Basingstoke and Deane

Planning for our future

Basingstoke and Deane Local Plan

Engaging the community in neighbourhood planning







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Introduction

Involving the community is central to neighbourhood planning. You need to involve them in the process to find out what they think about issues such as housing, employment opportunities, open spaces etc. This document is designed to support neighbourhood planning groups in the consultation process.

Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council has an adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which aims to inform local communities and stakeholders how they will be involved in the preparation of planning documents in their areas and how their views will be considered. It also covers how people and the community will be engaged in decisions on planning applications for development proposals. The council's aim is to ensure the active, meaningful and continued involvement of local communities and stakeholders. This document builds on the principles set out in the council's SCI.

The council has also produced a Neighbourhood Planning Protocol[1], which sets out the stages required in working towards a Neighbourhood Plan, and identifies the responsibilities of those involved. This protocol suggests that neighbourhood planning groups should develop a communications strategy in order to establish how and when you will engage the local community and other stakeholders.

Good communication is important at the start and throughout the process for a number of reasons: to meet the regulations, to inform the evidence base, to guide more realistic and deliverable policies, to gain public confidence and support towards the referendum stage, and to avoid conflict and delays.

Consultation basics

Getting the consultation right can make the difference between good, meaningful contact and a negative response.

1. Plan your consultation so everyone can contribute.

Does your community have regular meeting places? Are they mobile? Do they have access to computers and the internet? Are there any literacy issues or need for alternative formats e.g. large print?

2. Allow everyone to take part.

Overcome barriers that some individuals may have by selecting venues, times of consultation and communication methods with care.

3. Be clear on what you are trying to achieve.

This helps you explain it to others.

4. Plan your questions

Consider the information that you can already find out from other sources, in order to avoid very lengthy questionnaires.

5. Make your consultation easy to understand.

Use simple explanations to provide context to complex questions or different subjects.

[1] The Protocol is available to view on the council's website at http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/browse/environment-and-planning/planning/emerging-local-plan/neighbourhood-planning/producing-neighbourhood-plans.htm

6. Set aside enough time.
Your project plan should include time to draft, conduct and analyse your consultation.

7. Comply with the Data Protection Act when handling personal information.
Personal questions about household size, age and gender, postcode and village and street names etc will help with the analysis, but responses must be handled as confidential data and stored securely.

8. Make sure you observe and display any copyright.
This includes Ordnance survey maps that you may wish to use as part of your consultation.

9. Keep people informed.
Make sure you let people know what you have learnt and what you will do as a result.

10. Analyse your consultation process.
Have you achieved what you set out to do? If not, why not? Could you have done things differently?

When to consult

The length of time needed will vary depending on what method you choose, the time of year and the level of response you need. However best practice suggests you should plan for 6 to 12 weeks for your consultation programme.

1. Think about the time of year.
What else is happening? Try to avoid major holiday times such as school or religious holidays.

2. Are there any other local events planned?
Make sure you don't clash with the timing of other events. Could you use an event as an opportunity for your communication methods?

3. Offer a range of dates and time of day / evening for events.
This is to ensure that all groups can take part.

4. Build in sufficient time to the programme.
Allow enough time for analysing what you have learnt and for feedback and evaluation.

Who to consult

It is important to recognise the mix of people in your community to ensure that everyone has the chance to engage in the process. Grouping residents and businesses into stakeholder groups will help you to identify what methods you need to use to ensure you obtain their views. Typical stakeholders groups include:

- Schoolchildren (aged 5-16)
- Young people (aged 16 – 30)
- Older people
- Commuters (people living in the community but working outside)
- Housing estate representatives

- Community groups and societies
- Single parent families
- Individuals with disabilities
- Faith groups
- People employed in the community
- Local businesses
- Black and minority ethnic groups including gypsies and travellers
- Families
- Migrant workers
- Voluntary organisations acting in the area

You might also want to engage with other bodies whose interests may be affected by your neighbourhood plan. These include:

- Hampshire County Council
- Infrastructure providers
- Natural England
- Environment Agency
- English Heritage

The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations also require that, before submitting a plan or proposal to the local planning authority, neighbourhood planning groups must consult any 'consultation body' whose interests may be affected by the proposals. The definition of a consultation body as set out by the regulations is listed at Appendix 2 of the council's Neighbourhood Planning Protocol.

