

**NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR MALTON & NORTON
2020-2027**

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

**PREPARED ON BEHALF OF
MALTON AND NORTON TOWN COUNCILS**



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1. Introduction

This Consultation Statement has been prepared to meet the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 in respect of the Neighbourhood Plan (NP) for Malton and Norton.

The legal basis of the statement is provided by Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which requires that a Consultation Statement should:

- Contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed NDP;
- Explain how they were consulted;
- Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;
- Describe how those issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed NDP.

This statement:-

- Sets out the aims of the consultation process;
- Summarises the approach to consultation;
- Details the consultees;
- Sets out the consultation stages, the issues and concerns raised at each stage and the way in which they have been addressed.

2. Consultation Aims

Throughout the Neighbourhood Plan consultation process, the aims have been:-

- To involve the community so that the plan was informed by, and took account of, the views of local people living, working and carrying out business in the Neighbourhood Area;
- To involve a wide range of statutory and non-statutory bodies in the development of the plan at key stages;
- To consult with landowners whose interests were affected by plan policies and proposals;
- To ensure that consultation took place at critical points in the process where decisions needed to be taken;
- To consult regularly and closely with officers of Ryedale District Council (RDC) to ensure that the plan was developing in line with legal requirements.

3. Background to Neighbourhood Plan Consultation

In 2011, Malton and Norton Town Councils took the original decision to produce a Neighbourhood Plan in order to give local people a greater say in the future of their communities. Following a hiatus, awaiting progress on the Ryedale Local Plan, a Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was formed in 2015, comprising town councillors and local community volunteers. Four focus groups were subsequently formed to advise and inform the steering group (see Neighbourhood Plan Governance Structure and invitation letter to join groups at Appendices 1 and 2).

After some delay, due to protracted and ultimately inconclusive discussions with neighbouring Hutton Ambo Parish Council regarding land contiguous with Malton but within Hutton Ambo parish, a Neighbourhood Area application was subsequently made and the Malton and Norton Neighbourhood Area designated by RDC on February 19th 2019.

Between 2011 and 2021, extensive community engagement was undertaken, involving questionnaires, community drop-ins and public meetings, together with consultation with RDC and a range of statutory and non-statutory bodies. The key engagement stages were:-

- 2011-2016 – Early years engagement via questionnaire, interactive website, public exhibitions, postal mail out and focus group meetings;
- January-February 2019 - Informal sites and policy options consultation;
- February-March 2021 - Regulation 14 consultation on a Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan.

4. Neighbourhood Plan Consultees

Over the nine years of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation process, a wide range of people and bodies have been consulted at the various preparation stages. These may be summarized as follows:-

- All residents in the Neighbourhood Area;
- All businesses and landowners in the Neighbourhood Area;
- All community and voluntary groups in the Neighbourhood Area;
- Statutory consultees;
- A range of non-statutory consultees, e.g. North Yorkshire Clinical Commissioning Group, National trainers Federation, Yorkshire Wildlife Trust.

A full list of statutory and non-statutory consultees can be found at Appendix 3.

5. Consultation Stages and Issues Raised

Early Years Engagement

In April 2011, an initial two month plus community-wide consultation exercise was carried out via a questionnaire (see Appendices 4A and 4B). This was available both electronically, via a specially constructed website, and as a hard copy. The exercise was supported by public exhibitions held in the two towns on the 9th and 30th of May.

The exercise resulted in the completion of 492 questionnaires, with some 75% submitted via hard copy. There was a more or less even split between Malton and Norton residents together with submissions from interested parties outside the two parishes. A full schedule and analysis of responses can be found at Appendix 5, with a 'Schedule of Recommended Changes' to emerging policies, as contained in a report to the two town councils at Appendix 6.

In December 2015, the town councils sent out a letter to over a thousand interested parties, including businesses, professionals, local organisations, key stakeholders, retailers, schools, sports facilities and health care centres, inviting interest in joining focus groups, covering community/leisure, environment, forward planning and heritage, together with an overall Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group.

The groups subsequently formed met throughout 2016 and provided the basis for ongoing engagement with the community during this period. Their work resulted in a list of matters to be covered in the Neighbourhood Plan and shaped the nature of the policy content. This in turn, together with the outputs from the initial questionnaire consultation, resulted in an early draft of a pre-submission plan. The minutes of both focus groups and steering groups can be found on the Neighbourhood Plan pages of the Malton town Council website.

Informal Sites and Policy Options Consultation

The draft pre-submission plan contained a number of policies and proposals relating to individual sites and buildings within the towns. As such, it was considered necessary to carry out a targeted informal consultation with those with legal interests in these sites/buildings, as well as giving local people the opportunity to comment on these detailed proposals. The plan also included matters that split opinion within the group and over which unanimous agreement could not be reached. It was therefore also decided to informally seek the views of the community on the subjects of housing mix, Wentworth Street Car Park and the pedestrianisation of Malton Market Place, with a view to obtaining a steer on plan policies covering these topics.

