



Horbury Civic Society

Framework for Community Consultation on a 'A Place Plan' – 'Vision for Horbury'

Introduction – Why a Place Plan?

We recognise Horbury as an attractive town, surrounded by open countryside, on the edge of Wakefield in West Yorkshire. In order to protect and enhance it as a unique 'Place' over the next fifteen years, Horbury Civic Society is proposing to develop a 'Place Plan' for Horbury which will set out ambitious objectives to address the key challenges over this period. To ensure that it has widespread support, this will be in partnership with other local community organisations, businesses and schools and consultation will be carried out with all members of the community. Although the 'Vision for Horbury' Place Plan will have no powers to enforce changes, the aspects relating to future planning and development in Horbury will seek to provide detailed guidance based on local knowledge and preferences to influence the Council's decision making, but remaining within the framework and policies of the Wakefield Local Plan.

What makes Horbury attractive is its distinct and historic character which includes a high street with a range of independent shops, restaurants, cafes, pubs and other services which are all within residents' walking distance. It is a mixed community and has thriving community organisations serving wide interest groups. Although it is now mainly residential, it is built upon a proud heritage of woollen mills and railways engineering along the river Calder valley which it overlooks from Horbury Bridge to Horbury Junction. It retains a variety of Listed and locally important heritage buildings constructed from locally quarried stone which reflect the prosperity derived from those industries.

In response to increasingly rapid and global changes in society and the built and natural environment, the 'Place Plan' will identify priorities to encourage protection or improvement of facilities and developments in Horbury and opportunities to influence such changes.

The Vision

In order to develop the Place Plan, a 'Vision for Horbury' is needed to provide a long term focus on the most important issues to be addressed over the period up to 2036, which is also the period covered by Wakefield district's emerging Local Development Plan. It is proposed that our ambition should be to make Horbury 'best in class' across the improvement objectives for a town of our size and they should be based upon the following aims which are to highlight the adaptation measures necessary to address the following key global challenges.:

- built environment and heritage;
- public health;
- the digital revolution;
- climate change;

- and nature conservation

On that basis, it is suggested that the Vision statement should be along the lines of:

The 'Vision for Horbury' will gather support from all sectors of the local community and local government agencies to identify and highlight the adaptation measures necessary to maintain and enhance the town and its facilities as an attractive, healthy, economically, socially and environmentally sustainable place to visit, live and work. Some measures will be dependent on decision making by the Council and other agencies, but others will be about influencing behaviour at both community and personal levels.

The Place Plan

For information, background principles and methodology on Place Plans for communities can be explored at <http://www.placeplans.org.uk/en/>

The proposed 'Vision for Horbury' Place Plan will bring together a document derived from consultation with all sectors of the community and local agencies which will:

- provide supplementary planning guidance (SPG) on the use and development of land and property in the Horbury area;
- link to planning policies set out by Wakefield Council as the Local Planning Authority;
- be written by local people who know the area well and can add more detail to the work done by the planners;
- link to other local and community plans on a wide range of physical, historical, social, and economic issues (to be agreed through consultation).

Public consultation

Notwithstanding the current difficulties in face to face gatherings due to the pandemic, safe methods of public consultation will be undertaken in the initial stages to establish support for the aims and objectives of the proposed Plan among local community leaders and our local authority. Other means of consultation will be offered at appropriate times through development of the Plan in relation to each topic area for Horbury residents, businesses, employees and visitors together with relevant public agencies and other stakeholders.

Potential objectives of the Place Plan would be to develop improvements in:

A) Planning and Land Use Issues

- Master planning the redevelopment of the 'Wakefield Commercial Park' at Horbury Bridge;
- Design code and low carbon development for new buildings;
- Public realm and public amenities
- Future proofing existing buildings through retro-fitting energy saving and carbon reduction;
- Flood resilience measures;

- Identification of heritage buildings and structures for conservation and protection through 'Local Listing';
- Nature and wildlife conservation;
- Environmental improvements.

B) Non-Planning and Land Use issues

- Digital infrastructure improvement – Promote ultra-high speed internet coverage in the town and free wifi in the town centre;
- Health promotion through community information and learning;
- Public art and improvement of the public realm;
- Enhancement of sport, exercise and recreation facilities;
- Community development facilities for older and younger people;
- Public transport improvement to reduce reliance on commuting by car;
- Horbury town centre business improvement schemes;
- Promoting provision of facilities for new forms of business, manufacturing and employment;
- Charging points for electric vehicles.

Planning and Land Use

On completion of the draft Place Plan, a community wide consultation will take place for confirmation before asking Wakefield Council to formally adopt the elements relevant to planning and land use. If successful that would mean that those principles in the Place Plan would become 'supplementary planning guidance' for developers and other planning applicants, which would be taken in to account by the Council when reaching planning decisions.

Non Land Use Issues

Achievement of the non-land use elements of the Plan would be pursued with other responsible agencies and stakeholders. Opportunities will be identified where adaptations and improvements are best achieved through changes in behaviour at both a community and personal level.