

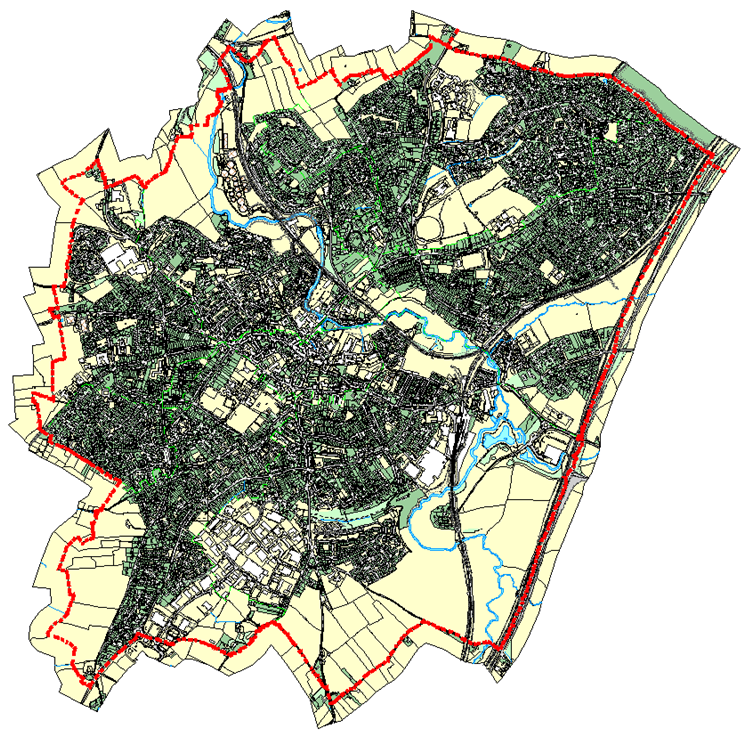
Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (Part 5 s15)

Neighbourhood Development Plan

Consultation Statement

Frome Town Council (Qualifying Body)

Frome Neighbourhood Development Plan



**1. INTRODUCTION**

This Consultation Statement has been prepared to fulfil the legal obligations of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the Regulations sets out what a Consultation Statement should contain:

*(a) contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed neighbourhood development plan;*

*(b) explains how they were consulted;*

*(c) summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted;*

*(d) describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed neighbourhood development plan.*

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The aims of the Frome Neighbourhood Plan consultation process were:

* To build on previous consultations carried out in Frome, in particular the Vision4Frome Community Plan consultation, so that the Plan was informed by the views of local people and other stakeholders from the start of the neighbourhood planning process
* To ensure that consultation events took place at critical points in the process where decisions needed to be taken and at different times and locations throughout the town to make the events assessible to as many people as possible
* To engage with as wide a range of people as possible, using a variety of events and communication techniques

Consultation was undertaken by Frome Town Council in partnership with consultants, Action for Market Towns (AMT) for the initial Citizens Panel workshops and solely by Frome Town Council for the Statutory Consultation stage in accordance with Regulation 14.

Consultation events took place at the following stages in the neighbourhood planning process:

* Initial consultations using a Citizens’ Panel took place on 23rd May 202, 13th June 2012, 20th June 2012 & 4th July 2012.
* The statutory consultation stage in accordance with Regulation 14 from 28th October to 31st December 2013.

This Consultation Statement provides an overview of each of the above stages of

consultation in accordance with Section 15(2) of Part 5 of the Regulations.

**2. INITIAL CONSULTATION- CITIZENS’ PANEL 23rd May – 4th July**

This was the first series of public consultation events for the Neighbourhood Plan for Frome. The aim of this consultation was to ensure that the list of priorities gathered from previous consultations (including vision4frome, the Local Development Framework consultations and the Town Councils strategic plan) were still relevant and to identify any gaps.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group felt that it was important that all of the work that had already been carried out on previous consultations, in particular on the Vision4Frome Community Plan was not lost. The Community Plan was the result of considerable work and the input of the people of Frome, providing over 3,000 responses to the consultations that took place in spring 2008. The Steering Group were also concerned about the impact of consultation fatigue.

The Vision4Frome Community Plan is attached to this report as Appendix i, setting out the comprehensive consultation exercise that was carried out.

To ensure that the public engagement was as effective as possible, the Steering Group proposed the use of a Citizens’ Panel, a small representative group of people, this involved using techniques such as planning for real and world cafes.

Action for Market Towns were engaged to assist with the set up and facilitation of the Citizens’ Panel meetings. A summary of how the panels were set up is below. The full feedback report from the Citizens’ Panels setting out the outcomes and priorities is attached to this report as Appendix ii.

