

JOINT MELKSHAM AREA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Draft Consultation Statement

Regulation 14 Version

Text in blue to be updated after Regulation 14 consultation



MELKSHAM
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLAN

INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document is a working draft version. The Consultation Statement is legally required to be submitted with the Neighbourhood Plan as part of the next formal round of consultation. As such, this working draft version is not complete, but is being shared at this stage to share the consultation process that has been undertaken to date. The next version of this document will be completed after formal Regulation 14 consultation, to include Section 2 which will provide detail on the formal Regulation 14 process and comments received from consultees during this process.
- 1.2 This draft consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012¹ in respect of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan. Section 15(2) of part 5 of the regulations requires that a Consultation Statement should:
- Contain details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Plan
 - Explain how they were consulted
 - Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted and
 - Describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.3 Section 1 (Pre-Regulation 14 Consultation) gives an overview of the various consultation events and activities held to date, that have led to the production of the Draft Melksham Neighbourhood Plan and the policies contained within it.
- 1.4 Supporting information relating to this Statement is available on the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan website: <http://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/>
- 1.5 Section 2 is to come and will give an overview of formal consultation – termed Regulation 14 consultation – which will take place in April – May 2020.

SECTION 1 PRE-REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION

Approach to Consultation

- 2.1 Throughout the preparation stages of the Melksham Neighbourhood Plan, the Steering Group have worked hard to engage with residents and various stakeholders on the progress of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- 2.2 The Melksham Neighbourhood Steering Group was originally formed in 2012 following several meetings with both Melksham Town Council and Melksham Without Parish Council to prepare a joint neighbourhood plan. The

¹ Localism Act 2011

Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group was originally made up of 10 permanent voting members as follows:

- Two representatives each from the Town and Parish Council
- One representative from Melksham Area Board
- One representative from the Melksham Community Area Partnership
- One representative from the business community.
- One representative from the health community.
- One representative for environmental and climate change interests
- One representative for the historic and built environment

In addition, two officers each from both councils, as well as a representative of the Wiltshire Council Spatial Planning Team attend meetings.

2.3 During the Plan preparation, the Steering Group created 5 topic groups, following feedback from members of the public on their priorities, to ensure they were fully examined and addressed in the context of the detailed guidance contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the Wiltshire Core Strategy. The topic groups were as follows and were made up of members of the wider community, the 'lead' of each topic group then joined the Steering Group:

- Employment & Economy
- Transport
- Housing
- Health & Wellbeing
- Education

2.4 In August 2017 consultants were appointed to help with public consultation and to help collate a housing site survey.

Consultation Activities

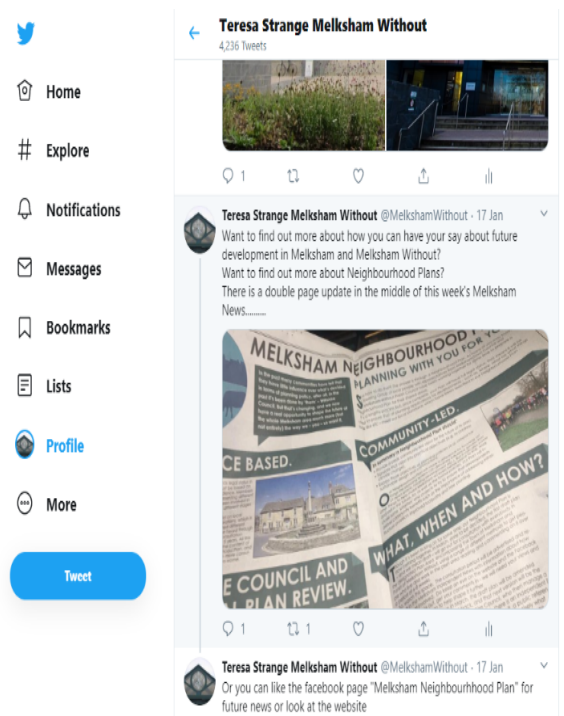
Online

3.1 A Website was created to keep residents up to date with progress and events promoting the various stages of the plan (see: <http://www.melkshamneighbourhoodplan.org/>). Both councils had links to the Neighbourhood Plan on their own websites.

