

# **St Erth Neighbourhood Plan**

## **Communications and Engagement Strategy**

**May 2015**

## 1. Introduction

The communication and engagement strategy ensures the delivery of a “Consultation Statement” that accords with the definition of such a document as set out in Regulation 15 of the NP Regulations (setting out a consultation statement as being a statutory part of the package to be submitted for examination), which reads as follows:

*15(2) In this regulation “consultation statement” means a document which –*

- (a) Contains details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed NP;*
- (b) Explains how they were consulted;*
- (c) Summarises the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted; and*
- (d) Describes how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant, addressed in the proposed NP.*

St Erth parish is situated in west Cornwall and was declared a Front Runner on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2012 as part of central government’s Neighbourhood Plan Vanguard Initiative. St Erth’s Neighbourhood Plan (NP) covers all of the parish area and will span the same timeframe as the draft Cornwall Local Plan (CLP) - up to 2030.

The Parish Council applied for designation of the NP area on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2013 and received approval on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2013.

There are 652 dwellings in St Erth, with a population of 1381 based on 2011 census data, mainly made up of long standing residents.

The main cluster of housing is in the village with others living near the rail head/industrial estate and some in the dispersed farming communities. It will be important to engage with those harder to reach within the community.

The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (NPSG) is leading the development of the Plan on behalf of St Erth Parish Council. The NPSG is comprised of five Parish Councillors and five community volunteers.

The catalyst for St Erth's NP came from proposals contained within Cornwall Council's Core Strategy for major changes to the dairy factory located on the industrial estate to the eastern side of the railway station, close to the A30 on the northern edge of St Erth. The Parish Council was keen to influence any changes by taking a concentrated look at this area along the A30 in the form of a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) and perhaps developing a leisure and conference facility to attract and retain visitors in St Erth to help promote a vibrant local economy. However, the Parish Council subsequently decided on the more holistic approach of a NP, with the option of possibly developing a NDO once the NP is adopted.

St Erth is also experiencing a number of speculative planning applications and the Parish Council is keen to manage appropriate development in the parish, particularly linking it, wherever possible, to new employment opportunities.

The Cornwall Local Plan proposes 350 new homes for the 3 rural parishes in the Community Network Area (CNA), excluding the towns of Hayle and St Ives, the other two parishes being Gwinear-Gwithian and Towednack.

It is anticipated that the bulk of housing will be in St Erth and Gwinear-Gwithian as Towednack is very small, has low demand for and is unable to accommodate much development. The three parishes are discussing between themselves how best to apportion housing numbers and hope to influence where development happens.

This communications and engagement strategy has been developed by the NPSG. It identifies key stakeholders and interest groups in the parish, with a view to engaging as widely as possible to demonstrate effective and meaningful participation in the Neighbourhood Plan's development and to help achieve a positive outcome at referendum, planned for early 2017. It balances robustness with the NPSG's capacity to undertake consultation within the projected timeframe for completion of the NP. The strategy will fit into St Erth Parish Council's wider communications activity, and will be implemented in liaison with the Council's Communications and Engagement Committee.

A draft version of the strategy has been reviewed by the NPSG and approved by the Parish Council before publication.

## **2. Purpose of Communication and Engagement**

For the adopted NP to reflect the views of those living and working in St Erth, it is important that opportunities to consult on key issues, options and proposals, and to feed into the process of its development, are made available to all who wish to get involved. A fundamental aim of the NP is to belong to those living and working in the area and the views of the community and stakeholders need to shape it as it is being developed.

Consultation runs throughout every stage of the NP process and adopting an agreed communications and engagement strategy should maximise the use of existing capacity within the NPSG to effectively manage consultation requirements, both statutory and non-statutory. This is particularly important at pre-submission stage of consultation, which must accord with Regulation 14 of the NP Regulations. It is also essential for a robust Consultation Statement to accompany the final Plan to Cornwall Council, (the Local Planning Authority (LPA)) - Regulation 15.

The NPSG, alongside the NP Project Officer, will be responsible for ensuring that this strategy is kept up to date, and for recording the outcomes of the different events, along with feeding these into the next stages of consultation. Whilst the programme is not “set in stone”, it is designed to provide a firm foundation upon which to build all stages of consultation.