**How the panels were set up:**

Actions were taken to establish Citizens Panels with as representative a group of people as possible. To this end the following actions were undertaken:

* + Research of community groups and specific targeting of representatives from these groups
  + Internet research to find interest groups with a Frome connection
  + Flyer drops for the general community
  + Specific targeting of youth groups, eg the YMCA and older people eg Age Concern
  + Specific targeting of groups for people with disabilities eg the Gateway Club, Mencap, Storytellers Group etc
  + Targeting of groups from specific postcodes supplied by Mendip through the use of mail shot
  + Invitations to members of the local business community
  + Chamber of Commerce
  + Younger people targeted by canvassing the schools / college
  + Newspaper articles on general release
  + Creation of a Twitter account
  + Creation of a Facebook Page
  + Individual invitation issued to individuals expressing an interest

**How the issues and concerns raised by the Citizens’ Panel have been considered**

The issues and concerns were collated in a detailed report of the consultation event.

These were then used by the Steering Group to develop an overall Vision and set of ‘Core Objectives’ for the Neighbourhood Plan and identified the issues and priorities that the plan would cover. The vision and objectives have formed the heart of the Frome Neighbourhood Plan, and can still be clearly seen in the final Plan.

**3 . STATUTORY CONSULTATION STAGE IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULATION 14 FROM 28TH OCTOBER TO 31ST DECEMBER 2013.**

The Regulation 14 consultation on the Frome Neighbourhood Plan was carried out

between 28th October 2013 and 31st December 2013.

**Who was consulted**

Frome Town Council developed a consultation strategy that aimed to engage with as wide a cross-section of Frome’s population as possible, and provide a wide variety of different ways for people to get involved. The aim was to ensure that all local residents, businesses, community groups and landowners were aware of the draft Plan and how to comment on it.

In addition all statutory consultees were contacted by e-mail/letter, which included a link to a copy of the draft Frome Neighbourhood Plan and the option to request a hard copy was offered. An example consultation letter is attached at appendix iii.

Where possible, local land owners whose land may be affected by the plan were also consulted, a letter advising them of the relevant policy that may affect them was sent. Where the landowners were not known a Land Registry search was carried out to identify them.

**How people were consulted**

Frome Town Council consulted local people by:

• Uploading the draft Frome Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents to the

Town Council website

• Providing a hard copy of the Plan and supporting documents in the town office,

Information Centre and Library

• Publicising the Plan in a variety of ways and encouraging people to feedback using the standard form via post or by e-mail

• Holding drop in sessions to answer questions about the Plan

**Publicising the consultation events involved:**

* Providing information in the Town Council’s website and posting updates on the Town Council’s facebook page including a video specially commission to raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan. The video received had 1,363 views on facebook , it was liked 10 times and shared 15 times.
* The plan was publicised at all Town Council meetings
* Displaying posters at locations around the town, including notice boards and public buildings. A copy of the poster is attached at Appendix vi.
* Holding an exhibition throughout the consultation period in the Library
* Issuing a press release and holding a press launch, where all local newspapers were invited to a presentation of the plan
* Having news articles in the Somerset Standard and Frome Times
* Running alongside the Neighbourhood Plan consultation an initiative “Participate Frome” which took place over one week. A pop up shop was set up in the Westway Centre. On the Sunday and Tuesday of this event a member of the Neighbourhood plan team was available to answer questions, for the remainder of the event an exhibition was in place. Feedback forms were available to complete. 650+ people came through the door during the week. A copy of the “Participate Frome” report is attached at appendix vii. (Pages 4&5 refer to the figures and show the Neighbourhood Plan on display).

**The following consultation events took place**

Provided at the consultation events were nine A1 display Boards setting out the Vision & Objectives and policies giving and overview of each section of the plan. The location and timing for the events were carefully considered, ensuring that the locations were spread around the town so that an event was within reasonable walking distance and at a variety of different times. A copy of the display boards are shown at appendix viii.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Date | Location | Time | No. Attendees |
| Sunday 3rd November 2013 | Frome Super Market  Unit 15 Westway Centre | 10.00am – 2.00pm | 650+ for event week |
| Tuesday 5th November 2013 | Unit 15 Westway Centre | 10.00am – 4.00pm |
| Thursday 14th November 2013 | Oakfield Academy | 6.00pm – 9.00pm | 17 |
| Monday 18th November 2013 | Trinity Hall | 10.00am – 1.00pm | 11 |
| Wednesday 27th November 2013 | Selwood Academy | 6.00pm – 9.00pm | 21 |
| Friday 6th December 2013 | The Key Centre | 1.00pm – 4.00pm | 23 |
| Wednesday 13th November 2013 | ‘Participate Frome’ - Frome Town Meeting,Cheese & Grain | 7.00pm – 9.00pm |  |

**4. MAIN ISSUES AND CONCERNS RAISED**

A total of 50 formal consultation responses were received, which include responses from The Environment Agency, Natural England and English Heritage. A schedule of the consultation responses, is attached at appendix iv.

