

Leicestershire Neighbourhood Planning Event
Tuesday 12th February 2013

Welcome and Introduction
Blake Pain CC, Leicestershire County Council

Introduced the themes for the evening “Communications” and “Engaging with Young People”, thanking and introducing you

Reminded NP groups about the County Council’s Big Society Grant Fund, where groups can apply for up to £10,000 to support their Neighbourhood Planning activity

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/big society/big society grant fund.htm>

and our Big Society Rural Advice Service, delivered by the RCC, where groups can access support to help them decide what type of community consultation best fits their needs.

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/community/big society/big society rural advice service.htm>

Blake Pain highlighted the recent developments around Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) where Neighbourhood Plan Groups will receive 25% of CIL funding for development within their plan area. Blake Pain stressed the importance of delivering the appropriate infrastructure to support growth.

Hold the Front Page! How to get your message across to the media
Steve Pumfrey, Leicestershire County Council

See slides, presentation notes and Leicestershire Press contact sheet at <http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/neighbourhoodplanning/networkingevents.htm>

- News is available in so many formats; the digital age means more people accessing from Smartphones as well as more traditional channels.
- Get together as a group to discuss what you want to say in the press release and then draw up a list of the key facts you want to put across.
- Set out what you want to achieve from the press release - for example, is it to attract public interest to an event, raise money for a good cause, or looking for feedback on a planning issue.
- Assess what the public impact is likely to be matched to your own expectations - will there be a positive, negative or indifferent response, be prepared for all three by achieving clear goals on what you would like the outcomes to be.
- When producing a press release - it has to be an attention-grabber. The Leicester Mercury, for example, receives up to 20/30 press releases a day so you have to make the release stand out. It's a bit like a CV; it needs to get to the top of that pile.
- Punchy introduction - a diverting couple of opening lines, try to humanise it. Perhaps, build it around an individual rather than a collective body. For

example, if it's a fund-raiser, talk about the pensioner doing a half-marathon rather than a Town/Parish Council is planning to.

- Short and to the point - the nature of the news editor's job will be skimming over of the first few paragraphs to see if there is a notable news line.
- Get the key information well to the fore - particularly location, date and time of an event as high up the press release as you can.
- Picture opportunity - sometimes this can be the deciding factor. Give it a twist by featuring something unusual and you can turn it into a media invite
- Another way of developing your news story is by making the opportunity a daytime event. Reduced staffing levels at newspapers mean that evening jobs are rarely covered now, unless you wear a City or Tigers shirt. Some papers have a complete ban on cheque presentations.
- Take the picture yourself - a good Smartphone or a digital camera will do the trick. Make sure the people on the photograph are clearly identified by doing a simple (Pictured, left to right).
- Ahead of issuing the picture, just prepare a 200-wd resume of the event or release and enclose some contact details, particularly daytime as they will invariably contact you then.
- Get to know your contacts at the paper or radio station. keep them informed on events - two months in advance, then a month and then the week before.
- Find out their printing patterns - weeklies in Leicestershire have a deadline of Wednesday lunchtime so, for example, if you send them something on Thursday it won't appear until following week which might be too late
- There are also other less traditional channels - social media is, a way of people communicating online.
- Twitter involves a very short snippet of information – up to 140 characters – in a tweet.
- Facebook is rooted in making connections and building communities, Linked In focuses on building professional contacts and special interest sites such as Mumsnet.
- Social media can create dialogue with residents - it's not just a one-way channel:
 - It can also be used to 'listen in' and respond
 - It works well when linked to an initiative eg. Leicestershire County Council's "gritter twitter"
 - It offers way of pushing out real-time info during a major incident
 - It is resource intensive, the more you do with it, the more resource it takes
- Treat social media in a similar way to media relations:
 - Treat every comment or post as a statement
 - If you wouldn't send it to the media – think twice before you post
 - Once it's published it will be available for everyone to see
 - It can grow into a story quickly
- A press release is representing a parish council:
 - You might have an eye-catching photo opportunity but could it damage the reputation of the council if it is inappropriate

