

HARTLEPOOL RURAL PLAN

Neighbourhood Planning is central to the Coalition Government's Localism Act 2011 and in May 2011, Hartlepool was successful in securing resources to develop and produce a Development Plan Document (DPD) for the rural area of Hartlepool. The 10 year land use and development framework will become part of the formal planning process and must be in general conformity with national planning policy and the Local Authority's Development Plan (currently the Hartlepool Local Plan 2006, which will be superseded by the Hartlepool Local Plan 2013 post adoption in early 2013).

HARTLEPOOL RURAL PLAN WORKING GROUP

The Hartlepool Rural Plan Working Group represents the communities living within the proposed Hartlepool Rural Plan area; this encompasses the five Parishes of Dalton Piercy, Elwick, Greatham, Hart and Newton Bewley, with the addition of Greatham Creek and Queens Meadow Wildlife Site, and the exclusion of the urban areas of South Fens, Wynyard and Kingfisher Close.

The five Parishes are long standing and are well established in serving their local communities. They have previously collaborated on projects focussing on rural issues (for example the Parishes' commitment to the Hartlepool Rural Forum, and more recently, responding to the Ward Boundary Commission's Electoral Review) and have a clear sense of community identity and interest.

The Parishes have historically had aspirations to produce a Neighbourhood Plan, and in May 2011, were successful through the Third Wave of the Neighbourhood Planning Front Runners Scheme in securing £20,000 from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) to develop a Development Plan Document (DPD). The rural community anticipate that the production of a Rural Plan will provide an opportunity to influence how their neighbourhood is developed in the future.

The Working Group has commenced the process by undertaking a baselining exercise in order to identify community assets, but also to gather statistical information and local knowledge about the issues currently affecting the rural area. The development of the Plan will be subject to a widespread and robust consultation process (Phase 1 of which has commenced), in which the views and involvement of the wider community will be sought.

The Local Authority has previously outlined their support for the designation of the boundary detailed above; a provisional consultation exercise was conducted between January and March 2012 (prior to the formal adoption of the Neighbourhood Planning – General Regulations on 6 April 2012) after which, the LA provisionally designated the Rural Plan boundary. It is now intended to re-submit the Rural Plan boundary post adoption of the Regulations in order to formally designate the boundary.

The Group's Terms of Reference ensures that membership is open to two representatives from each of the rural Parishes including: Hart, Dalton, Elwick, Greatham and Newton Bewley, with a minimum of five members and representation from three Parishes required to achieve Quorum (the number of members of a group required to be present to transact business or make decisions formally). Strong working links have been made with Officers within Hartlepool Borough Council's Planning Policy, Regeneration and Neighbourhood Management Teams, and Tees Valley Rural Community Council (TVRCC).

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