

New Milton Neighbourhood Plan 2016-2036

CONSULTATION STATEMENT

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1. Introduction

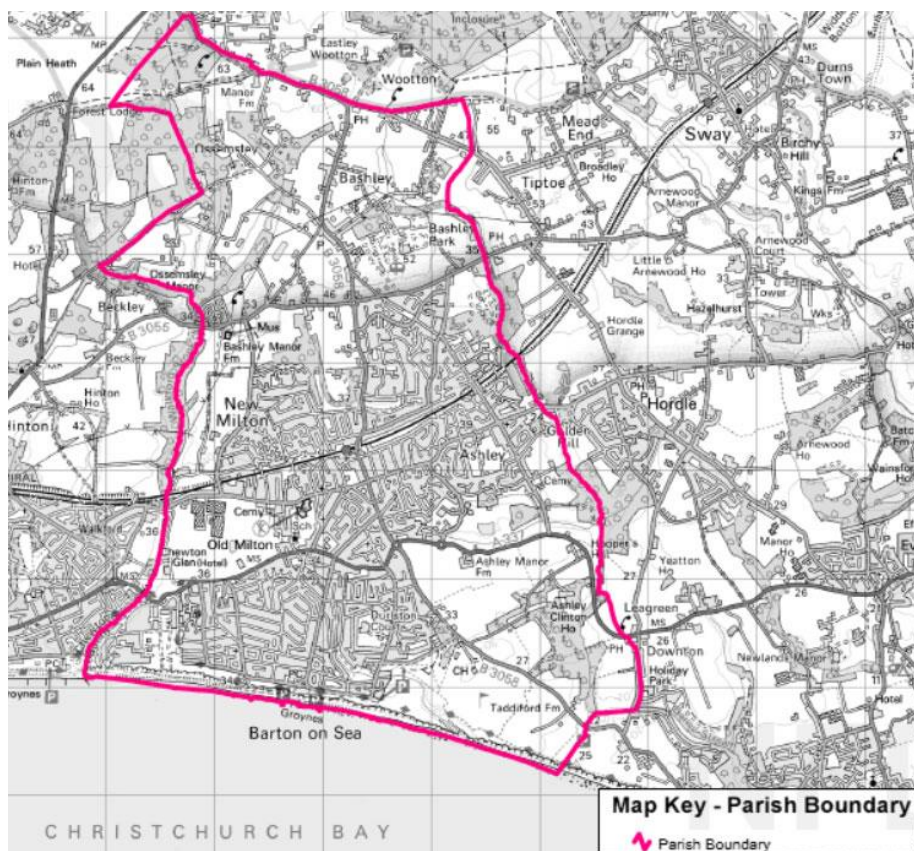
This consultation statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 in respect of the New Milton Neighbourhood Plan (NMNP). The legal basis of this Statement is provided by Section 15 (2) of part 5 of the 2012 Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, which requires that a consultation statement should:

- Contain details of the persons and bodies that were consulted about the proposed Neighbourhood Development Plan;
- Explain how they were consulted;
- Summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and
- Describe how those issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.

2. Neighbourhood Area Designation

To ensure the most appropriate area was selected, the whole parish was included because each area is interlinked in terms of geographical area and proximity to each other and the services each area provides. Although each area has their own identities, it was considered that the community is integrated as they share a central infrastructure system.

Therefore it was proposed that the plan should provide the parish of New Milton with an opportunity to better address the communities' needs and infrastructure requirements as a collective whole rather than separate entities.



3. The Consultation Process

3.1. Timeline

6 November 2014	Planning Committee of Town Council recommends town undertakes a Neighbourhood Plan.
20 November 2014	At a special meeting of Town Council's Planning Committee, it was agreed: To seek permission from NFDC/NFNPA that New Milton parish be designated as a Neighbourhood Area; That the Neighbourhood Plan synchronise with NFDC's Local Plan Review.
5 January 2015	These decisions were endorsed at a meeting of the Town Council.
13 February 2015	NFDC confirmed New Milton parish as a Neighbourhood Area.
22 April 2015	Pre-election working group meeting held to agree which outside bodies to invite to the Working Group.
27 May 2015	Initial meeting of Working Group held including representatives from the Town Council, Town Partnership, The Residents' Association and NewBiz. Agreed that the Neighbourhood Plan would be a standing item at Town Council Planning Committee to report, in turn, to Town Council.
24 June 2015	Terms of Reference approved at a meeting of the Working Group.
15 January 2016	Statement of Community Engagement and Communication – a working document outlining statutory requirement, good practice, key stages of