- Make sure expectations are managed and above all deliver what is promised.
- If the press release has not appeared, revisit it and consider:
 - Was it too long?
 - Did the information get cut because it was in the last paragraph and stories are trimmed from the bottom?
 - Were there queries about the press release, but no-one for the reporter to contact?
 - Was the wrong audience targeted; that brings us back to establishing what you want to say and who you want to reach.
 - Does the journalist need another reminder?
- Send a polite email or call to check on progress, asking if it is likely to be reproduced next day/next week.
- Monitor the newspaper closely and keep in touch with any contacts made during a follow-up call.

Cllr Hulbert (Barwell PC & HBBC) highlighted the importance of radio, giving four tips from his experience as a radio presenter:

- Speak in soundbites – deliver the key message / info 15 seconds, so this can be used on the radio.
- Make sure you're available on the day – the radio presenter is likely to want to speak to / interview someone about the press release.
- Put someone on who is confident and willing to speak on the radio.
- Don't tell the journalist / editor how to do the job – they will pick

Mike Lee, Fosse Villages NP Group noted that their group had received good coverage from local press and radio adding that it was helpful to ensure the following:

- Your NP website was used to add documents / information and kept up to date.
- It was helpful to have some stock photos of your consultation events / area to use in publicity.

Leicestershire Neighbourhood Plan Front Runner Updates

1. Fosse Villages

- RCC have worked with the FVNP to update their parish profiles and carried out a consultation event in each village.
- Some cynicism from residents with recent controversial planning appeal decisions.
- Area is designated, draft plan being developed.
- Seeing benefits of working in partnership with key stakeholders
- Waiting for the outcome of Blaby District Council Core Strategy consultation, the inspector proposing settlements housing targets were grouped together according to size, linking Fosse Villages settlements with those outside the plan area.

2. Lubenham

- Area application submitted to Harborough DC, still agreeing this. Implications of whether the strategic development area (SDA) is included in the NP area or not, particularly with the 25% CIL for Parish councils with a NP.
 - Run consultation events:
 1. With the chairs of all the community groups in the village; WI, playing fields org., key parishioner, etc.
 2. Stakeholder event led by RCC
 3. School consultation
 - Evidence work:
 1. Undertaking a housing needs survey for the village
 2. Edwards and Edwards are carrying out SDA transport assessment
 - Wider community consultation on village envelope, flooding and important buildings.
 - Commissioned a transport study by Edwards and Edwards.
 - Many questions regarding CIL and in discussion with HDC about whether HDC plan to bring in a CIL charging schedule.
3. Broughton Astley
- Have published their draft Neighbourhood Plan for 6 weeks public consultation, the deadline for comments is 25th March 2013.
 - Policy writing has been challenging, making sure the wording you use will be interpreted correctly. Policy writing suggested as a future topic for the networking sessions.
 - HDC have been very supportive and have provided a list of all statutory consultees, however the cost of postage has been high so that is something else to remember to build into a NP budget.
 - They will consider comments and prepare the final version for submission to HDC mid April.
4. Market Bosworth
- Have re-branded the NP Group to 'Bosworth Vision', new website going live this week. www.bosworthvision.org.uk
 - Have been successful in securing a grant from Big Society
 - Engaging with RCC
 - Had their first public engagement event in January which was well attended and has encouraged having a stakeholder event on Monday 18th March 2013.
 - Still concerns over public perception of localism and the worry that developers will beat the NP groups to it.
5. Asfordby
- Hope to have designation approved by Melton Borough Council in March 2013.
 - Currently working with the design council on developing a design brief for an identified site with the Neighbourhood Plan.
 - Hoping to hold one further consultation event targeting 17-22 year olds in the summer.

Billesdon and Waltham on the Wolds, the other 2 Leicestershire Front Runners, were unable to attend the Networking Event.

