

Rye Neighbourhood Plan Draft Project Plan (V2)

“A thriving market town for the 21st century”

Area of Neighbourhood Plan (NP): The Parish of Rye

Estimated completion time of NP: 24 months.

Stage One - The Decision to Plan

Structure - Terms of Reference

The Rye Town Council (Rye TC) as the “relevant body” under the localism legislation consults, decides to plan and establishes a Rye Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (RNPSG). It agrees Terms of Reference for the RNPSG and endorses its approach, including the intention to establish working groups.

ACTION 1	Responsibility	When
RNPSG – formally established with Terms of Reference	Rye Town Council	July 2013

Agree Designated NP Area

RNPSG drafts bid for Rye TC, which as the “relevant body” submits to Rother DC for a NP designated area based on Rye Parish.

Following the consultations with adjacent parishes, Rother DC asks for the bid to include a protocol for liaising with them during the planning.

ACTION 2	Responsibility	When
Bid to Rother DC for a designated NP area	RNPSG drafts for Rye Town Council	July 2013

Support and Advice for the RNPSG

The RNPSG seeks from Rye TC the precise support available from Rother DC and other bodies for the preparation of the NP. RNPSG considers Service Level Agreement (SLA) for Rother DC support which might include:

- Access to the Rother DC Core Strategy Policy Team
- Identification of relevant planning policies and saved policies
- Access to and periodic meetings with relevant planning officer and representatives from other bodies
- Quarterly progress meetings with lead Cllrs
- Access to a data pack from Rother DC: *'profile' of a community, providing statistical data on population size, household size, incomes, and environmental constraints etc. This helps to build up a social, economic and environmental portrait of the community.*
- Support from bodies such as Locality

ACTION 3	Responsibility	When
Seek support from Rother DC and other bodies for the NP process	RNPSG drafts for Rye TC	By Oct 2013

Launch Meeting

Rother DC designates Rye Parish as the NP area and publicises on 9 August. The period set for comments and objections is to 27 September. On the assumption of no

objections then the proposal is put to Rother DC Cabinet. If agreed then Rye TC becomes the “Qualifying Body” for its NP.

Concurrently, RNPSG plans a launch public meeting for Rye TC at Rye College for 17 October 2013.

ACTION 4	Responsibility	When
Plan and implement a public meeting to launch the NP project and engage with community	RNPSG for Rye TC	17 October 2013

Finance

Rye TC as the “Qualifying Body” retains financial responsibility. RNPSG drafts an initial bid for a budget for Rye TC to submit to Rother DC, covering the key elements of the project:

- Referendum
- Independent Examination
- Consultancy Fees
- Location hire & consultation resources
- Printing
- Questionnaire and analysis software
- TBC Sustainability appraisal

As part of this process, RNPSG drafts bids for available grants for Rye TC to submit, including to Locality.

The budget is reviewed periodically and amended to reflect the needs of the project as it evolves.

ACTION 5	Responsibility	When
Draft initial budget	RNPSG for Rye TC	By 17 October 2013
Draft bids for available grants for Rye TC to submit		As and when

Develop a Communication and Engagement Strategy

People who live, work and study in Rye, those groups based in Rye and adjacent parishes (in accordance with the agreed protocol) (all known as stakeholders) have to be kept informed and their participation enabled.

The RNPSG drafts a ‘communication and engagement strategy’ for Rye TC, setting out how and when it means to communicate with the community and other stakeholders. This is developed as the project progresses.

All information that is published is subject to the Freedom of Information Act. In conjunction with Rye TC, RNPSG adopts many ways of getting messages out to the community, both within the Rye NP area and to adjacent parishes:

- Posters/banners
- Flyers through letterboxes
- Consulting community groups, businesses etc.
- Use of IT: websites, social media (e.g. Facebook page, blog), email groups etc.
- Regular notices in Town newsletters
- Reports in local media (e.g. press, radio, television) for major announcements
- Interactive workshops and ‘drop-in’ sessions
- Advertising at key events

- Updates at Town Council meetings and the annual Town Meeting

ACTION 6	Responsibility	When
Develop a communication and engagement strategy	RNPSG for Rye TC	By Oct 2013

Clarification of Community Assets

RNPSG takes stock of the land and related assets in the planning area which benefit or could benefit the community, to note the condition, status and any issues arising: community centres, sports centre, green areas, sports facilities, cultural facilities, footpaths, cycle tracks, health facilities etc.

RNPSG plans a series of site meetings to record site details. There is a diary of events, photo record and map marking, to provide data for later stages in the process.

