



Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan

Cross Cutting Discussion Forum 24.07.2012



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Introduction

Plangle Community Planning Services working with Alnwick Town Council, Argyle Planning and supported by Locality held a Cross Cutting Discussion Workshop in July 2012 to help the process of the neighbourhood plan for Alnwick and Denwick move onto its next stage. The session was designed and facilitated by Plangle with the support of members of the Alnwick and Denwick neighbourhood plan steering group and Community staff at Locality. The workshop intended to “widen the net” in terms of discussion around key topics emerging so far in the neighbourhood plan process and intended to give more members of Alnwick and Denwicks community involvement in the plan. A key priority for the workshop was to enable a more strategic set of aims and objectives to be developed, rather than a list of topic based issues that existed in silos. The discussions and group work included in the workshop would help the individual topic based groups looking at topics such as Housing, Environment, Heritage etc. see how their current issues affected other groups issues and to discuss the cross cutting themes running through that work that had been undertaken so far.

What is a Cross Cutting Discussion Forum?

8 subject topic groups had been identified as fundamental to an Alnwick and Denwick Neighbourhood Plan (ADNP). Work had been undertaken to identify issues that were apparent within these topic areas. Alongside an Alnwick and Denwick wide questionnaire and a number of drop-in events the ADNP working group had collected information that had been identified as issues under the following topic headings.

- Housing
- Environment
- Community Facilities and Education
- Economy and Employment
- Heritage and Culture
- Sport and Recreation
- Transport
- Retail and Leisure

While it was important to recognise that consultation is an on-going process it was also necessary to maintain a level of momentum in producing a plan for Alnwick and Denwick. With this in mind a Cross Cutting Discussion Forum would be an opportunity for topic groups to gather within their chosen interest area and bring together some of the key issues in their topic that had emerged so far. These main issues would then be built upon with a wider community group discussion looking at the What, Why, How, Who and When scenarios around these main issues. The latter part of the workshop would then enable groups to share their scenarios with other topics to see how they worked as an overall plan. The main intentions of the workshop being to:-



- Understand what the main issues were in each topic
- Discuss the What, Where, Why, When and Who? Of each topic area
- Identify issues that could cross over into other topics
- Move forward as one group
- Help inform the next stage in setting strategic objectives for the ADNP

Who Attended the Workshop?

Making sure as many members of a community have been given a chance to get involved in plan making is important to a successful plan. With this in mind the Cross Cutting Discussion Forum held in Alnwick, invited selected members from a broad range of the community to get involved, and included representatives and members from the following types of groups

- ADNP Steering Group Members
- Younger People
- Disabled People
- Older People
- Local Business
- Heritage Groups
- Emergency Services
- Other key departments at Northumberland County Council
- Landlords
- Developers
- Education Establishments
- Environment Groups
- Transport Groups

A list of attendees can be found in Appendix (?)

Such an event would seek representation from these types of people to make the discussion as mixed as possible and to help the discussion take into account all of the different angles neighbourhoods can view planning from.

How did the Discussion Forum work?

The event was held as an evening event and ran from 6.00pm till 9.30pm with breaks for refreshments. *(The event was planned to be a longer and held on a Saturday from 10.30 till*

3.00 but attendance could not be arranged so the programme was condensed into an evening session). A program with explanatory notes can be obtained by contacting chris@plangle.co.uk



A Topic Lead Facilitates a workshop in Alnwick (image www.plangle.co.uk)

Avoiding Consultation Fatigue

ADNP steering groups were conscious they did not want to wind the clock back and revisit issues they had previously discussed so the idea of this workshop was to begin to move onto the next phase in preparing the Neighbourhood Plan. It was not just a process to gather more issues and revisit old ones. *Although sometimes having these cross cutting discussions can pull out new or underlying issues.* The idea was to begin to look more at the issues and begin discussing how we do something about them strategically and objectively using the ADNP as one of the tools to do that.

Preparing for the event

A crucially important “dry run” and question and answers session a week before the main event was held for members of the ADNP steering group who had agreed to facilitate and lead a group discussion at the workshop. The dry run would help iron out any misunderstandings regarding the workshop and be a chance to ask questions before the event. A full detailed program and set of facilitator’s notes was prepared for the dry run that was used as a step by step guide and as a guide on the actual event.



“Touring the Tables – Discussing Issues for Housing” (image www.plangle.co.uk)

Plangle Further Information

Neighbourhoods and communities will all come up against the planning system at some point. Without realising we can often find ourselves talking about planning and the ways in which the built environment we live in affects our day to day lives. We all have an opinion about where we think new houses, supermarkets, schools, libraries, doctors and playparks should be built. We have local knowledge about the history of our neighbourhood, certain communities and cultures in our neighbourhoods or day to day information we gather as we go about our daily lives

The planning system is a constantly changing one and early intervention and involvement from communities helps to realistically shape, design and influence the changes that are happening. Plangle is a community planning service that aims to help communities get involved in the changes going on where we live and help people of all ages and backgrounds understand why, where, when and how changes can affect our neighbourhoods and how we can all use the planning system in a positive way.

We normally react when it's too late to have an influence in planning. Through Plangle's advice, support and guidance communities can get involved in planning at the right time.

Contact Plangle

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