### **3. Principles of Communication and Engagement**

The NPSG and Objective Groups will seek to be as inclusive as possible, providing all residents and workers in St Erth parish with every opportunity to input into and help shape the NP. Specifically to:

1. ensure those that might be considered “harder to reach” are a focus of attention in engagement;
2. maximise the potential for volunteer involvement in the process;
3. maximise the use of all available channels of communication (see section 4 below);
4. align consultation activities to deliver the best outcomes for the NP;
5. engage those who may become opposed to the policies in the NP – eg stakeholders affected by site specifics;
6. make the effort to go out to residents in more remote parts of the parish and not to expect everyone to come to central events.

#### 4. Programme of Communication and Engagement

Date	Consultation programme	Time to Plan
March – May 2014	<b>Launch of consultation:</b> Publicising of Neighbourhood Plan area (see Regulation 5 of the NP Regs – submission to LPA followed by 6 week consultation period)	<b>6 weeks</b>
November 2014	<b>Issues Gathering: Household Questionnaire</b> (including on the website for online completion)	<b>6 weeks</b>
February 2015	<b>Community Engagement Events</b> To publicise and ask opinion on the 5 draft objectives of the NDP	<b>6 weeks</b>
May 2015	<b>NP E-Newsletter</b>	<b>N/A</b>
July 2015	<b>Mailed Newsletter</b> <b>NP E-Newsletter</b>	<b>6 weeks</b> <b>N/A</b>
July - September 2015	<b>Focused Consultation Groups</b> St Erth Primary School; landowners and key stakeholders, neighbouring parishes; harder to reach areas; industrial estate	<b>12 weeks</b>
September 2015	<b>Mailed Newsletter</b> <b>NP E-Newsletter</b>	<b>6 weeks</b> <b>N/A</b>
September – October 2015	<b>Preferred Policy Options</b> To publicise and ask opinion on the policy options identified by the working groups as a result of the household questionnaire	<b>8 weeks</b>
November 2015	<b>E-Newsletter</b>	<b>N/A</b>

January 2016	<b>Mailed Newsletter</b> <b>NP E-Newsletter</b>	<b>6 weeks</b> <b>N/A</b>
February – March 2016	<b>Formal Regulation 14 (Pre-submission) Consultation</b> Draft Neighbourhood Development Plan	<b>8 weeks</b>
March 2016	<b>NP E-Newsletter</b>	<b>N/A</b>
May 2016	<b>Mailed Newsletter</b> <b>NP E-Newsletter</b> Submission of Plan followed by LPA consultation of 6 weeks	<b>6 weeks</b> <b>N/A</b>
July 2016	<b>NP E-Newsletter</b>	<b>N/A</b>
September 2016	<b>NP E-Newsletter</b>	<b>N/A</b>
November 2016	<b>NP E-Newsletter</b>	<b>N/A</b>
January 2017	<b>NP E-Newsletter and Community Referendum</b>	<b>6 weeks</b>

The following channels of communication and engagement will be used to implement the programme:

**i. Local Newspapers**

The Cornishman is the weekly newspaper most widely read in St Erth. This form of reporting will be particularly useful at key stages of consultation. i.e. launch of the Neighbourhood Plan, statutory pre-submission consultation on the draft Plan, and at time of referendum.

**ii. E-Newsletter – NP News**

This will be sent to all contacts on the residents’ mailing list every other month. It will keep people informed of the progress of the working



groups and latest news, including topical NP-related issues and always contain links to the PC's website. Consultation events and working group meetings will be advertised, with regular calls for volunteers. The mailing list will grow as contacts will be collected throughout the process, particularly during major consultation rounds.

**iii. Parish-wide Newsletter**

This will be a printed newsletter mailed to every household and business address in the parish, a total of four times during the plan-making process. The newsletter will contain similar content to the E-Newsletter and include a response form for comments and contact details of people wishing to be kept informed.

In the months prior to consultation events, the newsletter will also contain details of times and venues.

**iv. Notice Boards**

There are three notice boards outside the pub, the Methodist church and inside the village shop, which are regularly viewed by the community for village updates, including information on the NP. A notice board could also be put up at the school. Information provided through notice boards will give the link to the website.

**v. Website**

The PC website contains a dedicated NP section, which will be the central source of information about the NP and the process. It will

contain all meeting dates, meeting minutes<sup>1</sup>, relevant documents and data etc. being used to develop the NP, event notifications, consultation results and draft documents as they are produced. There will be a Sign-up link for the E-Newsletter and a comments section. It will also contain links to other helpful NP sites for additional sources of information.

**vi. Farmers Market**

Farmers tend to be harder to engage due to working hours and dispersed farms in isolated areas, so the Farmers Market, held every Saturday morning, is seen as key to engaging those harder to reach. It is envisaged that the NPSG will work with the National Farmers Union (NFU) to also reach the local farming community.