3.2 Both councils also kept residents up-to-date on progress via social media (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram). There is also a separate Neighbourhood Plan Facebook group.



Examples of Facebook Posts



Examples of Twitter and Instagram Posts

Local Newspapers and Magazines

- 3.3 Information on consultation events, as well as various articles on the Neighbourhood Plan were also published in the local Paper, Melksham Independent News which is circulated to over 13,700+ dwellings for free every two weeks.

<http://melkshamnews.com/2016/11/02/villages-to-get-say-on-neighbourhood-plan/>

<https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=13635e85-0abe-483a-9978-144ba02e729b>

(see page 16-17 for Neighbourhood Plan article)

and an article on protecting green spaces within the town:

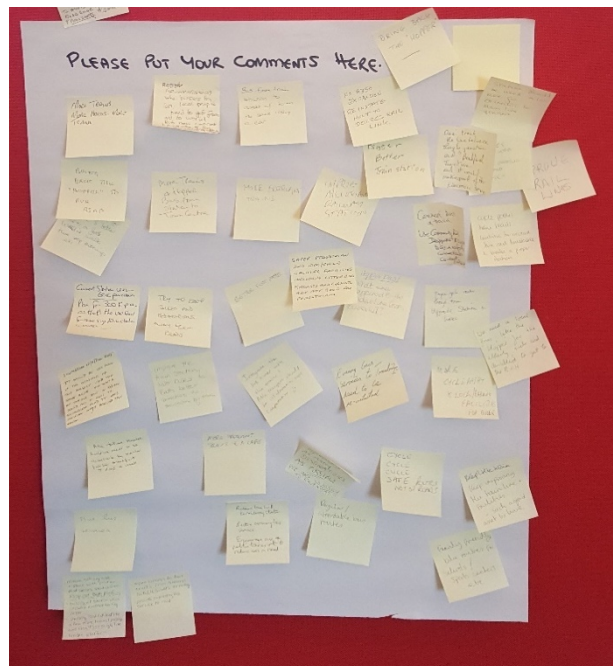
<http://melkshamnews.com/2017/08/30/is-there-a-green-space-in-melksham-you-feel-needs-protecting/>

- 3.4 Information was also provided in several community magazines such as Bowerhill Villager and Shaw/Whitley Connect newsletters.

Consultation Events

- 3.5 A Public consultation Group, was set up on 14 December 2014 reporting to the Steering Group. The brief for the group was to agree a suggested calendar of engagement activities, budgetary requirements for hall hire costs, advertising etc. Various stakeholders were invited to join this group, such as community groups, schools and charitable organisations. The group early on purchased floor banners to help promote public engagement events.
- 3.6 A number of drop-in events were held throughout the Neighbourhood Plan process at various locations within the Neighbourhood Plan area. (See Table 1 below of the various sessions held). Consultation also took place at various community events, such as the Christmas Lights Switch on and Melksham's Food Festival.
- 3.7 Consultation events involved members of the steering group providing post-it stickers for members of the public to write comments on against various topics, such as transport, education, housing, health & wellbeing and employment/economy.
- 3.8 In order to engage with the younger generation the Steering Group used Instagram. In order to engage with the older generation, flyers for some events were also produced. The Steering Group approached Christie Miller Sports Centre, who distributed flyers with receipts on the group's behalf advertising consultation events.

- 3.9 Consultation events were held on different days and different times of day in order to attract a wider audience.
- 3.10 In November-December 2017 with the assistance of public engagement consultants, housing sites community engagement took place using an on-line survey, hard copies were available in various locations, such as the Town Hall, Melksham Without offices and the library, for those without access to a computer, with over 200 people responding to the consultation on future housing growth with over 1,200 individual comments made. The Chairman quoting in the local press *“It is fantastic that so many people got involved in this engagement, as the Neighbourhood Plan must express the views of the local people and how they see their area developing in the future”*.