ACTION 7	Responsibility	When
Carry out an audit of assets for the plan	RNPSG for Rye TC	Sep to Dec 2013

Stage Two - Preparing the Plan

Evidence - Reviewing existing plans and strategies

The RNPSG gathers evidence for the NP from any existing plans, strategies or studies which have relevance. These include:

- National policies such as relevant Acts and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Previous community-led plans developed in the area, including the Local Action Plan
- Rother DC policies, such as for housing, health, education, leisure and culture, local Transport, waste, Sustainable Strategies, handling minorities and so on.
- ESCC strategies relating to education the economy, flood risk etc.
- Harbour of Rye Advisory Committee (HORAC) advice on policies and plans

RNPSG considers the implications of all relevant policy and past studies on the NP.

ACTION 8	Responsibility	When
Identify and review the impacts of existing and relevant studies, plans and strategies	RNPSG	By Mar 2014

Developing the plan along specific work themes

In order to handle the detailed work in a coordinated way, the RNPSG establishes a small number (up to 5) of working groups to focus on specific work themes, such as housing and landscape, transport, community issues and infrastructure, business and employment and environment and sustainability.

Members of these groups will be found from volunteers drawn from the Council or established groups based on Rye or interested individuals.

As an aid to standardisation, the RNPSG drafts for each group: Terms of Reference, clear objectives and provides guidance through councillor members of the RNPSG, who are

invited to align with a group to provide mentoring and steerage.

These councillors will also provide the feed-back between the groups and the RNPSG. Other members of the RNPSG can join working groups as appropriate.

Each Working Group elects a chair and other officers as appropriate.

Action 9	Responsibility	When
Identify and establish working groups; agree process, Terms of Reference (TsOR), objectives and guidance	RNPSG	By Feb 2014

Handling the discussions with stakeholders

In order to handle the consultation with the stakeholders within the planning area there is a programme of consultation events to include:

- Local community organisations (through the RVA)
- Rye Partnership
- Local businesses
- Key landowners and/or their representatives
- Officers at Rother DC
- Officers from public agencies and service providers, such as Natural England, Environment Agency, English Heritage, Health Care Organisations, RMIDB, Orbit and Amicus Horizon
- Adjacent parishes

The RNPSG plans a schedule of consultation which will be listed as an enclosure to the communication strategy.

ACTION 10	Responsibility	When
Exploit all existing contacts to identify and make contact with all stakeholders, either individually or at meetings	RNPSG	Ongoing but by Mar 2014

The Planning Area - Strengths and Weaknesses

The RNPSG discovers what stakeholders consider are the area's strengths and weaknesses, through consultation and engagement, using a range of approaches:

- Survey (hard copy / web-based)
- Community events (workshops / exhibitions etc.)
- Focus groups or discussions at meetings of parish community groups
- Working with schools and youth groups
- Techniques tailored for different sectors of the community (e.g. online surveys such as Survey Monkey?)

Some questions might be:

- What are our strengths as a community? What do we do well?
- What can we improve or change in the community?
- What are we missing? What do we need to make the community a better place to live?
- What key resources (e.g. people, places, services, land) do we have?

- What opportunities exist in the area?
- What are the barriers (physical, financial, environmental)?

The RNPSG may find that some of the information and responses it receives from the community cannot be addressed through a NP, (such as social activities) which would be passed back to Rye Town Council for progress by its own committees.

ACTION 11	Responsibility	When
Strengths and Weaknesses	RNPSG	By Mar 2014

Agreeing the Vision and Objectives

As the NP has to conform to the Rother DC Development Plan (core strategy – once agreed) it should cover the same time period as the Rother DC core strategy: 2015 – 2028.

The vision and objectives should be based on the information gathered through the processes programmed in late 2013. Objectives must be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and timelined. (SMART). The NP may include topics such as:

- What the area will look like, including any new development
- What facilities there will be (e.g. parks, GP surgeries, shops, schools) and what their qualities will be
- What the social and economic outlook for the area will be
- What style and types of development that the area considers would and would not be appropriate, particularly for the Conservation Area.

ACTION 12	Responsibility	When
Draft objectives	RNPSG	by Mar 2014

Maps of Site Proposals

For site allocations and site-related policies, the NP has to include maps showing proposed site locations and boundaries. There is a requirement for marked maps throughout the process to enable the wider community to understand what is being proposed.

ACTION 13	Responsibility	When
Draw up site proposals map	RNPSG	As required

Check Draft Objectives for conformity with Rother DC Core Strategy

Once the RNPSG has drafted the objectives for the NP, they are checked for consistency with Rother DC strategy.