	engagement, communications mix, key stakeholders, target segments and community groups – discussed and agreed at Working Group meeting.
11 July 2016	Press release issued on plans for public consultation later in the year.
14 July 2016	Working Group meeting where it was agreed that Planning Consultants be contracted to advise the Group.
6 September 2016	Following an agreed quotation, Planning Consultants rCOH (later renamed O’Neill Homer), experienced in Neighbourhood Plans, were appointed by the Town Council.
October 2016	Initial Consultation to Set Vision Local community survey.
October 2016	Working Group Vision Workshop
12 January 2017	Working Group meeting held where the following was agreed: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task Groups and members - to work up concepts for policy areas. Appendix 3: ‘Task Groups’. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for a younger demographic for a self-sustaining community. • Introductory and progress meetings with relevant land interests. Also: A secure online filing system was set up to enable secure access by the Group and Advisors to all relevant documents.
March 2017	Vision/Town Centre Consultation
July 2017	Town Centre site owners identified from Land Registry and door-to-door enquiries, for consultation purposes.
October 2017	Ensuring consistency with NFDC’s Local Plan policies, and referring to policy concepts from the Working Group, our Planning Consultants developed draft policies within an initial Draft Plan. After review by the Working Group, an abridged version was provided to Councillors for review and subsequently approved with minor amendments.
November 2017- January 2018	The Draft Plan was provided to all key stakeholders for feedback - followed by meetings with land interests and with key people at NFDC. Feedback from NFDC, HCC, Natural England, Environment Agency and other parties was collated by the Planning Consultants.
January 2018	NFDC requested that the Pre-Submission Consultation be started after Easter to allow more time for NFDC to consult on the Plan. Consequently, the six-week Consultation process was planned to start on 3 rd April, 2018.
12 March 2018	At an extraordinary meeting of the Town Council, Members approved the updated Neighbourhood Plan, subject to any final amendments and additions, and agreed it should go to public consultation on 3 rd April 2018.
March 2018	Draft Sustainability Assessment Report received from AECOM. After minor amendment to Policy titles, this was confirmed as supporting evidence for the Pre-Submission Consultation.
April 2018	Pre-Submission Consultation – 6 weeks commencing 3 rd April 2018
5 th July 2018	Working Group meeting briefed members on outcomes from the Consultation.
April 2018	Following the Sweetman Judgement of April 2018, any significant development would now require HRA Appropriate Assessments.
July 2018	NFDC Local Plan sent for Consultation until 12 August.
Summer 2018	Meetings held with key stakeholders to address relevant issues. The Caird Avenue site owner had identified silt issues on the designated housing site. Employment opportunities and food store site not affected. (Site not in Local Plan). This was later discussed with NFDC and the Neighbourhood Plan amended to remove the housing site while retaining employment.

<i>September 2018</i>	NP representatives met with NFDC Planning to ensure alignment of approach. Although retained in the Local Plan, NFDC requested two housing sites (Gore Road and Brockhills) be removed from the Neighbourhood Plan.
<i>December 2018</i>	Habitats Regulations Assessment and Appropriate Assessment reports received. This was provided to Natural England for comment; their comments were then provided to NFDC and NPA for review.
<i>January 2019</i>	References to Greenway, in the Neighbourhood Plan were removed at the request of NFDC, as Green Way is an NFDC 'brand' with a specific purpose. The Neighbourhood Plan reverted to referring to a 'Green Loop'.
<i>24 January 2019</i>	New National Planning Policy Framework came into effect.
<i>April 2019</i>	Town Centre section of Plan restructured with policies on sites where there were clear proposals. Where proposals were less clear, sites were shown as 'opportunity areas'. The revised Plan was provided to AECOM for an updated Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Report and Sustainability Assessment (SA) Report.
<i>3 May 2019</i>	Submission Plan finalised and provided to the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and Councillors for review.
<i>May 2019</i>	Updated HRA Report and SA Report received.
<i>13 May 2019</i>	Submission Plan authorised by New Milton Town Council at meeting.

3.2. Initial Consultation to set Vision

With the aim of establishing a 'vision' for the New Milton parish, local residents were surveyed about what they value about New Milton, how they would like to see the town develop; and how they felt about NFDC's proposed new housing sites; as well as healthcare, education and traffic. Survey available as a printed questionnaire, for return to Town Hall; and online. Forms and flyers were available at community, health and sports centres, library, shops, schools. Survey promoted by advertising, PR and social media.