Public consultation events 1 & 2 July 2016
at Melksham Town Hall



Examples of posters and advertisements in the local press

Questionnaires

3.11 A questionnaire was also sent to local estate agents seeking their views on the following with regard to industrial units:

- What size units are you experiencing demand for?
- Do you foresee a change in demand as businesses expand or working practices change?
- What specifications and requirements are your enquiries demanding?
- How can Melksham 'win' business to this area under a SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats)
- What industry does the proximity of the railway attract?

With regard to retail the following questions were asked:

- What size are you experiencing demand for?
- As people change their shopping habits and move online how will this change high street property demand and usage?

Business Survey

3.12 A business online survey was undertaken in late 2015. Various businesses within the Neighbourhood Plan area were asked to complete the survey. The survey included various questions such as, sustainable growth of the town and what the local community could do to encourage local businesses to employ more local people, how many people were employed by them, what attracted them to base themselves in Melksham, what facilities did they wish to see provided locally that would contribute to business life in Melksham.

Summary of Events and Activities

Table 1

See 'Description of Events and Activities' below for more detail

Date	Location	Activity/Event
27 March 2015 2.00pm-7.00pm	Assembly Hall, Market Place	Open House Launch event
28 March 2015 10.00am-2.00pm	Assembly Hall, Market Place	Open House Launch event
11 July 2015 12.30pm-3.30pm	Shaw Village Hall	Community Action: Whitley & Shaw (CAWS) Community Event
6 September 2015	King George V Park	Stall at Food & River Festival

19 September 2015	Bowerhill Village Hall	Bowerhill Residents Action Group (BRAG) Community Group event – Community Engagement
February 2016	Assembly Hall	Public Meeting on health issues
6 June 2016		Briefing of Melksham Town Council & Melksham Without Parish Council
30 June 2016	Assembly Hall	Melksham Seniors Community Event
1 July 2016 4.30pm-7.30pm	Melksham Town Hall	Open House
2 July 2016 10.00am-2.00pm	Melksham Town Hall	Open House
July 2016	Assembly Hall	Melksham Seniors Event
4 September 2016	King George V Park	Food & River Festival
6 September 2016	Assembly Hall	Public meeting on health issues
5 November 2016 10.00am-12 noon	Shaw Primary School	Open House
8 November 2016 7.00pm-9.00pm	Bowerhill Village Hall	Open House
3 December 2016	Market Place	Xmas Lights Switch-on event

24 January 2017 6.00pm-8.00pm	Berryfield Village Hall	Engagement Event
9 February 2017 6.00pm-8.00pm	Melksham Rugby/Football Club, Oakfields Stadium	Engagement Event
2 March 2017 6.30pm	Assembly Hall	Health Meeting
18 May 2017	Whitley Reading Rooms	Update at Melksham Without Parish Council's Annual Parish meeting
10 November 2017 4.00pm-7.00pm	Christie Miller Sports Centre	Drop-in consultation on housing sites
11 November 2017 11.30pm-2.30pm	Guides Hut, King George V Park	Drop-in consultation on housing sites
6 January 2020 7.00pm	Oakfields Stadium	Update on Neighbourhood Plan at Area Board Meeting

Description of Events and Activities

3.13 The Steering Group felt it important that all settlements within the neighbourhood plan area had an opportunity to be involved therefore, various consultation, open house events were held in both the town and the parish.

27/28 March 2015 'Open House' Launch events held in the Assembly Hall

3.14 These events were the first events held to inform residents and seek their views. These 'Open House' events were held between 2.00pm-7.00pm and 10.00am-2.00pm respectively.

3.15 The hall was laid out as a theatre style arrangement for the 'launch' events with a semi circle configuration of display panels with various topics on such as education, housing, transport, health & well being and economy / employment. Residents provided their views using posit-it notes. Several members of the Steering Group were on hand to discuss queries.