English Heritage, Natural England, the Forestry Commission and the Environment Agency have also prepared advice for groups starting work on a neighbourhood plan, neighbourhood development order, or Community Right to Build Order. 'Planning for the environment at the neighbourhood level'[2] covers ideas, where to get information, and when to consult the statutory agencies.

How to consult

The range of consultation methods particularly suited to neighbourhood planning includes:

- Questionnaires
- Public meetings
- Focus groups
- Stakeholder seminars
- Open Days
- Exhibitions

Several methods may have to be used to get the whole community involved.

[2] Planning for the environment at the neighbourhood level can be accessed here: http://a0768b4a8a31e106d8b0-50dc802554eb38a24458b98ff72d550b.r19.cf3.rackcdn.com/geho0212bwaz-e-e.pdf

Where to consult

If you are holding an event, consider using different consultation venues to help you reach the whole of your community. Often the most effective way to reach people is to piggy back on other events, meetings or gatherings that you know people will already be attending. Possible venues include:

- Community centre / village hall
- Schools
- Pubs
- Places of worship
- Shops / post office
- On the street
- Drop in events
- Public meetings
- Community days / village fetes / summer festivals
- Existing community clubs and societies

Developing Questionnaires

Questionnaires are a useful way to collect a range of information and can be used to support an exhibition or open day, or on their own.

When formulating your questions, think about your objectives and consider the key points you want answered.

You also need to give people some background so they know why you are asking them for their views. This could be through a leaflet explaining the background, exhibitions and displays, web links and further contact information.

- Keep the subject matter simple. Other forms of research may be better suited to more complex questions.
- Using multiple choice or ranking options is easier for both respondents to answer and data entry.
- Make sure the questionnaire is logically planned, formed in sections that flow naturally from one to the other.
- Keep your questions and the overall questionnaire as short as possible[3].
- Pilot the questionnaire ask someone who has not been involved in the design to test how long it takes to complete.
- Add in a confidentiality statement to reassure participants of your security / data protection.
- Always end with a thank you and the closing date for the replies.
- Offer the information in alternative formats e.g. large print. See the back cover of this document for an example of this.
- Include a range of contact details for your group, with an email address and telephone number as a minimum.

[3] Where possible, it is a good idea to complement questionnaires with more qualitative (more detailed) information. You can gather this information via any of the other methods outlined on page 3.

‘About You’ questions

These are used to help with analysis and identify what different groups of interviewees feel about different issues. Using these helps demonstrate that you have been inclusive in your consultation and your results are robust. It will also help you address any issues of inequality in your community.

The minimum questions should be:
Age
Gender
Disability
Ethnicity

But you might also want to ask:
Number in household
Housing type
Occupation
Postcode and street

Please refer to Appendix 1 for more details.

Question wording

A clear and concise survey will improve response rates.

- Avoid using jargon. Use everyday language wherever possible
- Write in short sentences and keep the questions short.
- Use multiple choice questions wherever possible. It is easier for people to tick a box and it is easier to analyse.
- Do not ask questions that are hard to answer e.g. where people think they will be living in 10 years time.
- Avoid leading questions, such as ‘Do you agree…’
- Avoid vague phrases, such as ‘Do you use the bus service regularly?‘
  List a variety of time scales instead e.g. daily, weekly, twice monthly etc.

Appendix 1 includes a variety of questions related to neighbourhood planning, which you may want to incorporate into your questionnaire.

Analysing your responses

Using survey software to create the questionnaire will make the analysis much easier. There are a number of online survey software companies to choose from, such as Survey Monkey www.surveymonkey.com

- Merge the responses from any paper and online questionnaires by inputting paper replies electronically
- Don’t worry if not everyone has answered all the questions – this is a good reason for putting in a ‘don’t know / not sure’ option in the survey.
- Start by looking at basic statistics and percentages

- Cross reference, looking for trends in the data by analysing two questions together e.g. of those that think that more open space is needed, how important is it for certain age groups?

Feedback and reporting

You don't need to use all of the feedback in your report. Select the most relevant and important information and organise it into summary tables and graphs. Be careful not to change the data received during this process.

Use these statistics to support and evidence the conclusions you have come to, which will inform any decisions moving forward.

- Make sure that what you have included is supported by the data.
- Ensure you feedback the results to residents in a timely manner.
- Let people know what you have found out as well as what you are going to do with the information.
- If using other consultation methods in addition to questionnaires, don't be tempted to merge the results. They are not comparable, but complementary.

