

Heversham and Hincaster Neighbourhood Plan 2015 to 2025 – Consultation Statement

1. Introduction

1.1 This document sets out how Heversham Parish Council, Hincaster Parish Meeting and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have involved the community and other interested parties in the preparation of the Heversham and Hincaster Neighbourhood Plan 2015 to 2025.

1.2 The document sets out:-

- Background information prior to development of the Neighbourhood Plan
- Timeline on developing the document
- Which bodies and persons were invited to make representations
- How these bodies and persons were invited to make representations
- Summary of the main issues raised by the representations
- How the main issues have been addressed.

1.3 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012(Localism Act 2011) require a Consultation Statement to set out the details and results of consultations undertaken in the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. In accordance with these Regulations and the local planning authority's guidance on consultation, the preparation of the Heversham and Hincaster Neighbourhood Plan 2015 to 2025 has involved residents, businesses and other organisations with an interest in the two parishes in the preparatory stages for the Neighbourhood Plan.

2. Background Information.

2.1 In 2011 South Lakeland District Council (SLDC) adopted a Heversham and Hincaster Neighbourhood Plan as its "Front Runner" Plan. It was agreed that Heversham Parish Council would act as the Neighbourhood Planning Body preparing the Plan in close consultation with Hincaster Parish Meeting. Hincaster representatives would form part of the Steering Group developing the Plan and would be fully engaged in any decisions affecting Hincaster. A letter from Hincaster Parish Meeting to SLDC confirmed its agreement to this arrangement. The Cabinet of SLDC confirmed the parishes of Heversham and Hincaster as the Neighbourhood Area in August 2013.

2.2 In February and March 2012 an initial survey was carried out. Residents and businesses in the two parishes were asked two simple questions. "What do you like about Heversham and Hincaster?" and "What could be improved?"

From the 414 questionnaires (sent out with the Parish Magazine) 96 replies were received. The results were fed back to both parishes at their respective Annual Meetings in April 2012. A copy of the Powerpoint presentation used at the Annual Meetings is attached as Annex 1. It was clear that in 7 of the replies two residents had replied independently – leading to 103 sets of data in some instances.

This is a selection of comments made under "What do you like?"

"Friendly, quiet, low crime, neighbours, small size, attractive countryside, unspoilt, local walks, lovely views, close to junction 36 of the M6, the primary school, the Church, the Athenaeum, local services in Milnthorpe/Kendal."

This is a selection of comments made under “What could be improved?”

“Provide light industrial premises, faster and more reliable broadband.
More affordable housing for young families, Need housing to protect the primary school, Build on brownfield sites first, any development should create better linked villages, no requirement for large scale housing development, Keep ambience of village.”

2.3 In May 2012 Heversham Parish Council appointed a Steering Group to Develop the Neighbourhood Plan.

3. Timeline on developing Heversham and Hincaster Neighbourhood Plan 2015 to 2025.

3.1 In November 2012 a “First Progress Report” (Annex 2) was delivered to every household in the two parishes with the Parish Magazine. This included draft objectives which the Plan should achieve, and took into account the responses to the initial survey – see paragraph 2.2 above.

3.2 In October 2013 a second progress report headed “Towards a Neighbourhood Plan for Heversham and Hincaster” (Annex 3) was published. Four “roadshow” style events in November and December 2013 allowed residents to make comments and discuss the ideas put forward. More than 80 people attended the roadshows or made written comments.

3.3 This report suggested three sites which might be suitable for small housing developments. Some respondents to the consultations welcomed this approach, because of the relative certainty that naming sites was seen to bring. However, it is not easy for the community to predict now the economic and policy drivers that will influence developers’ proposals over the next decade, nor to be precise about what parcels of land may or may not become potentially available to developers. It was recognised that the apparent certainty given by referring to specific sites risks actually weakening the ability of the Plan to influence the patterns and form of development over the period.

3.4 In October 2014 Cumbria Rural Housing Trust carried out a Housing Survey (Annex 4) in the two Parishes. 210 survey forms (56%) were returned. A majority of the respondents thought that extra housing would be needed in the Parishes. 38 of them stated that they, or a member of their family, would have a housing need in the next five years.

4. Formal Consultation Process on the Pre-submission Plan – Monday 2nd November 2015 to Sunday 13th December 2015.

4.1 Shortly before 2nd December a Neighbourhood Plan web site <http://www.hevershamandhincasternp.co.uk> was set up. It contains a copy of the Pre-submission Plan, a number of background documents, a link to an electronic response form, and a note of where printed copies could be viewed.

4.2 Shortly before 2nd December printed copies of the Pre-submission Plan were delivered to every household in the two parishes. Printed copies were also made available for the duration of the consultation in Milnthorpe Library, St Peter’s Church, Heversham and at the office of SLDC in Lowther Street, Kendal. Every printed copy included a printed copy of the response form. These are included as Annex 5 and Annex 6.

Requests for comments were also sent to Neighbouring Parish Councils, Statutory consultees, and a wide variety of other organisations which it was felt might have an interest. The “other

organisations” list was mainly extracted from a file held by SLDC, that it uses in its own consultations, but with the addition of some more local stakeholders. The majority of these requests were sent out by email and included the address of the web site and the link to the electronic response form. A list of these consultees, with a note of which responded, is included as Annex 7.

4.3 Respondents were encouraged to comment on each section of the Pre-submission Plan to aid later analysis. Responses were also welcomed by email, and by letter. Where possible paper based responses and email responses were copied into the electronic response form.

4.4 The total number of responses was

Residents	24
Statutory Consultees	6
Neighbouring Parish Councils	nil
Other Consultees	<u>3</u>
Total	33

A copy of all responses received is on the Neighbourhood Plan web site. The comments of the Steering Group to responses that potentially required an amendment to the Plan are set out in Annex 8.

5. Summary of main issues and how they were addressed.

5.1 Responses to the Pre-submission draft were generally positive. However, a few issues were raised.

5.2 Issue : It became apparent that some respondents did not understand the constraints that National and South Lakeland District Council planning policy impose on the Neighbourhood Plan.
Action : This has been clarified in the Submission Draft.

5.3 Issue : It was not clear in the Pre-submission Draft how the number of new dwellings proposed was consistent with Heversham and Hincaster’s share of the South Lakeland District Council Local Plan. There was also confusion about the way in which dwellings that had been given planning approval as at 31st March 2015, but not completed, were treated.
Action : Both of these aspects have been clarified in the Submission Draft.

5.4 Issue : A few respondents felt that it would be difficult to support the plan if sites for dwellings were not specified. See also paragraph 5.5 below.
Action : The reasons for not specifying sites are given in the Submission Draft. Developers will have more freedom about what to propose, but proposals will need to comply with the Policies in the Plan

5.5 Issue : A few respondents felt that up to six dwellings in any development is too many.
Action : In the Submission Draft up to six dwellings is confirmed.

5.6 Issue : A few respondents felt that only developments that are infill or rounding off should be considered.
Action : Policy HH3 allows for slightly greater flexibility, but still limits free standing developments.

5.7 Issue : Planning Policy HH7 : Parish Consultations. This Policy undermines the others. Any deviation should involve the whole community.

Action : The policy has been redrafted, but the principle is maintained in order that the vision can be realized. In practical terms the Parish Council/Parish Meeting, at a public meeting, would be the most appropriate forum for any such consideration.

Note : Some changes have been made to the Community Objectives Sections as a result of comments from respondents. However, these are not covered here as they are not technically part of the Neighbourhood Plan.