- 3.16 Feedback from people who attended indicated that it was generally well received. This event generated 'Next Steps', such as collating the various comments under the various working group topic headings.

1 and 2 July 2016 'Open House' Event, Town Hall held 4.30pm-7.30pm and 10.00am-2.00pm respectively

- 3.17 Again several consultation boards were available, with people able to add comments using post-it notes. Several members of the steering group were also on hand to answer any questions.

- 3.18 Approximately 400 comments were received from those who attended these events. With a table being drawn up and divided into various subject headings, such as housing, transport, education, health & wellbeing and economy/employment

5 and 8 November 2016 'Open House' Events held 10.00am-12 Midday and 7.00pm-9.00pm respectively

- 3.19 These events were held in Shaw Primary School and Bowerhill Village Hall from 10.00am-12 noon and 7.00pm-9.00pm respectively.

- 3.20 These events were promoted with a half page advertisement in Melksham Independent News, with articles in various local media, as well as articles in community newsletters, such as Bowerhill Villager and Connect (Shaw & Whitley Newsletter).

- 3.21 Both these events were well attended and followed a similar information format used previously. These events generated plenty of questions and discussion about various issues, such as health care, employment, education and transport to name but a few, with people leaving comments and questions on post-it notes provided.

24 January and 9 February 2017 held 6.00pm-8.00pm and 6.00pm-8.00pm respectively

- 3.22 These events were held in Berryfield Village Hall and Melksham Rugby Club, Oakfields Stadium, respectively.

- 3.23 Whilst both events were well publicised, with flyers for the event at Oakfields Stadium in particular being available at various locations, including the fish & chip shop, Verbena Court (local community centre) and in the local press. The Rugby Club event was poorly attended, despite the Steering Group's best efforts, which was disappointing, as in choosing this venue, it was hoped to attract a lot of the residents who had recently moved into the East of Melksham estate (approximately 800 houses).

- 3.24 Again various display boards were available, covering the various topic headings, with post-it notes being available for people to leave any comments.

10 November 2017 – Christie Miller Sports Centre & 11 November 2017 – Melksham Guides Hut held 4.00pm-7.00pm and 11.30pm-2.30pm respectively

- 3.25 Consultation events on the various sites were held at both the Guides Hut, King George V Park and Christie Miller Sports Centre, Bowerhill. Community Engagement Consultants, as well as various members of the Steering Group were in attendance to answer any questions.
- 3.26 The event at Christie Miller, despite being well advertised in the local press, social media and patrons of Christie Miller being provided with a leaflet advertising the consultation events with their receipts, unfortunately the consultation was poorly attended.

6 January 2020 – Melksham Rugby Club, Oakfields Stadium at 7.00pm

- 3.27 Both the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Steering Group attended the meeting to address various stakeholders in the wider Melksham community area on the progress of the plan.

Community Events

- 3.28 The Steering Group had a stall at various community events with the town, such as the Food & River Festival, Carnival and Xmas Lights Switch on. These events are extremely popular with 500+ people of various age groups at each event, making it a good opportunity for Steering Group members to keep people up to date on the progress of the plan and to seek their views.
- 3.29 Steering Group members also attended various community events within Melksham Without, such as Bowerhill Residents' Community Action Group event and CAWS Community event in Shaw, which are also very popular and well supported by their respective communities.

Public Meetings

- 3.30 Several Members also attended various public meetings and specific groups, such as over 55s and health meetings to make them aware of the plan and seek their views.

SECTION 2 - REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION

4.1 More on this section is to come after Regulation 14 consultation.

Pre-Submission Publicity and Consultation

4.2 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 states that before submitting a plan proposal to the local planning authority, a qualifying body must publicise in a manner that is likely to bring it to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the neighbourhood area:

- details of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan
- details of where and when the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan may be inspected
- details of how to make representations and
- the date by which those representations must be received, being not less than 6 weeks from the date on which the draft proposal is first publicised
- consult any consultation body referred to in paragraph 1 of Schedule 1 whose interests the qualifying body considers may be affected by the proposals for a neighbourhood plan and
- send a copy of the proposals for a neighbourhood development plan to the local planning authority.