ACTION 14	Responsibility	When
Check for conformity with Rother DC	RNPSG for Rye TC	By May 2014

The RNPSG finalises the draft vision and objectives for the area for Rye TC. Once agreed, they are put to the stakeholders for endorsement, including by:

- Making copies available for public distribution and asking for comments
- Meeting with community groups and asking for their feedback
- Organising informal discussion groups
- Holding public meetings or drop-in events
- Publishing information in the parish newsletter/website and providing an address to receive peoples' feedback

- Following consultation on the draft vision and objectives, any necessary amendments can be made before moving on to developing the detailed content of the Neighbourhood Plan.
- All documents will be made available on the website and at the parish office. Information on where to find these documents will be published in the parish newsletter.

ACTION 15	Responsibility	When
Initiate consideration and consultation of the vision and objectives.	RNPSG for Rye TC	By May 2014

Developing the Plan

Once the vision and objectives have been agreed, the RNPSG considers the structure of the Neighbourhood Plan:

- Objectives set out by work group themes
- Policies
- How the policies contribute to sustainability
- Reasons for the policies
- Sustainability issues
- The form of a related ‘Action Plan’ to flow from the NP

For the above, the RNPSG draws output from the Working Groups using an iterative process: consider output; discuss and analyse; agree and/or seek adjustments, examining evidence, feeding back comments and considering impacts on sustainability.

ACTION 16	Responsibility	When
Interact with the Working Groups to provide input for the NP	RNPSG	Throughout first 3 quarters of 2014

Developing the detailed NP

To meet the SMART objectives, the RNPSG considers the draft policies coming from the Working Groups. These policies should be based on the evidence gathered during the process and may take one of the following forms:

- Policies may allocate specific sites for particular types and scales of development (e.g. residential, employment, mixed development etc.)
- Policies may specify particular requirements relating to each or any allocation (e.g. access, landscaping, location of green space, assessments needed etc.)
- Policies may specify sites within the neighbourhood area to be protected or enhanced as environmental assets or areas of landscape character.
- Policies may be more generic and apply to any future development within the neighbourhood area (e.g. local design policies, policies relating to transport and access etc.)

The RNPSG ensures that, where possible, site-related policies are drawn up in negotiation with the relevant landowners or site developers. Key stakeholders are approached and involved in discussions as part of the information gathering stage.

As the plan is developed, the RNPSG re-checks for conformity with strategic policies, consulting Rother DC as necessary, particularly where there are potential conflicts with: NPPF, Waste & Minerals Strategy (where applicable) and the SEA.

ACTION 17	Responsibility	When
Draft policies	RNPSG	By Oct 2014

Check conformity with Strategic Policies within the Rother District Development Plan

The RNPSG consults Rother DC planning officers to help identify what is achievable in terms of emerging policies within the Plan. This helps ensure that whatever emerges conforms to the strategy for the district.

ACTION 18	Responsibility	When
Check conformity with Rother DC	RNPSG and Rye TC	By Oct 2015

Draft an Action Plan

The RNPSG develops an Action Plan, to record what is needed to achieve the objectives and policies of the NP, and to meet specific timelines.

The Action Plan does not introduce new material but translates policy into action. The Action Plan need not be an integral part of the main NP, but should explain the achievability, practicality and identification of policy.

ACTION 19	Responsibility	When
Draft Action Plan	RNPSG	Feb 2015

Finalise the Draft NP

Once the policies and Action Plan have been drafted, then the RNPSG can continue to develop the NP. This can take any form but must include clear policy supported by evidence from public consultation and other technical sources, such as transport plans or assessments.

ACTION 20	Responsibility	When
<p>Draft RNP</p> <p>Consider the progress and future of all or some of the working groups</p> <p>Review and communicate progress to stakeholders</p>	RNPSG	2 nd and 3 rd quarters 2014

Sustainability Appraisal

Dependent on the scope and nature of the policies, the RNPSG considers the need for a separate Sustainability Appraisal (SA) or to include appropriate text to consider sustainability of the plan. Advice from Rother DC provides guidance.

Whatever is decided, the RNPSG drafts a report on the sustainability appraisal (SA) process, which has been completed, explaining why the policies it has included in the plan are the most appropriate ones.

ACTION 21	Responsibility	When
Consider Sustainability Appraisal	RNPSG for Rye TC to seek Rother DC advice	By Sep 2014

Check for Conformity with strategic policies in the Development Plan

Policies and actions must conform to the Rother DC development plan (Core Strategy) which will demand continued and structured liaison with Rother DC throughout the process.