Engaging with Young People
Nyasha Dire, Youth Offending 'Impact' Team
Sam Howlett, RCC

See slides, presentation notes and Leicestershire Youth Contact sheet at <http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/neighbourhoodplanning/npnetworkingevents.htm>

- Be clear on how young peoples views are going to be used
- How the Neighbourhood Plan will affect young people
- Keep young people involved at every stage
- Be creative with engagement e.g. Street Vibes model can be used (at a cost)
- Provide incentives for young people to be involved e.g. using a Sim City computer game where young people can created their own town / village and explore the impacts of this.
- Link in with existing events that young people attend and incorporate consultations to a regular activity.
- Feedback in a creative way, e.g. via social media
- Planning For Real techniques
- Research what young people are currently concerned with in the community.
- Develop some quick wins to get the attention of young people and then incorporate the long term consultations in.
- The districts have different models for engagement; Rebecca Ball, HBBC can provide information on this.
- Use High School/Secondary School children to provide suggestions/raise concerns regarding the community where they live and went to primary school and perhaps lead the engagement with the primary school children.
- Use modern methods of engagement with adults as well as young people.
- Being creative with consultation methods e.g. children making a model of their development could also engage more adults because the children will pass the message on.
- Chris, Ashby Civic Society, suggested applying this thinking for all your consultation approaches, young people and older people alike want to be informed and involved in a positive and creative way.
- Some groups have had difficulties getting passed school receptions; other suggested going straight to the head or the chair of governors.
- Some question when CRBs would be needed. Recent changes have made the process of CRB checks less onerous. The RCC have info on their website about CRBs and the
- Mick Duggan suggested linking NP work to the school curriculum or school targets makes it much easier for teachers to integrate into lessons.

New Development in Neighbourhood Planning
Mick Duggan, DCLG

See presentation at

<http://www.leics.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/neighbourhoodplanning/networkingevents.htm>

Recent speeches by Nick Boles MP for DCLG and TCP Policy Exchange describe NP as a “revolutionary step”.

Keep up to date with Upper Eden, having their referendum 7th March 2013. Exeter (St James) <http://www.exeter.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=14115> are heading towards their examination and Thame are about to submit their allocations.

Look at upper Edens examination report, it clearly focusses on:

http://uecp.org.uk/upper-eden-neighbourhood-development-plan/upper-eden-development-plan-examination-proposal_examiners-final-report-2/

- Viability/ deliverability
- Evidence
- General conformity with the Local Plan

Current position:

- LPAs can secure £30k support / Neighbourhood plan in tranches of £5k, £5k and £20k on adoption.
- New support arrangements being considered.
- Small grants of up to £7k will be announced soon for supporting NP process and will be available for 2 years.
- NP CIL regulations will be published Spring 2013.
- Community right to Build and other community rights can link in well with NPs.
- For NP discussion try searching #neighbourhoodplanning on twitter.

Leicestershire Networking Events

Future Topics Suggestions

The following topics were suggested through the topics board at the NP Networking event.

- Dealing with developers
- Prioritising the issues to include in policies
- Funding
- Top tips for getting through the examination
- Design policies
- Dealing with doubters
- Policy Writing
- Planning inspectorates impression of Neighbourhood Planning
- Infrastructure, Transport, Drainage, broadband, HS
- Housing mix
- Planning for sustainability
- Developers – land ownership
- Equality and community cohesion ‘knowing your community’

It was agreed at the end of the meeting that the next Leicestershire Neighbourhood Planning Networking Event would focus on the following related issues:

- Dealing with developers and national / key stakeholders
- Transport and other key infrastructure
- Deliverability, viability and developer contributions.

Other topics:

- Policy Writing – Leicestershire planning officers will work together to draft some advice and tips to support NP groups in policy writing. These will be circulated at the next meeting

Date of Next Networking Event

The Next Leicestershire Neighbourhood Planning Networking Event will take place on Monday 1st July at Leicestershire County Council with networking at 5.30pm.