

An Introduction to Producing a

Village Design Statement

For Your Village

2006



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Dear Community Representative

Firstly, well done for taking this first step towards producing a Village Design Statement for your local area.

If you have ever felt that you have too little say over what development takes place in your community or simply feel that your village has qualities worth protecting, here is your chance to do something about it. Producing a Village Design Statement will provide an opportunity for you to put your knowledge and understanding of your area to good use and demonstrate to others the qualities that residents value in your village and its surroundings. The process of producing VDS has also proved very valuable in bringing local people together, building community spirit and increasing interest in local areas.

Village Design Statements are really taking off here in the York area, with a number of very successful VDS already published and many more underway. This also means that there is an established wealth of VDS experience giving you access to further advice and support from those who have already been down the VDS route.

We hope that this introduction pack helps you to get started and remember we will be here to support you every step of the way.

For more information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Good luck in creating a great VDS!

The Community Planning Team
City of York Council

What is a Village Design Statement?

Many people feel that they would like to have more say over what development takes place in their area, Village Design Statements (VDS) offer a constructive solution.

As the local community you have a unique appreciation and understanding of your own place, and a VDS puts this knowledge to good use. It describes the qualities that you as residents value in your village and its surroundings. A great number of communities have already completed Village Design Statements to date with great success both in terms of planning guidance and also as a means of building the community spirit and engagement.

A Village Design Statement sets out clear and simple guidance for the design to be used where development is to take place in your village, based on its character. It will help developers or residents wishing to extend their houses for example to understand local views and perceptions at the outset and enable design to promote new buildings that are likely to gain local support. It is an advisory, community-led document produced by you as the village community itself. The VDS helps to define features, whether buildings or landscape, that should be conserved. Where change is contemplated the VDS is a guide to help new buildings fit into the village. VDS are taken into account in the operation of the planning system, to enable new development to be in harmony with its setting and make a positive contribution to the village environment.

The aim is for the VDS to be approved by the local planning authority as planning guidance, so that it plays a major role in decision-making on planning applications. The weight, which will be attached to the VDS, will depend on how closely it reflects national or regional guidance and the level of consultation carried out.

A VDS provides a description of the relationship between the village landscape and buildings and identifies principles to be considered in new developments such as the design of buildings and the spaces between them. The document should be actively used and of benefit to local people, developers, new occupants and planners.

'Sustainable Development in Rural Areas' gives guidance on the design and character of rural settlements and endorses the use of Village Design Statements; 'Local planning authorities should prepare policies and guidance that encourage good quality design throughout their rural areas, and utilising tools such as Landscape Character Assessments and Village or Town Design Statements, and the design elements of Village or Parish Plans prepared by local communities.'

PPG3 'Housing' states; 'In determining planning applications, local planning authorities should reject poor design particularly where their decisions are supported by clear plan policies and adopted planning guidance, including village design statements.'

Where did they come from?

In 1996 the Countryside Commission (now the Countryside Agency) launched the 'Design in the Countryside' initiative, and produced advisory packs to help villages understand the concept, process and method of producing a Village Design Statement (VDS).

In more recent years the Countryside Agency handed over the management of the VDS initiative to the Yorkshire Rural Community Council (YRCC), however these days the VDS programme is pretty much running itself through support from Councils such as ours here in York. Unfortunately the original advisory packs have never been updated which is why we decided to produce this pack to help local villages find there way through the VDS process and also to make better use of the existing VDS experience and contacts we now have in the area.

What does it cover?