If handled systematically, non- conformity should not be an issue, but the RNPSG should discuss their emerging policies and action plan with a planning policy officer before consulting the wider community.

ACTION 22	Responsibility	When
Check for conformity with Rother DC planning officers	RNPSG for Rye TC	Sep 2014

Public Consultation

RNPSG agrees final draft of the NP and submits to Rye TC. Rye TC considers and consults (minimum of 6 weeks) stakeholders including adjacent Parishes.

As well as seeking the local views Rye Town Council should consult wider stakeholder organisations that traditionally have a valuable input into plan making. This list will need to be developed according to the content of the NP.

It is likely that when discussing future development that even at a late stage of plan development, interested groups may comment to either Rye TC or the RNPSG. This provides the opportunity to gain more information about particular issues, sites or proposals, as part of the fine tuning of the NP.

Once local consultation has been carried out an analysis of comments should be made and the RNPSG should be tasked to consider whether any amendments need to be made to the

draft plan before submitting it back to Rye Town Council and then to Rother DC for scrutiny before independent examination.

ACTION 23	Responsibility	When
Series of consultation events with residents and stakeholders	RNPSG	By Sep 2014

Stage 3: Independent Examination

Submission to Rother DC

Rother DC is required to conduct a check of the plan, to ensure that the process has been followed in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act and to consider the quality of the evidence base and make sure policies are consistent with district and national planning policy.

If Rother DC is content that the plan meets these requirements, it will arrange for the independent examination of the document.

ACTION 24	Responsibility	When
Independent Examination	RNPSG for Rye TC	Early 2015

Examination of the Plan

Rother DC decides whom to appoint to undertake an independent examination of the Neighbourhood Plan. The examination will be funded by Rother DC.

The main function of the examination will be to check that the Neighbourhood Plan is “sound” and conforms with:

- The strategic content of wider development plans
- The National Planning Policy Framework and/or other national guidance
- European Directives
- National and international designations (e.g. listed buildings, green belts)
- Adjoining Neighbourhood Plans

The examiner will consider written representations during the examination period, rather than oral representations. However he/she may decide that an oral representation is preferable in certain situations. In this case a public hearing must be held.

Examiner's report published

The result of the examination will be a written report, issued by the independent examiner, which will have one of the following recommendations:

- That the draft NP is “sound” and should proceed to a referendum
- That it is “sound” and should proceed to a referendum, subject to certain amendments
- That the proposed NP is “unsound”.

If the NP is considered “unsound” then Rye Town Council has the option of repeating the planning process or abandoning the process.

If the examiner recommends that the draft plan should proceed to a referendum, he/she may also recommend to Rother DC that the area subject to a referendum is extended beyond that of Rye parish.

As Rother DC arranges for the publication of the report, it will consider the examiner’s report to decide whether or not the recommendations should be followed. Rother DC will notify its decision to Rye TC.

ACTION 25	Responsibility	When
Arrange publication of report and consider recommendations	Rother DC	April 2015

Stage 4: Community Referendum

If the NP is found to be “sound” then it will be offered for referendum. Rother DC will co-ordinate and pay for this. The referendum will be open to any individual registered to vote in Rye, but the independent examiner (or Rother DC) may take the decision that the area of referendum should be extended, for example if certain policies within the plan have particular implications for adjacent parishes.

Rye TC considers its campaign for securing a majority vote for the NP. If the NP receives a majority vote (over 50%) then it will be adopted by Rother DC. If the NP does not get a majority, it will not. Then, one option is to restart the process.

ACTION 26	Responsibility	When
Put the NP to a referendum	Rother DC	May 2015

Stage 5: Into Legal Force

Plan Adoption

If and when adopted, the NP will become a planning policy document and form part of the Rother DC planning policy.

Importantly, it will be a material consideration in determining planning applications within the planning area.

The Action Plan which flows from the NP should be adopted by Rye TC.

At this stage Rye TC may decide to both dissolve the RNPSG and absorb the function into the Rye TC Planning Committee. Rye TC then monitors the NP and related Action Plan to ensure that it meets the community's objectives to identify any future review a necessary.

Even with a NP in place, it is Rother DC that determines any planning application, with recommendations from Rye TC.

ACTION 27	Responsibility	When
Adopt RNP	Rother DC	Late 2015
Finalise an Action Plan	Rye TC	

ATBK
Vice Chair RNPSG
1 March 2014