4.3 This section of the Consultation Statement will therefore outline the approach taken by the Planning Group to consult on the Draft NDP at the Regulation 14 stage of the process.

Appendix

Articles from Melksham News

Appendix 1: Articles from Melksham News

Links to articles on the Neighbourhood Plan:

Residents make their views known over Melksham Neighbourhood Plan – 14/02/19

<http://melkshamnews.com/2018/02/14/residents-make-their-views-known-over-melksham-neighbourhood-plan/>

‘We need to think outside the box’ Resident sparks debate over neighbourhood plan – 13/02/19

<http://melkshamnews.com/2019/02/13/we-need-to-think-outside-the-box-resident-sparks-debate-over-neighbourhood-plan/>

What’s important to you in Melksham? – 04/07/18

<http://melkshamnews.com/2018/07/04/whats-important-to-you-in-melksham/>

‘We need a vision for Melksham!’ Council to create visionary document for town’s future – 25/04/18

<http://melkshamnews.com/2018/04/25/we-need-a-vision-for-melksham-council-to-create-visionary-document-for-towns-future/>

Still time to add your views about future housing in Melksham - 13/12/17

<http://melkshamnews.com/2017/12/13/still-time-to-add-your-views-about-future-housing-in-melksham-3/>

Is there a green space in Melksham you feel needs protecting? – 30/08/17

<http://melkshamnews.com/2017/08/30/is-there-a-green-space-in-melksham-you-feel-needs-protecting/>

Neighbourhood plan gets council approval - 04/01/17

<http://melkshamnews.com/2017/01/04/neighbourhood-plan-gets-council-approval/>

Villages to get say on neighbourhood plan – 02/11/16

<http://melkshamnews.com/2016/11/02/villages-to-get-say-on-neighbourhood-plan/>

Neighbourhood Plan Open House meeting – 18/05/16

<http://melkshamnews.com/2016/05/18/neighbourhood-plan-open-house-meeting/>

Help shape Melksham’s future with the neighbourhood plan – 13/01/16

<http://melkshamnews.com/2016/01/13/help-shape-melkshams-future-with-the-neighbourhood-plan/>

New film about Melksham Neighbourhood Plan – 12/08/15

<http://melkshamnews.com/2015/08/12/new-film-about-melksham-neighbourhood-plan/>

Neighbourhood Plan website goes live – 15/07/15

<http://melkshamnews.com/2015/07/15/neighbourhood-plan-website-goes-live/>

MELKSHAM 2026: Task Groups tackle Neighbourhood Plan issues – 03/06/15

<http://melkshamnews.com/2015/06/03/melksham-2026-task-groups-tackle-neighbourhood-plan-issues/>

Open House to share ideas on Melksham Neighbourhood Plan – 25/02/15
<http://melkshamnews.com/2015/02/25/open-house-to-share-ideas-on-melksham-neighbourhood-plan/>

Design a logo for the Melksham 2025 Neighbourhood Plan – 14/01/15
<http://melkshamnews.com/2015/01/14/design-a-logo-for-the-melksham-2025-neighbourhood-plan/>

Community will get their say on Neighbourhood Plan – 22/10/14
<http://melkshamnews.com/2014/10/22/community-will-get-their-say-on-neighbourhood-plan/>

Neighbourhood plan delay as Melksham councils try to agree terms – 09/04/14
<http://melkshamnews.com/2014/04/09/neighbourhood-plan-delay-as-melksham-councils-try-to-agree-terms/>

Melksham's councils join forces to plan town's future – 29/01/14
<http://melkshamnews.com/2014/01/29/melkshams-councils-join-forces-to-plan-towns-future/>