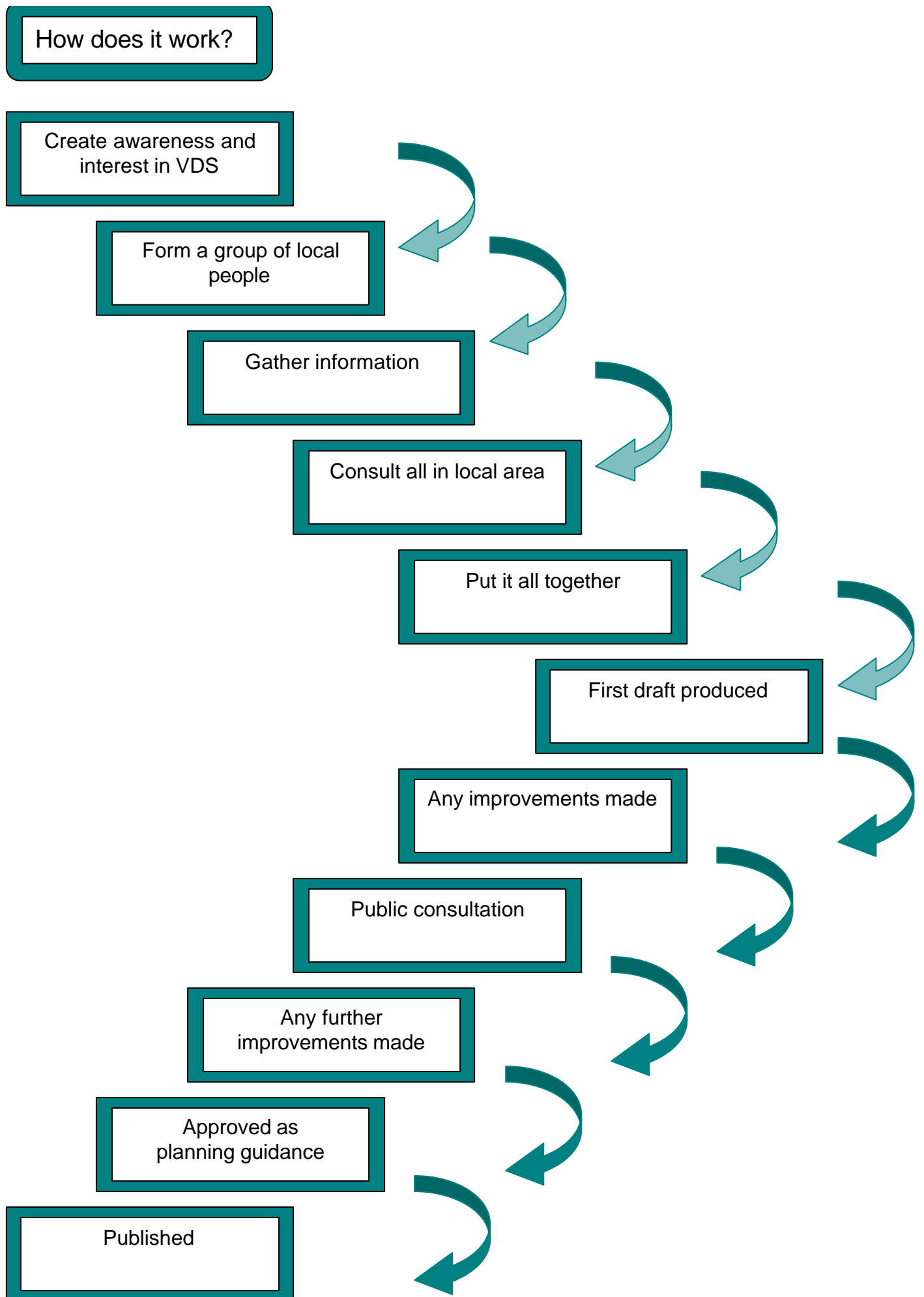
A VDS should:

- describe the distinctive character of your village and surrounding countryside including the landscape setting, shape of the settlement and nature of the buildings themselves **and...**
- set down design principles based on that local character

An effective VDS should.....

