’s data is protected. • Update automated email and telephone voicemail responses to indicate that the consultation is now closed and no further feedback can be accepted. • Whilst the NP Steering Group prepare the Draft Plan for submission to CBC at Regulation 15 based upon the feedback received during Regulation 14 the NP Steering Group will continue to hold regular public meetings. They will provide updates on progress in the Parish Council Newsletter, both online and via door to door distribution (subject to any changing COVID-19 guidelines after the consultation).

3 Conclusion

The engagement strategy outlined above provides a robust, fair, inclusive and safe framework for running the draft Campton and Chicksands Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 14 Consultation. It is the view of the Steering Group that with acceptance of the “view by appt.” and “view at home/office” proposals the Steering Group has a viable way forward with this consultation. Online document review or download, and electronic submission of responses will be encouraged with all stakeholders where this is possible.

Following the guidance issued by CBC the consultation will run for eight weeks (two weeks longer than is the legal requirement) to provide additional opportunity for all stakeholders to provide representation during these unprecedented times and further mitigate for the increased complexity of this exercise.

The Steering Group continue to monitor our capacity to manage the additional workload associated with running a longer, more expensive, and more complex consultation process given the on-going health emergency. We must also consider the impact of Steering Group members being unavailable because of any requirement to self-isolate, or indeed illness. Currently, we feel confident we have the team capacity and budget to manage such concerns.

Furthermore, at these difficult times we accept that national or local guidance relating to the pandemic could change quickly and may alter the course, duration, or nature of the consultation. Should it become necessary to suspend the consultation at any stage then notification will be posted on notice boards, website, and social media and via the Parish Council Newsletter if possible. Once it is safe to resume consultation this will be notified via the same mechanisms. Those methods unaffected by any future Covid-19 restrictions e.g. email will be allowed to continue throughout any suspension period. It is the clear hope that no suspension will be necessary.

Acknowledging all the points outlined in this document, and subject to approval of this engagement strategy by CBC and the Parish Council the Steering Group recommend that the draft Plan should proceed to Regulation 14 in early September (date to be confirmed).

4 Reference Links

General CBC advice:

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/26/public_health/737/coronavirus%20-%20covid-19

Government advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing>

Locality advice:

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/planning-through-covid-19/>

Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012, as amended:

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents>

Detailed guidance on the Neighbourhood Planning process:

<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/toolkits-and-guidance/create-neighbourhood-plan-step-by-step-roadmap-guide/>

CBC Further Advice (8th July 2020):

https://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/info/45/planning_policy/473/neighbourhood_planning/2

Campton Village Hall Covid-19 Risk Assessment (August 2020):

<https://camptonandchicksands-pc.gov.uk/village-hall/>

Campton and Chicksands Parish Council Policies and Procedures:

<https://camptonandchicksands-pc.gov.uk/policies-and-procedures/>