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Peacehaven and Telscombe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group

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NEWSLETTER - JUNE 2021

A Layman's Guide to the Public Realm

This is a term little heard of by anyone who doesn't work in Planning!

Public Realm is any free space open to anyone including streets and parks and is an umbrella phrase used to describe street furniture such as benches, street signs, railings, planters and grass verges. It is the quality of the public realm and street furniture which contributes to "Place Making" giving a town character and improving the human experience.

Peacehaven and Telscombe Towns can also be improved by unified designs set out as "Design Codes". These codes inform future development within the towns and will be achieved by setting out some general design principles based on national guidance. Then, different character areas are defined and a brief character area assessment carried out which underpins the design codes that respect and enhance the existing character. These objectives were agreed with Peacehaven and Telscombe Town Councils at the outset of the project.

Currently in Peacehaven and Telscombe we have a mish-mash of different signage (particularly along the South Coast Road) which is ugly and unco-ordinated. Within the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan, there is an opportunity to adopt design codes for our streets to improve the visual effect and currently the Steering Group is working on a set of Design Codes to be approved. Thereafter, developers will be required to conform to those standards for any building that takes place and gradually improvements will be made.

The Design Codes will form part of the Neighbourhood Plan which is currently being drafted.

[Read more on our website here](#)



5.8. LEGIBILITY & WAYFINDING

To make walking and cycling a more attractive option, routes should be direct and unobscured. This can be achieved by using wayfinding principles, such as including clear signage at key nodes. Places should have a clear identity with local landmarks, such as buildings or public art that will help people understand and navigate the built environment.



5.9. STREET TREES

Planting street trees in urban areas can bring many benefits. Firstly, they are aesthetically pleasing and create variation and interest along the street. Furthermore, they can add to the identity of a place and act as a traffic calming measure. They also can improve people's physical and mental health.

Figure 302. Storage can be used for wayfinding.



Figure 304. Urban street trees.

Figure 303. Destructive public art can set legibility.



Figure 305. Mature residential street trees.

What's happening now?

The Steering Group has recently published the Strategic Environmental Assessment prepared by consultants AECOM into the environmental impact of future housing development covering air quality, biodiversity, climate change and transportation. The report will be used in the Neighbourhood Plan to make informed decisions on any future developments and has been sent to Natural and Historic England, the Environment Agency and the South Downs National Park Authority (also available on our website).

Additionally, the Steering Group were fortunate to secure the work of students from the University of Brighton who undertook to study the impact of other elements relating to further building development such as history, town centre, the economy, planning policy context, demographic issues around employment and health; a lot of analysis has been done and some of these reports are available on the documents page of the website. This work was completed at no cost and has been an invaluable input to the Neighbourhood Plan.

How is this being paid for?

Work started on the Neighbourhood Plan at pace at the end of 2017 (although preliminary work had been done prior to this) when consultants Homer O'Neil were engaged to complete preliminary findings.

AECOM (world's premier infrastructure Consultancy) were then commissioned to undertake assessments of all the sites (paid for through a grant) - report published in September 2019.

Work has continued since then with funding secured at various stages from government and other sources, in conjunction with contributions from both Peacehaven and Telscombe Town Councils.

The Steering Group has been very successful in sourcing funding for the work from Government grants to limit the impact on Town Council budgets. Design codes work by UoB students has also been provided at no cost. Most of the work is done by volunteers.

Official notification from Peacehaven & Telscombe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group | [Website](#)

WHO ARE THE STEERING GROUP?

Cathy Gallagher
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 Neil Watts
 Ron White
 David Judd
 Maureen Berg
 Chris Bowman
 Pat Bowman
 George White
 Peter Seed

In addition to the Steering Group, there are several small groups focussing on one element of the plan, such as Communications, Green Spaces, Housing, etc.

These groups are mainly comprised of volunteers who have spent many hours researching the required evidence.

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