Further guidance

Officers at Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council are actively involved in supporting groups in the preparation of their Neighbourhood Plans. If you would like further information or guidance, please contact:

Planning Policy Team

Email: local.plan@basingstoke.gov.uk
Telephone: 01256 845536

Community Planning Team

Email: community.development@basingstoke.gov.uk
Telephone: 01256 845282

Appendix 1 – Possible survey questions

About you

To aid analysis of consultation responses, we would like to know a bit more about you.

It is not compulsory, and for each question there is an option to tick 'Prefer not to say'.

All responses will be treated in the strictest confidence and will only be used for purposes of developing the neighbourhood plan.

What is your postcode? _____

- ☐ Prefer not to say

Are you:

- ☐ Male
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Prefer not to say

What is your age group?

- ☐ Under 15
- ☐ 15-24
- ☐ 25-34
- ☐ 35-44
- ☐ 45-54
- ☐ 55-64
- ☐ 65-74
- ☐ 75+
- ☐ Prefer not to say

How do you describe your ethnic origin?

White

- ☐ White British
- ☐ White Irish
- ☐ White Gypsy / Traveller
- ☐ Any other White background (please write in) _____

Mixed / multiple ethnic groups

- ☐ White and Black Caribbean
- ☐ White and Black African
- ☐ White and Asian
- ☐ Any other Mixed / multiple ethnic background (please write in) _____

Asian / Asian British

- ☐ Indian
- ☐ Pakistani
- ☐ Bangladeshi
- ☐ Chinese
- ☐ Nepalese
- ☐ Any other Asian background (please write in) _____

Black / Black British

- ☐ African
- ☐ Caribbean
- ☐ Any other Black background (please write in) _____

Other ethnic group

- ☐ Arab
- ☐ Any other ethnic group (please write in) _____

- ☐ Prefer not to say

Do you consider yourself as having a disability or long-term physical or mental health condition?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Prefer not to say

If you answered yes, please explain if you wish

_____

General

From the list below please indicate your three most important issues and your three least important issues. Put three ticks in the "Most" column and three in "Least".

	Most important	**Least important**
Playgrounds, sports pitches and parks		
Protection of our countryside, rivers and wildlife		
Enough jobs for all residents who want one		
Ability to travel to work without long hold ups		
Enough homes so that younger people can continue living in the area		
A range of housing types to meet the needs of older people		
Houses that are affordable for local people to rent or buy		
A wide choice of shops		
A reliable and frequent bus service		
Well-designed houses that fit in well with the local area		
Homes that are eco-friendly and energy efficient		
Regeneration of run down areas		
Good quality community facilities		
Safety and a reduction in crime and antisocial behaviour		

Do you have other priorities? (Please state below)

_____

Should certain parts of the area be designated for certain activities?
YES/NO (please delete as appropriate)

If so, which ones and for what purpose?

_____

What infrastructure do you think is necessary to address existing gaps and support new development?

Transport
- ☐ Roads
- ☐ Cycleways
- ☐ Footpaths
- ☐ Other (please state)

Education
- ☐ Further and higher education
- ☐ Secondary school
- ☐ Primary school
- ☐ Nurseries
- ☐ Other (please state)

Health
- ☐ Doctor
- ☐ Dentist
- ☐ Other (please state)

Social infrastructure
- ☐ Supported accommodation
- ☐ Community facilities
- ☐ Sports centres
- ☐ Open spaces
- ☐ Parks and play spaces
- ☐ Other (please state)

Green infrastructure
- ☐ Green spaces
- ☐ Trees and hedges
- ☐ Other (please state)

Public services
- ☐ Waste management and disposal
- ☐ Libraries
- ☐ Cemeteries
- ☐ Places of worship
- ☐ Other (please state)

Utility services
- ☐ Gas
- ☐ Electricity
- ☐ Water
- ☐ Waste water treatment
- ☐ Telecommunications
- ☐ Other (please state)

Please indicate any areas that would be potentially suitable for this infrastructure on the attached map.

What do you think is a suitable period for this Neighbourhood Development Plan to be in force? _____

What issues do you think the Neighbourhood Plan should cover and why? (please provide comments in the spaces below).

