

Your Vision  
Our future

## Introduction

The Localism Act was passed by Government in November 2011 and final regulations relating to the Act and regulating the process came into force in April 2012. The Act allows local areas to produce a development plan for their area and, if adopted, future planning applications would have to have regard to the policies within this plan.

In October 2015, after the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group had reported, Crowhurst Parish Council decided to start the process of creating a Neighbourhood Plan and designated the entire Parish as the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan area. Creating a Neighbourhood Plan can take around 2 years to achieve.

The key aims of the Neighbourhood Plan are:

- To create local planning policies for Crowhurst which ensures new development is sustainable and minimises adverse effects on traffic and the environment ;
- To improve facilities for all residents;
- To enhance the provision of essential rural services and infrastructure;
- To protect the rural character and natural environment of the parish.

Two-way communication with the local community during the Neighbourhood Plan is vital for its success and ultimate support through the referendum; therefore, it is important to develop a coherent strategy of how this will be achieved and plan out key stakeholder engagement.

This strategy sets a framework for communications to develop, promote, and support the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan. It gives direction to all media, online, internal, marketing, publications, and public relations communications activity undertaken on behalf of the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Group and Steering Group.

We will use the most appropriate channels of communications to reach our wide variety of stakeholders including residents, businesses, community partners, and all levels of government. We will seek to provide communications services on the most cost – effective basis.

Communication only works when messages are clear and easy to understand and when it is a two - way process. It's not enough to talk – we also have to be able to listen. Therefore, this strategy will set out to ensure that key messages are developed throughout the various stages of the Neighbourhood Plan, are communicated as widely as possible, and stakeholders are provided with multiple methods of providing feedback.

## Objectives

The objectives of the Communication and Engagement Strategy are to:

- Achieve good communication, leading to better feedback and decision-making.
- Ensure that the implications of the Neighbourhood Plan are understood by all stakeholders.
- Allow residents and other relevant stakeholders the opportunity to take part in defining the Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan.
- Ensure that all stakeholders are aware of the Neighbourhood Plan process to include:
  - the roles and responsibilities of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (see Crowhurst NP Steering Group Terms of Reference);
  - the process of creating the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - the governance, approval, and acceptance of the Neighbourhood Plan;
  - the schedule for the Neighbourhood Plan.
- Ensure appropriate consultation with and communication to all stakeholders, ensuring that:
  - Input into the development and approval of the Neighbourhood Plan has been included;
  - the current status of the Neighbourhood Plan is understood at all times;
  - appropriate approval is gained from key stakeholders;
- Ensure acceptance by Rother District Council (RDC) by providing, amongst other things:
  - A Consultation Statement setting out how consultation will be carried out;
  - A Statement of Community Involvement evidencing the engagement with the community.

## Principles

Our Strategy is based on four key principles:-

1. the right information
2. to the right people
3. in the right medium
4. at the right time

These principles include a number of key factors:

- Communication must be meaningful and appropriate.
- Information must be accessible.
- Communication channels must allow information to, through and across all levels.
- Information must be relevant and in plain English.
- Consideration needs to be given to the needs of people with disabilities and those whose first language is not English.
- The Neighbourhood Plan process must be transparent.

## Tools and Activities

We shall use a variety of methods based on what reaches people most effectively and has most credibility. These include but are not limited to:

<b>Tools to be used</b>
Consultation events
Council newsletter
Direct mail
Email lists
Events
Exhibition
Leaflets and flyers
Meetings / Minutes of meetings
Networking
Newsletter
Parish newsletters / magazine
Posters and banners
Social media
Stakeholders' and partners' outlets
Street champions
Website – Parish Council, Crowhurst Eye and dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website once created

The messages will be relayed using different methods for different groups.

## Resources

We shall make best use of the resources we have and try to ensure resources are commensurate with the task. Our current resources are:

<b>List of Available Local Resources:</b>
Group members
Local councillors
Parish Council notice board
Community notice boards
Community networks
Parish newsletters /magazine
Websites - Parish Council, Crowhurst Eye and dedicated Neighbourhood Plan website (being created)

## Key Communication Points

Preparing a neighbourhood plan is a sequential process. Communication is necessary at all stages but there are key points that are of particular import:

<b>Key Communication Points</b>
Area designation - October 2015
Building the evidence base and community engagement
Identifying projects and writing policies
Reg. 14 Pre-submission consultation
Reg. 15 Plan submission
Referendum

## Evaluation and Amendment

After the first 10-12 months following area designation, the Communications Task Group will carry out a communications audit to assess the effectiveness of the strategy with both 'internal' and 'external' audiences. We shall consider, in particular, who has not responded or reacted to our communications. We shall discuss the evidence/results carefully and use them to amend and improve the Strategy going forward

## How we will communicate

Stakeholder (s)	Format
Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan Group	Meetings advertised via websites, email, posters. Minutes via websites, email, hardcopies where necessary
Crowhurst Neighbourhood Steering Group	Meetings advertised via websites (inc Parish Council) with agendas published 3 days in advance. Minutes via websites, email, hardcopies where necessary
Parish Council	Meeting minutes, Steering Group, reports and presentations
Other elected members (DC & MP)	Direct email/reports and presentations
Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan task groups	Meeting mins/Steering Group/reports and presentations
All residents in Crowhurst	Consultation events/meetings/parish newsletter/website/posters/letter
Young people in Crowhurst	Consultation events – targeted events, online media
Clubs, community & voluntary groups in Crowhurst	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/posters/ Letter/email
Elderly persons in Crowhurst	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/posters/street champions
Persons with disabilities and special needs	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/posters/street champions
Hard to reach groups	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/posters/street champions
Schools and colleges serving Crowhurst	Consultation events - targeted
All businesses/employers in Crowhurst	Consultation events/parish newsletter/website/posters/ Letter/email
Service providers inc Housing Association(s)	Letter/ email /meeting
Statutory undertakers	Letter/ email /meeting
Major landowners	Letter/ email /meeting
Developers with interest in Crowhurst	Letter/ email /meeting
District Council	Letter/ email /meeting
Neighbouring parish/town councils	Letter/ email /meeting
Heritage/Conservation Groups	Letter/ email /meeting

Surveys, drop ins and workshops will be held as and when deemed necessary.

The Crowhurst Neighbourhood Plan website will be used as a continuous means of communicating with everyone. Minutes and other information will also be available on other websites, such as the Parish Council website and Crowhurst Eye.