The 'Informal Sites and Policy Options Consultation' was carried out over a period of some four weeks from 25th January until 25th February 2019. It involved the sending of a letter, with site map and response form, to all affected land owners (see Appendices 7A, 7B and 7C), together with the delivery of a 'Policy Options Newsletter' to all addresses within the Neighbourhood Area (see Appendix 8). The consultation also included two day-long community drop-ins at Malton and Norton Council Chambers.

The informal sites element of the consultation attracted 19 separate responses, with 16 made by response form (with/without supplements) and a further 3 by e-mail or letter. The 19 responses related to 19 of the 21 consultation sites as well as to a small number of more general issues (see Results Grid at Appendix 9).

The policy options consultation element attracted 223 separate responses, with 221 made by response form (with/without supplements) and a further 2 by e-mail or letter (see Report on Results at Appendix 10).

The responses to the 'Informal Sites and Policy Options Consultation' were used during early 2019 to refine and finalise a Pre-Submission Draft Neighbourhood Plan for Malton and Norton.

Statutory Regulation 14 Consultation on Pre-Submission Draft Plan

The Pre-Submission Draft Plan was the subject of a statutory six week Regulation 14 consultation period from February 12th to 26th March 2021. The consultation was carried out in accordance with regulations and involved all those identified in the list at Appendix 3.

Documentation comprised the full draft plan, a plan summary and questionnaire available on survey Monkey and as a hard copy (see Appendices 11A and 11B). These were also available online, and on the RDC website, along with all previous documents from the NP process. A copy of the full plan was made available at four locations around the area (NB limited by Covid-19 restrictions). As part of this consultation, three 'online drop-in' community events were held on 2nd, 6th and 16th March, where people were given the opportunity to drop in, listen to a presentation and ask questions.

The consultation attracted 57 separate detailed representations from a range of statutory consultees, organisations and individuals, via Survey Monkey, e-mail and written submissions. A summary report and detailed results grid can be found at Appendices 12A and 12B respectively.

All representations were carefully considered and agreed actions in response reflected in the final submission plan.

Summary of Main Issues Raised At Each Stage and How They Were Addressed

Early Years Engagement

The many issues and concerns raised by the community in the 2011 consultation are clearly set out at Appendix 5.

Appendix 6 indicates how the consultation influenced the policy content of the emerging plan at this very early stage.

Over the years until the next community-wide consultation in early 2019, the early draft plan was refined in the light of focus group work, the adoption of the Local Plan Strategy and the firming up of the Local Plan Sites Document. This saw the introduction of policies covering Heritage and Design (based on the work of a specialist consultant commission), the Environment.

With the commissioning of consultants, this early draft evolved into a more robust draft plan, from which the policies covering the following topics were removed on the grounds they did not relate to planning matters or were Local Plan matters:-

- Highways, Roads and Traffic policies relating to a town centres one way system and an HGV ban;
- River Derwent policies relating to the setting up of a trust; the prevention of siltation; SSSI restoration to 1986 conditions; Environment Agency legal powers; a River Rail corridor Study; and partial declassification of the SSSI;
- Car Parking policies covering a car parking strategy and pricing;
- Hospital policies relating to a variety of topics;
- A libraries cost saving policy;
- Schools policies;
- Housing policies relating to housing location, allocation and affordability – deemed to be Local Plan matters;
- Employment policies relating to off-street parking; phasing of development sites; plot and unit types; broadband; protection of employment sites – deemed to be Local Plan matters;
- Retail policies relating to a variety of topics, deemed either to be Local Plan or non-planning matters;
- Site-specific policies relating to Livestock Market, Showfield, Wheelgate, Mount Hotel, York House, East Mount, Highfield Road and Eden Road – deemed to be Local Plan matters.
- Milton and Assembly Rooms policies;
- Sports and Leisure policies relating to ‘pay as you go’; encouragement of leisure activities; and compensation for playing field loss.

This resulted in the plan which formed the basis of the informal sites and policy options consultation.