- ☐ Affordable housing _____
- ☐ Biodiversity conservation _____
- ☐ Community facilities _____
- ☐ Community safety _____
- ☐ Design _____
- ☐ Employment _____
- ☐ Flooding _____
- ☐ Green spaces _____
- ☐ Historic conservation _____
- ☐ Housing mix _____
- ☐ Leisure facilities _____
- ☐ Local services e.g. shops _____
- ☐ Renewable energy _____
- ☐ Tourism _____
- ☐ Transport _____
- ☐ Other (please state) _____

What do you like most about your local area?

_____

Is there anything you would like to be retained / protected?

_____

Housing

What is your current residential status?

- ☐ Owner occupier
- ☐ Private tenant
- ☐ Renter from housing association
- ☐ Shared ownership
- ☐ Living with relatives
- ☐ Other (please state)

If you rent, would you wish to own your property?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

If yes, why have you been unable to purchase a property locally?

- ☐ Too expensive
- ☐ Available housing is unsuitable size
- ☐ Available housing is unsuitable for special needs
- ☐ Other (please state) _____

How many people live in your household and what are their ages?
(insert number of occupants in relevant box)

- ☐ 0-4
- ☐ 5-15
- ☐ 16-24
- ☐ 25-39
- ☐ 40-55
- ☐ 56-64
- ☐ 65-79
- ☐ 80+

Is there any individual in your household currently, or in the near future, in need of alternative accommodation?
YES / NO (please delete as appropriate)

If 'yes' how many people are in this situation? _____

Where do they need to move to?

- ☐ Another dwelling within the parish
- ☐ Elsewhere in the borough
- ☐ Outside the borough

If they need to move within the parish, what size of property would they need?

- ☐ One bedroom
- ☐ Two bedrooms
- ☐ Three bedrooms
- ☐ Four bedrooms
- ☐ Five or more bedrooms

Is there anyone in the house, who is not currently in need of their own home but is likely to want one in the parish in the next five years? (e.g. a teenager who may leave home)

YES / NO (please delete as appropriate)

If 'yes' how many people are in this situation? _____

Where do they need to move to?

- ☐ Another dwelling within the parish
- ☐ Elsewhere in the borough
- ☐ Outside the borough

If they need to move within the parish, what size of property would they need?

- ☐ One bedroom
- ☐ Two bedrooms
- ☐ Three bedrooms
- ☐ Four bedrooms
- ☐ Five or more bedrooms

Do you think that new homes are needed in your local area?

- ☐ No, enough have already been built
- ☐ Yes, but there are things that make it difficult to develop housing in my area (Please explain what these are below)

  _____

- ☐ Yes, we need additional homes to meet the needs of the local community

If you answered yes, how many additional homes do you think are needed?

- ☐ Less than 10
- ☐ 10-20
- ☐ 21-50
- ☐ 51-100
- ☐ More than 100

If new houses were built in your local area which of these types would be most appropriate?

- ☐ Homes for older people downsizing
- ☐ Affordable houses to buy
- ☐ Affordable houses for rent
- ☐ Houses suitable for older people to live independently
- ☐ Accommodation for older people who need some care and support
- ☐ Bungalows
- ☐ Homes for single people
- ☐ Homes for couples
- ☐ Small family homes (2 or 3 bedrooms)
- ☐ Large family homes (four or more bedrooms)
- ☐ Homes for people with disabilities
- ☐ A wide mix of types

If future housing development within the Parish were required, where should this be sited?

- ☐ Adjacent to existing housing
- ☐ Brownfield (previously developed) sites
- ☐ Greenfield sites

Please indicate any potential sites you think may be suitable for new housing on the attached map.

Services and facilities

Our community has adequate access to…

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Please provide any comments you have on these services/facilities in the box below
Child care facilities/Pre-schools						
Primary Schools						
Secondary schools						
Shops						
Eating/drinking establishments						
Doctor's surgery						
Dentists						
Community facilities such as a community hall						
Youth facilities						
Sports facilities						
Public transport						
Road facilities						
Safe and attractive walking and cycling routes						
Open space						
The countryside						
High speed broadband						
Recycling and waste facilities						

Are there any other services, facilities or improvements you think are needed to serve your local area?

Leisure and recreation

What facilities do you use at present in the local area?

_____

How do you get there?

- ☐ Car
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Cycle
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Other (please state) _____

What facilities do you use outside the area?

_____

How do you get there?