There was a wide range of issues raised. However, the key points are summarised below.

• Overall support for the plan – 12 comments

• Opposition to the allocation of valuable employment sites – 3 comments

• Concerns about public transport and traffic - 7 comments

• Concerns about the redevelopment of Saxonvale – 12 comments

**Overall support for the plan**

All consultation responses were submitted on a feedback form, the form was set out corresponding to the 9 sections of the plan, asking “Do you support, oppose, support with modifications or have comments”. Space was provided to give details of the reasons. 12 of the feedback forms had indicated “support” for all sections. A copy of the response form is attached at appendix ix.

**Opposition to the allocation of valuable employment sites**

Where possible, the landowners of the sites identified as “Valuable Employment Sites” were directly consulted and advised that the site would be covered by Policy BE2-Protection of Employment Land.

* One response suggested that the site was better suited to residential development and there was no evidence to support the site being a valuable employment site

* One pointed out that the current nursery business had been on that site for over a hundred years and the plan couldn’t change the use of it
* One response suggested that the allocation would diminish its attractiveness for development

The intention of the policy is to protect existing employment sites within the town from redevelopment to non-employment uses, unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances. The value of the sites is supported by an Employment Land Study carried out in November 2012. Since the production of this report, four of the identified sites have gained planning permission for mostly residential redevelopment. The sites have not been removed from the plan.

**Concerns about public transport and traffic**

Comments were made by several respondents that the Town Council should be doing more in terms of sorting out the issues relating to public transport in Frome. It is acknowledged that there are issues with public transport, however it was not considered that all of these issues can be dealt with through policy and work is being carried out outside of the Neighbourhood Plan process to address timetable and connectivity issues.

Policy TC1-Remodelling, will also address the issues relating to pedestrian crossings and traffic congestion in the town centre.

Concerns were also raised about the impact of traffic generated by new developments throughout the town. The plan is committed to producing an integrated transport strategy for Frome, which will seek to address these issues. Policy T2-Travel Plans, requires that travel plans should be submitted with applications over a certain threshold of development, however the District Council have objected to this as it is onerous. This policy has not been removed from the plan.

**Concerns about the redevelopment of Saxonvale**

The Saxonvale site occupies 12 hectares of brownfield land immediately south of the

River Frome. The site offers scope to expand the provision of town centre housing and employment choices within Frome. In 2005, the District Council adopted a development brief for the site.

The comments relating to Saxonvale are wide ranging, some are in relation to a Supermarket being built on the site, which is the subject of a current planning application and not part of the proposals contained within the Neighbourhood Plan.

One respondent believes the best use for the site is a car park. Others are concerned about the traffic implications of the site being redeveloped. Several respondents including the District Council objected to Policy TC5-Saxonvale, which stated:-

“that in collaboration with the District Council, the Town Council would seek to refresh and redefine the brief”.

Policy TC5 has now been amended to simply state:-

“the redevelopment of the site should seek to achieve the overall vision for the 2005 development brief” and sets out the criteria within the adopted 2005 development brief.

In relation to other issues, the following changes have been made to the Plan:

* The Three Golden Threads have been changed from Policies to aspirations
* The One Planet Living Principles have been updated
* Policy H1- Planning For Growth, has been changed from a Policy to a statement
* Supporting information has been added in relation to Community Consultation and Engagement to VC02
* Supporting information clarifying what are major developments has been added to VC01
* Policy H7-Future Growth Area, has been removed
* The grading criteria for the Valuable Employment Site has been added
* Policy TC2 – St Catherines & Badcox Area, has been removed as a policy but remains as a statement of intent
* Policy D4 - Tree Protection, has been amended in line with a policy advocated by the Woodland Trust
* Errors and omissions in text have been corrected and the plan updated
* Where appropriate, text has been amended in line with suggestions made by respondents to add clarity or to strengthen the plan

The full schedule of modifications is attached as Appendix iv.

The Town Council is satisfied that it is appropriate to continue on with the next stages of producing the Plan, making appropriate changes in response to consultation comments and submitting the plan to Mendip District Council.

