

# Communications Strategy

December 2021



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## Introduction

This Communications Strategy has been produced to outline how the Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership manages its communications and engagement activities. The Communication Strategy seeks to ensure there is effective communication with local residents, businesses, organisations and key stakeholders when preparing strategic development plans.

The Strategy should be read in conjunction with the respective Statements of Community Involvement which set out how each Council undertakes consultation as part of its Planning Policy and Development Management functions (see Appendix A).

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## Background

The Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership was established in 2008. It has evolved from the long history of joint working on planning matters in Greater Nottingham. The following Councils form the Partnership:

- Ashfield District Council
- Broxtowe Borough Council.
- Erewash Borough Council
- Gedling Borough Council
- Nottingham City Council
- Rushcliffe Borough Council
- Derbyshire County Council
- Nottinghamshire County Council

The Partnership's aim is to prepare statutory strategic development plans which are consistent and provide a coherent policy framework across the area. In doing so it seeks to address the Duty to Cooperate between the constituent Councils, and provides a single point of contact for other Duty to Cooperate partners to engage in the strategic plan making process.

The National Planning Policy Framework sets out government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It states:

24. Local planning authorities and county councils (in two-tier areas) are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries.

26. Effective and on-going joint working between strategic policy-making authorities and relevant bodies is integral to the production of a positively prepared and justified strategy. In particular, joint working should help to determine where additional infrastructure is necessary, and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.

In recognition of the importance of planning coherently across Greater Nottingham, the Greater Nottingham Joint Planning Advisory Board (JPAB) was established in 2008. It is an advisory body and therefore any key decisions it makes are ratified by the relevant executive bodies of each member Council where appropriate.

The Greater Nottingham Joint Planning Advisory Board is made up of Councillors responsible for planning and transport matters within the constituent authorities.

The Councils of Broxtowe, Gedling, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe, in cooperation with Nottinghamshire County Council, are currently preparing the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan.

Erewash Borough Council is undertaking a separate Core Strategy Review.

As only the Hucknall part of Ashfield District Council falls within Greater Nottingham, and the District as a whole is part of the Nottingham Outer Housing Market area, Ashfield are preparing a separate Local Plan.

Erewash Borough Council and Ashfield District Council's Statements of Community Involvement provide details regarding how each Council's approach for engaging with local residents and stakeholders as part of preparing planning policy documents. However, the Partnership website also provides information and links to consultations being undertaken by these Councils.

All of the Councils within the Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership work collaboratively to produce and share joint evidence to support the plan preparation process.

# Communication and Engagement

Effective communication and engagement is vital to ensure that the Partnership understands and responds to the needs of the various stakeholders involved in strategic planning matters.

## Key Stakeholders

The preparation of development plan documents requires the engagement of a wide variety of stakeholders:

- Local Residents
- Elected Members
- Local Businesses
- Local Authorities
- Town and Parish Councils (and designated Neighbourhood Forums)
- Statutory Consultees
- Specialist bodies and organisations
- Developers, landowners and site promoters.

A variety of methods are used to engage with stakeholders and these are described in further detail below.

## Joint Planning Advisory Board (JPAB)

JPAB is an advisory board made up of Councillors from each of the constituent Councils. It meets four times a year, although additional meetings may be held when necessary.

JPAB allows for strategic planning matters and cross boundary issues to be discussed and provides an opportunity for effective joint working.

The following methods are used to communicate the work of JPAB:

- The meetings are open to the public and can be attended by any interested stakeholders. When held virtually, the meetings can be viewed online.
- The supporting papers and previous meeting minutes are available on the Partnership's website: [www.gnplan.org.uk](http://www.gnplan.org.uk)
- Presentations to JPAB are published on the Partnership's website. This includes presenting key findings relating to joint evidence reports.

## Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan

The Councils of Broxtowe, Gedling, Nottingham City and Rushcliffe are currently preparing the Greater Nottingham Strategic Plan. A Growth Options Consultation has been undertaken and future consultations will be undertaken following the production of a Draft Strategic Plan.

Where appropriate, key documents will include non-technical summaries and simplified guidance notes to enable all stakeholders to be able to engage effectively with the consultation. Technology will also be utilised to improve engagement, including the use of virtual consultation rooms and through making it easier to submit responses in relation to future consultations.

A variety of methods have been used, and will be utilised for future consultations, to ensure that a wide range of stakeholders have the opportunity to engage in the production of the Strategic Plan.



