

Please see QB response notes in red.

- The Neighbourhood Plan draft was published on the PC website prior to the official “consultation period “ between July and August 2020.

The plan was uploaded to the parish council website on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2020 and residents were informed of this via email (on that date) via Leire community email and posters displayed around the village informing them of the upcoming consultation. We were informed by Yourlocale that as part of the consultation period the document had to be uploaded to the parish council website These documents were emailed to the clerk at the beginning of July.2020

Alleged missing documents on PC website

- Appendix 5 (SSA Assessment) was only added in late July after the PC was emailed. This document was referred to in the Plan.

Appendix 5 was emailed to the clerk to be uploaded onto the parish council website on the 9<sup>th</sup> July 2020.

- the Neighbourhood Plan Action Committee minutes after January 2019 had to be requested twice before they were added to the website well into the time allocated for “consultation”. The minutes for several meetings between Jan 2019 and Jan 2020 appeared but nothing subsequent to that. On enquiring residents were informed that Jan 2020 was the last minuted meeting of the Committee. (The consultation period and all further additions and amendments have occurred after July 2020).

All minutes were on the PC website prior to the consultation. However, they were uploaded in the same place of PC meeting minutes.

- the Executive Summary document was only added to the PC website in October 2020.

This was created by Yourlocale to go alongside the submission version of the NP in recognition of the inability to hold an open event because of the coronavirus.

- a Consultation Statement has now been added on 27th Jan 2021, purportedly summarising how villagers were consulted and kept informed throughout the process.

We were tasked by Yourlocale to create a consultation Statement that would be put to HDC with the submission version of the draft plan. This is a statutory requirement.

- The Parish Council included “open web events” referred to in the Neighbourhood Plan that never actually took place.

Unfortunately, this was mis-print from YourLocale when creating the draft plan. (it referred to open web events from another village plan, not Leire.) Once we were made aware of the mis print, it was removed from the draft plan. Comments regarding this were also included in the responses part of the consultation responses document.

- The Consultation Statement claims that other “open events” took place and residents claim they are unaware of these. Dates given include 26 Sep 2018 and 26 Sep 2019 (which must be incorrect), without stipulating what these events were. There are claims of an email list of interested residents which some residents claim they have never been invited to join. A statement that the village Facebook page was “utilised to further engage with parishioners” refers to the announcement that of a copy of the draft Neighbourhood Plan

would be on display at the village hall during the Consultation Period for those without internet access (?).

There were multiple posts on the Leire Village facebook page over the last couple of years up to Aug 2020. These informed residents of upcoming events/meetings/ and copies of fliers posted through doors. Leire community email also sent out reminders for all meetings inviting residents.

The email list was generated when residents were asked to sign up during all of the open events we hosted. We also had a stall at the village fete where people could sign up for further information. A poster was also put up on the village notice board inviting people to sign up. Again interest in this was extremely low. In regard to the draft plan being on display for those without internet access, posters were also placed across the village to inform residents. Only one household came to this event.

- Page 19 of the Consultation Statement refers to the “emerging policies” being “shared with the community by written correspondence” but the PC had to amend this, when queried, to “policies have been contained within an Executive Summary “. It is alleged that this Executive Summary was not added to the Leire Parish Council website until October 2020. Residents claim this is further evidence of the lack of consultation with all villagers in the creation of the NP.

Everyone has had the opportunity to comment on the neighbourhood plan and to have been involved in its preparation. It is a shame that more people did not take up this opportunity to get involved

- Page 32 of the Consultation Statement (item 40) seeks to use the Executive Summary as evidence of sharing findings with parishioners. It is alleged that this was not published until well after the official consultation period.
- Residents claim they were unaware of the inclusion of the development behind them in St Peters Close in the NP until the start of the official consultation period in July 2020.

The developer who had created a plan for this site gave a presentation at the PC meeting in Oct 2019. This site was discussed and many residents of St Peters attended the meeting to air their views. So residents were already aware of this development prior to the NP draft and its inclusion in it.

- Residents claim they were not advised that this was being considered or invited to comment.

Residents were invited to join the housing theme group to help formulate approaches/discuss sites. As well as being invited to meetings etc. It is entirely appropriate that the draft plan and its policies were shared with the community at Regulation 14 consultation. There are further opportunities for consultation once Harborough DC undertake consultation at Regulation 16 stage.

- The Neighbourhood Plan committee had formulated the Plan by January 2020 and have not deviated from or amended it since.

The final version of the draft NP was created in June 2020, not Jan 2020. An earlier draft had been prepared between March and June 2020 as final docs from theme groups were compiled.

- Residents claim that after reading the Consultation Statement, which lists the comments and concerns received when invited, it is difficult to reconcile the

rigidity and denial of the Neighbourhood Plan committee with the overwhelming number of comments questioning the suitability of the access proposed to their preferred site and the general opposition to the selected development.

Isn't this the point of creating a draft plan for consultation? Residents were repeatedly invited to meetings where items were discussed. Residents were also invited to be a part of the theme groups which were specifically designed for this purpose. Again, turnout/interest was low. It is not unusual that people living adjacent to proposed developments express objections. The Parish Council has had to take a wider view on the benefit of development in Leire.

- Residents claim the only open event of which they were aware of was that intended for March 2020 but which was cancelled due to the arrival of Covid restrictions. Residents claim they cannot accept that Covid can be used as a defence against consultation with the parties most affected by the Neighbourhood Plan. Residents claim openness has been discarded in the Council's haste to submit this Plan.

As the plan was so close to completion (early/mid 2020) the decision was made to continue with the consultation process. Covid was never used in a defence of consultation as the process was carried out in the required way. The open events planned for the summer 2020 would have been an open event to view the plan/take on board questions etc. We were unable to do this during the first lockdown and as such held the event during the consultation period so that people could view it socially distanced. As mentioned earlier, one household visited this event.

- Residents are very concerned about the conduct of the complete Neighbourhood Plan process in Leire. Residents state they are amongst those likely to be most affected by their recommendations and yet seem to be being denied a voice.

The NP group are a group of residents who have given up a huge amount of their own time, unpaid, over the last three years to bring this plan to fruition. We have always endeavoured to be transparent and conveyed all information to villagers in a wide variety of mediums to ensure all were kept up to date. (open events/open meetings/posters around village/door drops of information/ online posts) All residents were given multiple opportunities to be a part of the plans creation, be it through joining theme groups, attending meetings (all of which were public and well-advertised) coming to open events.

We have adhered to all the processes required in the creation of this plan, the launch of the consultation, collating residents' comments. It is clear from the comments received that residents are not denied a voice as is suggested.

QB response to complaints from residents – Feb 2021