**5. DETAILS OF STATUTORY AND OTHER CONSULTEES**

**List of Citizens’ Panel Members**

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| --- |
| Alison Douthwaite |
| Michael Dunk |
| Kate Bielky |
| Jennifer White |
| Gill Harry |
| John Peverley |
| Richard Swann |
| Nick Ray |
| Sonja Harris |
| Fiona Green |
| Freda Green |
| David Gosling |
| Alex Malcolm |
| David Horsfall |
| Matt Sims |
| Suzi Holland |
| Ann Taylor |
| Bill Steele |
| Gerlinde Rambausek |
| Pam Brewster |
| Alex Webb |
| Neil Howlet |
| Duncan Skene |
| Rose Heaword |
| Charles Wood |
| David N Chesterfield |
| Brinnie Humm |
| Noel Hawkins |
| Michael Trevallion |
| Peter Dunn |
| Nicky Rogers |
| Linda Bird |

**List of Statutory Consultees**

**Contact Organisation**

Richard Swann Frome Civic Society

Somerset Clinical Commissioning Group (NHS)

Wales & West Utilities Limited (Gas)

First Great Western

British Telecom (Bristol)

Bristol Water plc

Gillian Saunders Wessex Water (Water & Sewage Service)

Communities Group DCLG

Caroline Power English Heritage

Kristian Morgan Environment Agency

Nick Ray Friend of the River Frome

President Frome & District Chamber of Commerce

Frome Area Wildlife Group

HOPE Frome (Frome Christians)

Marine Management Organisation

Ian Bowen Mendip District Council

Mobile Operators Association

Linda Tucker Natural England

Christina Gutsell Network Rail

PACE (Personal Achievements Creative Experiences – Disability Group, Frome)

Planning Control Somerset County Council

Economic Development & Planning Wiltshire County Council

Services

Blackdown Hills AONB

South West Highways Agency

Geoff Pell Sustrans

The Coal Authority

Western Power Distribution (Electricity)

**Neighbouring Parishes**

Mrs R Harvey Berkley Parish Council

Mr Clive Smith Selwood Parish Council

**Other Consultees**

Tom Winsborough Somerset Sight

Azeema Cafoor Frome Youth Council

Charles Wood Vision 4 Frome

Tony Gibson Catherine Hill Traders Association

Gareth Hunt Maybrook Properties

Frome & District Agricultural Society Ltd

Frome Football Club

Frome Rugby Club

The Mount Community Association

Tim Cutting Frome Co-Housing Group

Frome Super Markets Group

Sustainable Frome

Sheila Hedges F.R.O.G.S(Frome Recreation & Open Ground Supporters)

John Snelgrove Landowner

Minty & Son Land owner

H&B Tyres Landowner

Motor Care Landowner

Hornbeam Ivy Ltd Landowner

Nimbus Conservation Ltd Landowner

Linwood Motors Landowner

Butts Hill Motor Works Landowner

Welshmill Business Centre Landowner

Mr C D New Landowner

P J & K E Austin Landowner

Somerset Storage Ltd Landowner

Butler Tanner & Dennis Ltd Landowner

Westbury Homes Holdings Landowner

Connolly & Callahan Ltd Landowner

T H White Ltd Landowner

Homes & Communities Agency Landowner

T Bos Welding & Fabrication Landowner

Mr Damon Moore Landowner

Frome Police Station Landowner

Being Human Warehouse Landowner

Trustees of the Notts Industries Landowner

(Frome) Limited Pension Scheme

Mr D Tucker Landowner

**Steering Group Members**

Graham Burgess - Frome Town Councillor (Chairman)

Damon Hooton – Frome Town & District Councillor

Pippa Goldfinger – Frome Town Councillor

Peter Knibbs – District Councillor – Beckington & Selwood Ward ( Resigned Dec 2012)

Eve Berry – Frome Town Councillor (From Dec 2012 – June 2013)

Mel Usher – Frome Town Councillor (Leader)

John Peverley – Frome & District Civic Society

Peter Wheelhouse – Frome Town Council, Economic Development & Regeneration Officer

Jane Llewellyn – Planning & Development Officer

In addition to the Steering Group Members, Officers from Mendip District Council Planning Policy were invited to all Steering Group meetings in an advisory capacity.

For the initial meetings this included John Meeker & Jo Milling and latterly Ian Bowen and Anna Blackburn.

**6. APPENDICIES**

**Appendix i**

Vision4Frome Community Plan (including the consultation methodology)

**Appendix ii**

Report and feedback from the Citizen’s Panels held in Frome from May – July 2012

**Appendix iii**

Example consultation letter

**Appendix iv**

Shedule of consultation responses

**Appendix v**

Example Feedback form

**Appendix vi**

Consultation posters

**Appendix vii**

Participate Frome report

**Appendix viii**

Copy of consultation display boards

**Appendix ix**

Schedule of modifications