A series of drop-in events were held around the Parish.

415 residents gave their views.

Appendix 1: October 2016 Community Engagement Report.

Community feedback	Action taken
Loved the semi-rural location close to sea and forest; and small town facilities.	All feedback used as a reference for the Vision Workshop.
A more vibrant town centre. Up to half could see the opportunities that new housing could have to make positive changes for everyone; a more vibrant town centre with character – that stays alive in the evening with restaurants and family pubs.	A further consultation asked for views on achieving affordable homes and a more vibrant town centre by increasing the number of homes in the town centre – see Section 3.4.
Affordable homes for younger people including 2-3 bed family homes.	See above.
Jobs Greater employment opportunities of a better quality and variety.	An Innovation and Business Centre (NM9) and a new employment site at Caird

	Avenue (NM3) are included in the Plan to widen employment opportunities.
Health & Wellbeing Most people are happy with their health care now but can see that more clubs for friendship and activities and better cycle and walkways would improve health and wellbeing.	A Health & Wellbeing Centre is proposed (NM8). To significantly improve the town's leisure facilities, a new Cultural & Community Hub is proposed (NM7).
Infrastructure. Over half of respondents were not happy with traffic flow, particularly in the town centre, and over 200 responses for road improvements were made.	Policy NM5 supports junction improvements in the town centre.

3.3. Working Group Vision Workshop

Our Planning Consultants facilitated a 3-hour workshop with 12 impartial participants nominated by the Working Group, representing Town Council Planning, Residents' Association, Youth Services, NewBiz, New Milton Town Partnership and retail, education and health sectors. The workshop established scope and content of the Plan by defining vision and objectives which, effectively, added detail to the community's vision.

Appendix 2: 'Vision Note'.

3.4. Vision/Town Centre Consultation

Objective: To gauge support for the vision to shift demographic by providing more affordable homes for young people; and town centre regeneration through increasing number of homes. [Views also sought on Site K which was later withdrawn by NFDC.]. A survey form was delivered to all households in New Milton including Barton and Bashley, made available at the Town Hall and Library and was accessible online. Response was encouraged by a promotional flyer, advert and press release, and a Drop-in event.

Town centre regeneration through residential development

Over 1,400 people responded with 85% supporting town centre regeneration with more homes.

54% were in favour of policies to allocate land for a greater number of houses than the 930 proposed by NFDC, with the aim of attracting more younger residents.

Based on this feedback, the Neighbourhood Plan was developed to include plans and policies for regeneration of the town centre through additional residential development – and for a policy of increasing the opportunity for affordable homes.

Appendix 4: March 2017 Consultation Report.

3.5. Town Centre Study

A Town Centre Study was commissioned to gain insights into the future opportunities and challenges facing the town centre - to identify evidence, policies and practicalities that can guide change for a number of opportunity areas in the town centre.

Observations made on: low vacancy rate; and higher footfall than similar benchmarked towns.

Key conclusions:

- A revamped Memorial Centre could provide a key public realm function and focal point and play an enhanced role in developing the social interaction in the town centre.
- Both sides of Station Road South provide the opportunity for mixed use development or redevelopment with the opportunity of a new public space and shared space proposals.
- Improved access via foot/cycle/bus will be needed to relieve the added pressure to the road network caused by proposed housing growth.
- There is a greater than average representation of independent retailers which could be used in marketing to differentiate New Milton.
- As the internet plays an increasing role for shoppers, a town centre website could do much to promote the town's shops and facilities.

These conclusions, supporting community views, were incorporated into the Neighbourhood Plan.

3.6.Pre-Submission Consultation

With key stakeholders (See Section 6) and the local community.

A 4-page summary document with comment form was distributed to all households and accessible online. This was promoted by advertising and PR in local media and via social media; flyers were distributed to all age groups.

Drop-in events were held around the parish.

The full Draft Plan was available at the Town Hall, Library and Community Centre – and online at www.newmiltonplan.org.uk which contained more background information on the Neighbourhood Plan and process.

The events were well attended and 401 responses were received from local residents.

Community issues raised focused on:

a. Diversifying Housing.

