



# Statement of Community Involvement

2015

# Contents

1. Introduction .....	1
2. Values and priorities .....	3
3. How we will consult on planning policy documents .....	7
4. How we will consult on planning applications .....	17
5. Consultation on major infrastructure projects .....	26
6. Resource availability and review .....	28
Appendix 1 – Glossary of terms .....	31
Appendix 2 – Indicative list of consultees .....	37
Appendix 3 – Ways of consulting, involving and informing .....	41
Appendix 4 – Target groups and how they will be involved in preparing planning policy documents .....	43
Appendix 5 – Advertising planning applications .....	46
Appendix 6 – Minimum consultation methods for planning applications .....	48
Appendix 7 – Key terminology for significant planning applications .....	51
Appendix 8 – Minimum consultation required by Regulations for the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 .....	54

# 1. Introduction

Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This document sets out how the authority intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of its Local Plan and supporting documents in their area. The SCI also covers how people and the community will be engaged in decisions on planning applications for development that affect the authority's area.

1.2 The council adopted its first SCI in May 2008. Since the adoption, a number of changes have been made to the legislative framework within which the SCI operates, and also through planning reforms introduced by the Government including the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG). There have also been changes to the council's decision making processes and in the use of technology which, combined with the council's experience of using the SCI, have led to a need to refresh the document.

1.3 Planning is fundamental to shaping the neighbourhoods in which we all live and work in, and it is important that everyone has the opportunity to be involved in and influence decisions that are made through the planning process. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) confirms this. It says (in relation to plan-making, paragraph 155) that:

“Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that local plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in neighbourhood plans that have been made.”

1.4 This SCI sets out a clear framework for how to involve the community, whilst allowing for the fact that different consultations will have different purposes and emphases. It also gives clarity about what standards the council will be expected to adhere to in carrying out community involvement on planning matters.

## A refreshed SCI

1.5 Through this revised SCI, the council aims to continue to promote effective public involvement in the planning system. This will help to make sure that all sections of the community, including people who do not normally get involved in the planning process, have the opportunity to contribute to all aspects of place-making. The council aims to involve local residents, businesses, landowners, groups and organisations, along with other stakeholders such as national and sub-regional organisations, in the planning process. The council will place an emphasis on making information available in suitable formats, and will make use of the Internet, the local press and existing networks of communication, as appropriate.

1.6 The council considers the benefits of continuous community involvement are that it can:

- help people understand the planning processes
- work with groups and individuals who would otherwise not get involved, including on

individual planning applications

- identify issues of concern
- provide an opportunity for negotiation on representations made on the emerging Local Plan and planning applications
- achieve better outcomes – both in terms of the setting of Local Plan policy and determining Planning Applications; and
- provide a forum for explaining the reasons behind planning policy

1.7 The council views community involvement as a continual learning exercise so that the processes and techniques that it uses can be improved and enhanced over time. In order to be truly effective, the council views community involvement as needing to be:

- open
- transparent
- involving of people
- empowering of people

### Involvement in the drafting of the refreshed SCI

1.8 In February 2014, a letter/email was sent to all stakeholders on the council's planning consultation database to notify them of the intention to prepare a refreshed statement of community involvement and to invite representations as to what changes should be incorporated into the document. Stakeholders were also advised that, if they did not wish or feel able to comment at this stage, that there would be a period of full formal public consultation on a draft refreshed Statement of Community Involvement in the coming months.

1.9 During this period representations were received by the council and these were taken into account in preparing the draft refreshed SCI.

1.10 The draft refreshed SCI was published for public consultation for a period of 12 weeks from 21 July to 13 October 2014. All representations received were considered and informed the preparation of the final statement of community involvement that was presented to the committee for adoption

## 2. Values and priorities

### Partnership working

2.1 The council is committed to working with partners in many different areas at both a local and a West of England level. Partnerships are a significant feature of delivering high quality public services. Flexibility, innovation and many other benefits allow partnerships to address issues that individual organisations could not tackle alone. The voluntary and community sectors have vital roles to play in engaging communities, helping to give people a voice and in engaging hard to hear communities. One of the key ways in which this is undertaken is through the preparation of the sustainable community strategy (SCS).

2.2 The SCS is the shared vision of the people who live, work and visit South Gloucestershire; working together to meet today's requirements without damaging the ability of future generations to meet their needs. It is prepared by and monitored by the South Gloucestershire Partnership which is made up of private, public, voluntary and community groups who work with communities to identify and tackle key long, medium and short term local issues.