- ☐ Car
- ☐ Bus
- ☐ Cycle
- ☐ Walk
- ☐ Other (please state) _____

Our community has adequate access to…

	Strongly agree	**Agree**	**Neither agree nor disagree**	**Disagree**	**Strongly disagree**	**Please provide any comments you have on these facilities in the relevant box below**
Play areas and parks for 0-5 yrs						
Play areas and parks for 6 – 12 yrs						
Play areas and parks for teenagers						
Parks and recreation for adults						

Are you satisfied with the leisure and recreation facilities available for people of your age in the Parish?
YES/NO

If not, what facilities would you like to see provided in the local area?

_____

Do you consider that the priority in terms of leisure and recreational provision should focus on:

- ☐ effectively maintaining what we already have
- ☐ improving the quality of our public open spaces
- ☐ improving the quality and quantity of recreational and sporting facilities
- ☐ improving the provision of community facilities
- ☐ improving links to the surrounding countryside
- ☐ improving links to nearby towns
- ☐ providing more allotments

Are there any leisure or recreation facilities in the local area that should be protected?

YES/NO

If yes, please give details in the space below and highlight on the attached map.

Transport

The flow of traffic is adequately managed through the Parish

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

The speed of traffic is adequately managed through the Parish

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Adequate parking is available around my home

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Adequate parking available in local public places

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Pedestrians are adequately catered for around the Parish

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

Cyclists are adequately catered for around the Parish

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

How could the Neighbourhood Plan encourage more walking or cycling?

_____

Are there any specific areas in need of transport or parking improvements?

YES/NO

If so, please give details in the space below and highlight on the attached map.

_____

Employment

Should we encourage additional business/commercial development in the local area?

YES / NO (please delete as appropriate)

If yes, should this be

- ☐ Expansion of existing facilities
- ☐ Clustering near existing facilities
- ☐ Greenfield sites

What types of employment should the Plan encourage? (Tick any that you would support)

- ☐ Tourism, leisure and crafts
- ☐ Transport, storage and distribution
- ☐ Food and drink production
- ☐ Community services
- ☐ Offices
- ☐ Social Enterprises
- ☐ Pubs, restaurants and cafes
- ☐ Financial and professional services
- ☐ Shops
- ☐ Light industrial and manufacturing
- ☐ Other (please state)

Should existing employment sites be protected from changes of use?
YES/NO (please delete as appropriate)

If yes, which sites? _____

We should establish a business park in the parish

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

We should support small businesses run from home

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

We should support large businesses with their own premises

Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree

How important are these to the economic vitality of the area?

	Very	To some extent	Not at all	Don't know	Please provide any comments in the relevant box below
A business hub with office space for home-based workers					
Local shops					
Eating/drinking establishments					
Improved parking in central areas					
Office units					
Industrial units					
Improved broadband					

What additional businesses and services does the area need?

_____

Questions for business owners

What would encourage businesses to locate in the area?
Please list up to five in priority order.

What barriers or constraints prevent businesses moving to the area or existing business expanding? Please list up to five in priority order

To help us understand the range of existing businesses in the area, please tick the box(es) that best describes the nature of your business.

- ☐ Agriculture, forestry and fishing
- ☐ Mining and quarrying
- ☐ Energy and water
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Construction
- ☐ Wholesale and retail trades, repair of vehicles
- ☐ Transport and storage
- ☐ Accommodation, hotels, restaurants, food services
- ☐ Information and communications
- ☐ Finance and insurance activities
- ☐ Public administration, education and health
- ☐ Real estate activities
- ☐ Professional, scientific and technical activities
- ☐ Administration and support service activities
- ☐ Arts, entertainment and recreation
- ☐ Other (please state) _____

How many people do you employ? _____

How many of your employees live within the parish? _____

Are you expecting to recruit additional staff in the next 5 years?

YES/NO (please delete as appropriate)

If yes, roughly how many and what would this be dependent on?

_____

Design

Please indicate how you feel about the quality of the physical environment

Very satisfied	Satisfied	No opinion	Dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied

What are the most important things for our built environment? (Tick those that you consider important)

- ☐ Design that respects the scale of the existing townscape
- ☐ Minimum standards for living space in dwellings
- ☐ Use of traditional local building materials
- ☐ High levels of energy conservation in new buildings
- ☐ The green space and gardens within the settlements
- ☐ Better pedestrian and cycle access to the town centre
- ☐ Signage, advertising and street furniture that respects the locality
- ☐ Traditional styles and scale of shop fronts
- ☐ Other, please specify _____

Are there any buildings, places or views which you believe are important to protect? Please give details in the space below and highlight on the attached map.