Informal Sites and Policy Options Consultation

Regarding the informal sites consultation, comments were sought and received in respect of site-specific proposals for:-

- Transport Sites
- River Corridor Sites
- Candidate Local Green Spaces;
- Tourism Sites;
- Heritage and Design Sites;
- A Norton-specific Site

As a result of comments received, both in objection and support, together with suggestions regarding additional sites, action was taken as follows:-

- Transport Sites in Policy TM4 (NB TM2 in Submission NP) - policy was reworded in order to safeguard sites in question against prejudicial/sterilising development regarding pedestrian/cycle river/railway crossings, removing reference to on-site 'enabling' development.
- Transport Sites in Policy TM6 (NB TM5 in Submission NP) - policy was reworded in order to safeguard sites in question against prejudicial/sterilising development regarding pedestrian/cycle river/railway crossings, removing reference to on-site 'enabling' development.
- Transport Site TM6-1 and TM6-2 (NB TM5-1 and TM5-2 in Submission NP) - clarity of site mapping was addressed on Pre-Submission NP Proposals Map.
- Transport Sites in Policy TM7 (NB TM3 in Submission NP) - policy was reworded in order to safeguard sites in question against prejudicial/sterilising development regarding pedestrian/cycle river/railway crossings, removing reference to on-site 'enabling' development.
- River Corridor Site RC3 (NB RC2 in Submission NP)
 - the wording 'for employment and/or housing uses' was deleted from the end of policy para 1.
 - Yorkshire Water access and public convenience retention/replacement were added to list of things to which regard should be had in any development scheme.
- Local Green Space Sites in policy E3 (NB E1 in Submission NP)
 - as a result of comments regarding the need to go beyond considering green space sites in isolation, the plan was amended to include a policy on green infrastructure (E4 in the Submission NP).
 - all candidate Local Green Spaces (LGS) were re-assessed using a new pro-forma directly relating to NPPF LGS eligibility criteria.

-‘High Malton’ was assessed as a candidate LGS, but excluded from the NP at this stage as not being eligible.

- Norton-specific Site N1 (Land to the Rear of Commercial Street) – policy wording was amended to indicate encouragement for regeneration.

The comments made and response to those comments which underpin the above actions are set out in full at Appendix 9.

Regarding the policy options consultation, comments were sought and received in respect of:-

- The proposed housing mix for the towns;
- Wentworth Street Car Park; and
- The pedestrianisation of Malton Market Place.

As a result of consultation findings, action was taken as follows:-

- A Housing Mix policy (H1) was introduced to the NP, lending support for a Malton and Norton specific housing mix policy reflecting the findings of the consultation and referencing the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA).
- A Wentworth Street Car Park policy (M1) was introduced to the NP, protecting part of the site in its existing public car parking use and including reference to car park improvements within the policy, drawing on consultation suggestions.
- A new hotel policy (Wentworth Street TC4) was introduced to the encouraging and supporting development of a hotel with public car parking on the upper deck of the existing car park.
- A Malton Market Place policy (M2) was introduced to the NP, protecting the site in its existing public car parking use and including reference to car park improvements within the policy, drawing on consultation suggestions.

The analysis of and response to the results of the consultation which underpin the above actions are set out in full in the report on the consultation on policy options at Appendix 10.

Statutory Regulation 14 Consultation

The main consultation comments related to the following:-

- Some lack of alignment between NP and Local Plan statements;
- Lack of references to climate change and related issues;
- Loose wording of Policy TM1;
- Suggested new route to add to Policy TM1;
- View that any new unallocated development should not exacerbate exiting town centre congestion and should be located to allow direct A64 access;

- Lack of clarity regarding practical import/benefit of TM3-2 (NB TM5-2 in Submission NP);
- Need for better evidence/justification regarding Policy TM4 (NB TM3 in Submission NP) highway improvements;
- Unacceptable indicative alignment of TM4-4 (NB TM3-4 in submission NP);
- Unacceptable indicative alignment of TM4-5 (NB TM3-5 in submission NP);
- Strengthening/caveating of Policy TM5 (NB TM4 in Submission NP);
- Amendment to boundary of area covered by Policy RC2 to include all land in ownership of Fitzwilliam Malton Estate;
- Referencing of all SINC (Site of Importance for Nature Conservation) sites in the NP and on NP Map;
- Inclusion of new policy on provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure;
- Suggested additional Local Green Space sites – notably ‘High Malton’;
- Lack of clarity regarding Policy E2;
- Suggested rephrasing of Policy E3 and amendments to supporting text;
- Need to clearly identify and evidence the key views referenced in Policy E5;
- Querying of realism of new doctors’ surgery aspiration in Policy CF3;
- Concerns regarding restrictions placed on racing stables by Policy HRI1;
- Lack of clarity regarding intent and implementation of Policy HRI2;
- Lack of clarity regarding implementation of Policy H1;
- Inclusion of reference to ‘green industries’ in Policy EM1;
- Inclusion of specific support for retail and light industry, and possibly housing, uses in Policy N1;
- Misleading text relating to Ryedale CIL in Monitoring section of NP.

The ‘results grid’ at Appendix 12B sets out individual comments in respect of these matters and the detailed responses to them.