**vii. Residents Association**

The St Erth Residents Association (SERA) is very active and the Parish Council has a very good relationship with this Association which will prove valuable for getting the word out about consultation and engagement opportunities and support for the Neighbourhood Plan. The NPSG will build on the good relationship with SERA through all consultations. SERA has a link to the NP webpages on their website.

**viii. St Erth Primary School**

The school is a focus point for the community and engagement will happen in two ways:

1. With the children and teachers – to gain their input into the plan

---

<sup>1</sup> NB. Meeting minutes will be published on the website following approval by the group Chair.

2. With the Governing Board and parents – to ascertain the future needs of the school, eg a community hall, via s106 contributions.

**ix. Community Groups and “harder to reach” residents**

It is important that the NP is not solely village focussed. Outlying areas, such as Relubbus and along the A30 will be targeted with door-knocking during major consultation rounds.

The NPSG already holds an extensive list of voluntary groups, clubs and associations in St Erth (see below) with whom to engage and this will be added to where necessary. Community groups are a good way of reaching people who might not respond ordinarily to consultations. They can provide a forum for informal and relaxed discussion, leading to invaluable input into the NP process.

St Erth’s list of Community Groups includes:

St Erth Feast Committee	Guides
Christian Meditation Group	St Erth Concert Band
St Erth Handicraft Group	St Erth Farmers Market
St Erth Friendship Club	St Erth Twinning Association
St Erth Children’s Centre	St Erth Gardening Club
Parents and Toddlers	The Rainbow Youth Club
Bell Ringers	Praze Hayle Male Choir
Lights Committee	St Erth Residents Association
Bridge Youth Café	Copper Quilts
St Erth Walkers	Brownies
Book club	St Erth Players

NB. All venues for consultation need to be suitable for people using wheelchairs, and, if possible, have access to a hearing loop system for those hard of hearing.

**x. Neighbouring parishes**

As a matter of good practice, the NPSG will inform neighbouring parishes of key stages of consultation and will send regular them the NP News E-Newsletter.

Residents living in the parish of Ludgvan on the other side of the A30 will also be consulted, as they may be affected by the NP.

**xi. Other groups**

The following sorts of groups in the parish and in the surrounding area will also be contacted during consultations:

- Doctors Surgeries
- Surrounding schools (Hayle and St Ives)
- Age Concern
- PCDT
- Youth groups
- Hayle Chamber of Commerce

**xii. Statutory Consultees**

During the Regulation 14 Statutory Consultation on the draft St Erth NP, the following organisations and bodies will be consulted:

- Coastline Housing
- Cornwall Council Affordable Housing Team

- Cornwall Council Conservation Team
- Cornwall Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Cornwall Council Highways
- Cornwall Football Association
- Cornwall Town Centre Management Team
- Cornwall Wildlife Trust
- Devon and Cornwall Housing
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Gwinear and Gwithian Parish Council
- Hayle Town Council
- Ludgvan Parish Council
- National Trust
- Natural England
- National Rail Infrastructure Ltd
- Penwith Access and Rights of Way (PAROW)
- Primary Care Trust
- Ramblers Association
- South West Water
- St Ives Town Council
- Towednack Parish Council
- Local MP

Plus any other public body that is relevant to the issues contained within the NP policies.

### **Capturing wider parish issues**

The NPSG will ensure that all issues raised through NP consultations and surveys etc but which do not fall within the remit of the NP itself, will be captured and responded to effectively by the PC.

As NP policies must relate to land use only, all non-land use issues will be captured in an updated St Erth Parish Plan, to which the NP will refer. This Parish Plan will prioritise community needs and aspirations which could be funded if possible through planning gain (eg CIL, New Homes Bonus and voluntary contributions etc) and supported by policies relating to land use within the NP e.g. contribution to footpath upgrades, traffic schemes and street lighting.

**Appendix 1:**

**Consultation Activity and Feedback Log**

**Consultation Log:**

Consultation event/ activity	Date	Register of attendees maintained?	Key issues and concerns raised?	How are these being addressed?	Has consultation feedback been provided?

**Pre-submission consultation on Draft Neighbourhood Plan (Reg.14 of Neighbourhood Planning regulations 2012)**

Community or Statutory body consulted	Comments received (relating to each site and policy)	Feedback provided?	What changes were made to the Plan as a result of this consultation? (including policy changes)