_____

Are there any styles or areas that you would like to be replicated in new developments? Please give details in the space below and highlight on the attached map.

_____

Engaging the community in neighbourhood planning

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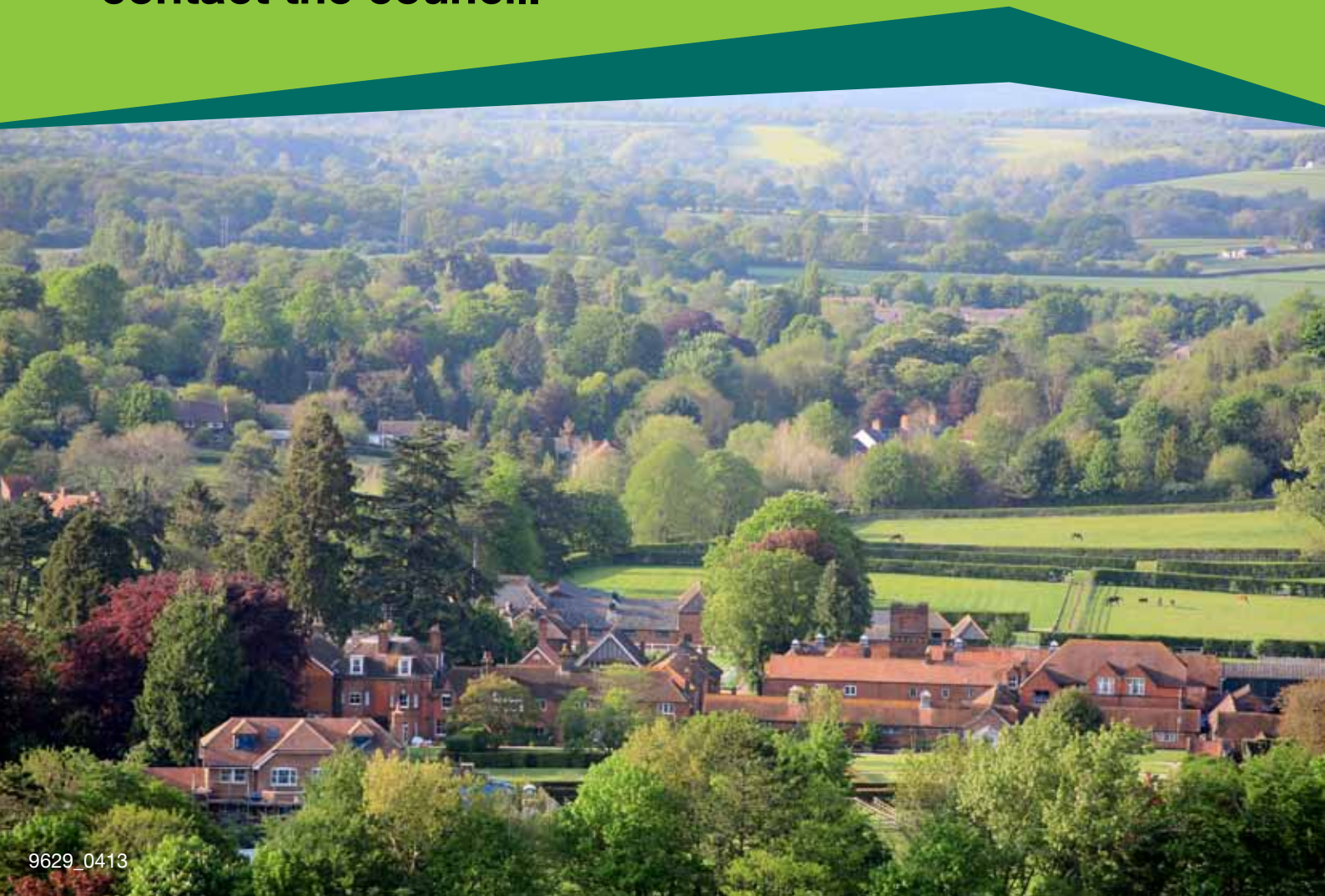

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