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Joint Database – [A joint database](#) is used to securely hold the details of any person or organisation who has expressed that they want to be informed of progress with the Strategic Plan. The database allows for notifications via emails or letters to be sent to all stakeholders on the database and this is undertaken as part of statutory consultations.

The database includes all statutory consultees such as Town and Parish Councils. There are currently 2,480 stakeholders held on the database, allowing for a substantial number of people, developers, and organisations to be contacted directly. The database also holds consultation documents allowing for comments to be submitted online without the requirement to submit separate forms.



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Joint website: The [Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership's website](#) provides information regarding the Partnership including details of previous consultations, evidence documents, JPAB papers and a latest news page. The website also includes contact information. It has been formatted to ensure it is accessible to a variety of users and can be viewed on computers, tablets and mobile phones and using accessibility software. The website also provides details and links to consultations being undertaken by Ashfield District Council and Erewash Borough Council.



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Digital technology and social media: The Partnership uses Twitter and YouTube to publicise information regarding consultations and to provide video content. Opportunities to further utilise digital technology will continue to be explored to widen participation in future consultations.

Communications, Web and Social Media Teams: Each Council has separate communication teams who utilise a variety of methods to provide information to residents and businesses. The Partnership works closely with these teams to ensure coordinated communication which includes using Council social media outlets and providing information on websites.



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Press releases: Local newspaper and media outlets including parish council newsletters are used to publicise details of consultations.



Created by Ade Nur Hidayat  
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Deposit Points: outside of Covid restrictions, documents are 'deposited' to be viewed at libraries and council offices as required under the planning regulations.



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Meetings: Regular meetings are held with statutory consultees which include organisations such as Natural England and the Environment Agency. Meetings are also held with neighbouring authorities who do not form part of the Partnership.

In addition to the above, periodic updates regarding progress will be provided to stakeholders regarding progress with the Strategic Plan and to provide an opportunity for engagement outside of consultation periods. These updates will be in addition to the information which is currently provided on the website.

It should be noted that the above only provides details of communication methods used by the Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership. Each Council also has a separate communications strategy and methods of engagement in addition to the above. These include:

- Committee meetings – The Joint Planning Advisory Board is only an advisory body. Therefore, all decisions must be ratified separately by each Council. Supporting papers are published and meetings can be attended or viewed online.
- Elected Members and Officers within each Council will have regular communication following Member/Officer protocols.
- Additional social media outlets including Facebook.
- Additional meetings and workshops – This may include workshops with local residents, attending Town and Parish Councils meetings or meetings with developers, landowners and local interest groups.

# Managing Information Requests

## **Media Enquiries**

Media enquiries are predominately dealt with by each respective Council's media team following their media protocols. The Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership may coordinate a joint response where required however this would be subject to an agreement from each authority. Joint press releases may be published to publicise consultations.

## **Freedom of Information Requests**

Responses to Freedom of Information requests would be dealt with by each Council following their own procedures in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Further information can be found on each Council's website.

## **Public Enquiries**

Enquires directed to the Greater Nottingham Planning Partnership email or social media accounts will be responded to within 7 days. Other enquiries will be dealt with in accordance with each Council's procedures.

# Monitoring

The Partnership continues to monitor the effectiveness of its communication and engagement. This includes reviewing:

- Number of consultation responses and groups represented.
- Type and form of consultation responses received.
- Social media engagement.
- Feedback from stakeholders including statutory consultees.

# Appendix A: Statements of Community Involvement

The Strategy should be read in conjunction with the respective Statements of Community Involvement which set out how each Council undertakes consultation as part of its Planning Policy and Development Management functions:

- Ashfield District Council: <https://www.ashfield.gov.uk/planning-building-control/local-plan/statement-of-community-involvement/>
- Broxtowe Borough Council: <https://www.broxtowe.gov.uk/for-you/planning/planning-policy/the-statement-of-community-involvement/>
- Erewash Borough Council: <https://www.erewash.gov.uk/local-plan-section/community-involvement.html>
- Gedling Borough Council: <https://www.gedling.gov.uk/media/gedlingboroughcouncil/documents/planningpolicy/documents/GBC%20SCI%20FINAL%202019.pdf>
- Nottingham City Council: <https://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/media/3332875/the-interim-statement-of-community-involvement-sci-2020.pdf>
- Rushcliffe Borough Council : <https://www.rushcliffe.gov.uk/planningpolicy/localplan/communityinvolvement/>