- be developed, researched, written and edited by local people
- reflect the views of the whole community
- involve a wide cross-section of residents in its production
- describe the visual character of the village
- demonstrate how local character and distinctiveness can be protected and enhanced where there is new development
- be compatible with the planning system
- be accepted as planning guidance and influence developers and planning decisions
- be relevant to all forms and scale of development
- develop partnerships with the local planning authority
- Illustrate the energy, imagination and determination of the local people

Village	Current Stage of VDS	Date of Adoption
Copmanthorpe	Printed	28 th November 2002
Poppleton	Printed/Live	28 th August 2003
Heslington	Printed/Live	22 nd April 2004
Rufforth	Printed/Live	23 rd September 2004
Holtby	Printed/Live	28 th April 2005
Askham Richard	Printed/Live	30 th June 2005
Askham Bryan	Awaiting print/Live	30 th June 2005
Murton	Printed/Live	13 th December 2005
Dunnington	Printed/Live	23 rd March 2006
Knapton	Awaiting print	24 th May 2006
Fulford	Underway	Yet to be approved
Wigginton	Early stages	Yet to be approved
Could your village be next?	?	?



How do you get people involved?

It is essential with any VDS to ensure that it is representative of everyone living in the area. In order to achieve this and to maximise local involvement we recommend that your group carry out a wide range of local consultation activities. This doesn't have to be complicated but the more imaginative your group can be the more interest you will create and the more local residents you will engage in the VDS work. Activities should be chosen to suit your own community and resources.

Here are a few examples of how you could go about this:

- Produce leaflets and posters to create awareness and interest
- Send out questionnaires to gather information
- Organise a village walk-about to create interest and help people to see the local area in a new light
- Hold public meetings to discuss local issues
- Run workshops with different activities to find out how people feel about their area
- Put on an exhibition to provide information and create interest
- Hold a drop-in session for people to give you their comments
- Put information in local papers or write your own newsletter to keep people up to date
- Link to other events happening in your area such as school fates, football matches etc
- Set up drawing or photography competitions with schools or the wider community
- Put on a launch event to get peoples attention and recruit volunteers
- Hold coffee mornings or quiz nights to engage people and possibly raise some funds
- Contact schools, churches, local businesses and any other existing groups in the area to see how they might like to get involved.

How much will it cost?

The cost of producing a VDS is dependant on a number of factors such as the size of your village, activities you choose to carry out, resources you already have available to you, and the complexity of design. Producing a VDS could require anywhere between £2000 and £3000.

How will it be funded?

There are a number of options for gaining funding to carry out your VDS. Some potential funding sources that have been used by previous groups include:

- **City of York Council**
We make a contribution of £250 towards printing costs of all VDS.
- **Parish Councils**
A number of previous groups have gained funding from their Parish Council.
- **Ward Committees**
Groups have also successfully approached their Ward Committees for funds.
- **York Challenge Fund**
Successful applications have been made for funding towards previous VDS including Poppleton and Askham Richard.
- **County Champions**
Groups have received up to £500 towards the cost of their VDS including Holtby and Dunnington.
- **Sponsorship for Local Businesses**
VDS groups have funded their VDS by approaching any businesses in their local area for sponsorship.
- **Contributions from residents/ subscription fee**
Some previous groups have asked residents to pay a very small subscription towards the good work of the VDS.
- **Fundraising Events**
Many groups have carried out their own fundraising activities. You could hold coffee mornings or lunches, lucky draws or raffles, sponsored walks, runs or bike rides – the options are endless and you never know you might even have a good time!

Who can be contacted for further advice?

VDS Group	Main Contact	Address	Telephone No.	Email
Heslington	Richard Frost	4 Hall Park Heslington York YO10 5DT	(01904) 412947	richard_frost@ntlworld.com
Holtby	Derek Utley	Virginia Cottage Main St Holtby York YO19 5UD	(01904) 488552	derekutley@fsmail.net
Murton	David Jenkins	Chicory Kiln Smary Lane Murton York YO19 5UG	(01904) 488055	dtj1@clara.co.uk
Dunnington	Linda Maggs	5 Church Lane Dunnington York YO19 5PT	(01904) 489127	ramaggs@5springfield.freeserve.co.uk
Knapton	Marion Wright	70 Main St Knapton York YO26 6QG	(01904) 780476	mwright780@yahoo.co.uk
Fulford	Stephen Kenwright	32 Eastwood Ave Fulford York YO10 4LS	(07808) 808775	cllrstephen@kenwright.net

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www.york.gov.uk/planning/VDS

Copies of any of the published VDS are available on request.

Thank you for your interest in creating your own VDS

Good Luck!

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