The most significant changes to the plan as a result of the above were:-

- NP text amended in Section 2 to remove implied criticism of RDC and achieve better alignment between NP and Local Plan;
- Paragraph added to introduction to Section 4.3 (Environment) explaining the NP approach to and content regarding climate change and related issues;
- New route – TM1-8 Middlecave Road-Malton Community Sports Centre (via Malton School Grounds) – added to Policy TM1;
- Policy TM6 (Development on Unallocated Sites) added to NP to address concern regarding any new unallocated development not exacerbating exiting town centre congestion and to encourage locations which allow direct A64 access;
- Explanation and graphic added regarding the benefits and possible implementation of TM3-2 (NB TM5-2 in Submission NP);
- Text added to explain/justify Policy TM4 (NB TM3 in Submission NP);
- TM4-4 (NB TM3-4 in Submission NP) indicative alignment deleted from NP

- Proposals Map. Map amended to indicate only start and end points for the envisaged road;
- TM4-5 (NB TM3-5 in Submission NP) indicative alignment deleted from NP Proposals Map. Map amended to indicate new start and end points for the envisaged road;
 - Wording of Policy TM5 (NB TM4 in Submission NP) amended to include caveat regarding evidencing of development in terms of highway safety, congestion and air quality;
 - Policy RC2 site boundary amended on NP Proposals Map to include land requested for inclusion by Fitzwilliam Malton Estate;
 - NP text and Proposals Map amended to include reference to all SINCs within the Neighbourhood Area;
 - Policy TM7 (Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure) added to the plan;
 - Suggested additional LGS sites assessed, resulting in 1 addition – The Plantation/Long Plantation - to the E1 policy list and NP Proposals Map;
 - A detailed 'Key Gateway Views' appendix, with photographs and brief descriptions of all specified views, added to the plan and referenced from Gateways Policy E5;
 - Policy CF3 and supporting text amended to reflect more likely improvement to existing medical facilities as opposed to new centre development;
 - Policy HRI1 wording amended in order to lessen restrictions placed on racing stables wishing to redevelop or change use;
 - Reference to green industries added to Policy EM1;
 - Policy N1 amended to include specific support for retail and light industrial uses;
 - Wording of the following policies, and supporting text where necessary, amended in order to improve clarity:- TM1, E2, E3, HRI2 and H1;
 - Misleading Ryedale CIL text in Section 6 deleted.

6. Conclusion – Reflection on Consultation Process and Outcomes

The Process

In general terms, it is the town councils' view that the overall consultation process, over a period of some ten years, has provided ample and appropriate opportunity for local community and wider stakeholder engagement, involving two non-statutory consultation stages (initial engagement and informal sites and policies consultation) plus engagement via focus groups, leading up to the final statutory Regulation 14 consultation. This has been supplemented throughout by the opportunity to attend regular and frequent NP Steering Group meetings and full town council meetings where the NP has been a regular agenda item.

What has been noticeable over the plan preparation period – in pure numerical terms - is a gradual dropping away of public interest, from the relatively high initial levels, through lower informal consultation levels and down to quite modest numbers at Regulation 14 stage.

Inevitably, 'plan fatigue' is likely to account for a degree of 'dropping-off' over the years. The plan has been a long time in development, with the process both elongated and complicated, in the public's mind, by the parallel preparation of the Local Plan Strategy and then the Local Plan Sites Document. It is notoriously difficult to generate and maintain community engagement in what can quite often seem to be quite remote and abstract matters.

The absence, for the most part, of controversial issues of particular concern to the local community is also likely to be a factor. However, where local issues did exist, e.g. in relation to the High Malton site and the indicative lines of possible future highway improvements, this clearly generated significant comment and concern at Regulation 14 stage. It should also be noted that informal consultation on just a limited range of issues – housing mix, Wentworth Street and Malton Market Place Car Parks did generate a lively interest and response. What seems to be clear from the Regulation 14 stage is the general support for the majority of the NP's policies and other provisions.

What is also noticeable is the healthy response from statutory consultees and other stakeholders at the Regulation 14 stage, building from the more limited involvement earlier in the process.

What could perhaps have been done better over the preparation process was the specific targeting of older, younger and disabled interests within the community, in order to better establish their specific needs. That said, it is fair to say that younger people's interests are clearly identified under 'community actions' in the 'Community Facilities and Services' section of the Neighbourhood Plan (i.e. Section 5) and in Policies CF1 and CF2. They were also specifically engaged with at initial stages. Both the older population and disabled interests were felt to be already well-catered for.

The Outcomes

As a result of the consultation process, the town councils are satisfied that Neighbourhood Plan policies:-

- reflect key community concerns as expressed at initial issues, focus group and informal consultation stages;
- respond positively to objections and comments received at the Regulation 14 consultation stage, where considered to be appropriate and feasible.

Additionally, Neighbourhood Plan 'community actions' take on board many of the community's non-planning concerns, as expressed via consultations and as filtered by the town councils in the light of up-to-date circumstances and knowledge.