More support for young and local people, especially key workers, to buy or rent their own homes – including facilitating downsizing.

b. Access/traffic/junctions

- **Brockhills:** 59 people expressed concerns on largely the same issues: Development on green belt inadequate road infrastructure, poor visibility at Sway junction; inadequate footpaths and pavements.
- **South of Gore Road.** Concern about excess traffic being generated at Gore Road and Stem Lane junction.
- **Caird Avenue.** Most concerns related to the extra traffic and lorry movements.
- **Town Centre.** 40 comments were made — most being about increased traffic/congestion and dangerous junctions. A significant number of comments related to:
 - i. Station Road/Osborne Road/Whitefield Road junction
 - ii. Old Milton Road/Lymington Road junction
 - iii. Town Centre traffic lights crossings and junction
 - iv. 13 people recommended pedestrianisation of part of Station Road with a one-way system for traffic for a more attractive Town Centre that's easier to navigate.

c. Improved footpaths and cycle ways. This was welcomed – especially for connecting with the Town Centre, Railway Station, the forest and the coast.

Appendix 5: Pre-Submission Consultation engagement

Appendix 6: Pre-Submission Consultation report.

Key stakeholders were contacted individually and responses tracked. These included: stakeholders, statutory consultees, local groups and utilities. Follow-up meetings were held where issues required further clarification.

The feedback is included in the **Appendix 7: Regulation 14 Report**.

4. Changes Made Resulting from Responses to Pre-Submission Consultation

- The recommendations made in the **Regulation 14 Report**, to the issues raised by statutory consultees and stakeholders, were accepted and addressed in the Submission Report.
- From earlier consultations the community said: A more vibrant town centre. Up to half could see the opportunities that new housing could have to make positive changes for everyone; a more vibrant town centre with character – that stays alive in the evening with restaurants and family pubs.
The Plan had already identified the opportunity to develop the town centre as a social, economic and cultural hub with an evening economy. With the opportunity and support identified, the neighbourhood plan working group sought to include policies about the town centre in developing its objective to widen the role of the town centre.

From the Pre-Submission Consultation, the greatest number of issues related to housing types, dangerous road junctions and traffic congestion.

- **Diversifying Housing.**

There were many requests for more support for young and local people, especially key workers, to buy or rent their own homes – including facilitating downsizing.

A core element of the plan is to contribute to change the demographic profile of New Milton. Its policies, specifically policy NM2 – Diversifying Housing and policy NM4 Design Quality, has therefore been amended to encourage a greater contribution of the types of homes that will support the needs of younger people and families.

- **Road improvements.**

While NM3 Brockhills and NM4 South of Gore Road sites have been removed from the plan, section 7.5 in the plan states that “The Council will seek to secure improvements to Sway Junction and pedestrian access from the Land to the East of Brockhills Lane into the New Forest National Park.”

- **Traffic Study.**

Responding to the concerns raised about traffic/congestion in the town centre, a town centre Transport Study is proposed in the plan to identify opportunity for transport improvements.

- **Footpath and cycle way additions.**

New Milton Town Council will be working with New Forest District Council on ongoing development of footpaths and cycle ways around the town.

5. Working Group members

- Cllr Steve Clarke – Chair
- Cllrs Alvin Reid, Keith Craze, Valya Schooling, Wyn Davies, David Hawkins
- NMRA (residents’ association): Alan Watson, Jill Henneh
- New Milton Town Partnership: Julia Stamper
- Hampshire County Council: Steve Eleftheriou, Highway Engineer
- Local GP: Dr Tim Thurston
- Ballard School: Tim Clark, Marketing Director
- Ordnance Survey Peter Parslow, Geographic Information Architect
- Local residents: Andrew Land, Peter Finch

6. Key Stakeholders

- New Forest District Council
 - Chief Executive
 - Planning
 - Property Services
 - Estates & Valuation Manager
- New Forest National Parks Authority
- Hampshire County Council
 - Planning
 - Education/Children's Services
- English Nature
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- Homes England
- Land interests: Draft Plan: NM2, NM3, NM4, NM5, NM6, NM7
- NM7 Opportunity Sites:
- Network Rail
- AMEY
- SSE
- SGN
- Bournemouth Water
- Southern Water
- Neighbouring Councils

7. Appendices

- Appendix 1: October 2016 Community Engagement Report.
- Appendix 2: Vision Note
- Appendix 3: Task Groups
- Appendix 4: March 2017 Consultation Results.
- Appendix 5: Pre-Submission Consultation engagement
- Appendix 6: Pre-Submission Consultation report.
- Appendix 7: Regulation 14 Report.