2.3 The current SGS 'South Gloucestershire 2026: A great place to live and work' was developed by the South Gloucestershire Partnership working with the communities of South Gloucestershire and was published in 2012. It contains the vision for the area for the period to 2026 and will be regularly reviewed. It sets out the context for the area's four key priorities and provides a framework for integrated delivery by partnerships and communities. The four key priorities of the sustainable community strategy are:

- our place - conserve and enhance our natural and built environment, develop low-carbon integrated communities with a strong sense of place connected by well-planned transport networks
- our economy - maximise opportunities to access first class education and prosper through a balanced economy, a well-trained workforce and sustainable jobs for all
- our communities - engage people of all ages so they feel they belong and can help provide local solutions; support communities so they are safe and feel safe and have access to high quality services
- our health - promote personal well-being, reduce health inequalities and deliver high quality physical and mental health and social care services which protect our most vulnerable and offer people greater choice and control.

2.4 Public engagement, consultation and decisions on planning policy matters and in handling planning applications are central to partnership working and to sustainable development. The council has already established ways of working with a wide range of interest groups. When preparing the Local Plan (and associated planning guidance documents) the aim is to build on that existing good practice, to make best use of existing communication channels and to develop new ways of working with hard to hear groups.

## Involving the local community

2.5 The Regulations for the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (see [Appendix 8](#) for minimum consultation requirements under these regulations) set out the groups that must be consulted during the determination of planning applications and the development of our local plan (and associated planning guidance documents). These include stakeholders such as neighbouring local authorities, parish/town councils, government departments and other groups that represent the interests of various parts of the community.

2.6 The 'community' includes many other individuals, groups and organisations that live, work, visit or operate here, including local businesses, developers and landowners, residents associations, the police, schools, amenity groups and service providers. Different groups will have different knowledge and experience of the planning system and their ability to get involved will vary. It is appreciated that those groups and individuals who are known to the council and have experience of the planning system are easier to involve than those who do not. However, it is important that the council ensures all sectors of its community are able to access and understand the planning system, and how it makes planning decisions.

2.7 Parish and town councils, local societies and associations or specific amenity/interest groups often represent many thousands of local residents and many varied communities. These will have varying experience of the planning system and different capabilities to get involved, as they are largely voluntary organisations.

2.8 South Gloucestershire Council aims to provide high quality services and information. We have a customer care charter that sets out the standards we aim to meet. This is available on our website at [www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk). In respect of responding to requests and queries from members of the public we operate in accordance with this charter unless a more specific target applies for an individual service, for example in the case of a planning application or representation made to a planning document (such as the local plan, or a planning guidance document) where there can be separate rules for how we respond (see Sections 3 and 4 of the SCI).

## Hard to hear groups

2.9 Some residents (for example, those in more isolated and rural areas, Gypsies and Travellers, young people, disabled people, people from minority ethnic backgrounds) may find it harder to get involved and may require support to do so. This will take the form of:

- ensuring documents are as clear and concise as possible
- providing a translation and/or interpreting service where requested (see para. 2.14 below)
- making sure meetings are held at times and places convenient and accessible to as many people as possible
- for children and young people, consulting with local schools and colleges, the University of the West of England, South Gloucestershire and Stroud College and the South Gloucestershire Youth Forum
- for older people, consulting with the South Gloucestershire Over Fifties Forum and similar organisations



- meeting the needs of disabled people, e.g. making a portable hearing loop available at all meetings, workshops, etc, where required
- ensuring that while the use of computer technology for consultation is increased and consolidated where appropriate, paper copies of documents and information are easily available when needed.

2.10 Wherever possible, harder to actively engage groups will be involved through existing channels, such as the South Gloucestershire Equalities Forum.

<http://www.southglos.gov.uk/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/south-gloucestershire-equalities-forum/>. This will be encouraged to spread information and knowledge of the planning system.

2.11 The council will ensure that hard to actively engage groups (for example the Gypsy/Traveller communities) are consulted in a direct and accessible manner appropriate to their needs at the relevant stages in the planning process so that their views are identified and understood.

2.12 The council recognises that while some groups may actually be 'hard to reach', many groups are in fact not hard to reach but 'hard to engage' in planning matters. The challenge that this presents to the council is that planning issues must be presented as being accessible, clear, relevant and interesting in order to encourage people to become involved. Advice on how best to engage such groups will be sought from the equalities & third sector team.

2.13 The council has in place a comprehensive “Equality and Diversity Communications Toolkit” <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/equality%20impact%20assessment%20and%20analysis%20toolkit.pdf> available to all staff provides guidance on communicating effectively with people who have a diverse range of communication needs. This covers communications in both written and spoken word.

2.14 The council will ensure that its consultation and involvement procedures for the production of documents in the local plan (and supporting policy documents) comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the need for equalities impact assessments (EIA) is considered.

### Council officer involvement

2.15 As well as consulting with the wider community, the council's own officers are also consulted on planning matters. The views of officers throughout the council with relevant expertise will be sought on initial drafts of local plan and planning guidance documents in order to ensure that any relevant issues are understood and addressed early on in the process. Section 4 briefly sets out how council officers are involved in planning applications. Elected members are also a valuable resource; they are ambassadors for the council, channels of communication to and advocates for local communities and as such have vital roles to play in the production of the Local Plan (and associated planning guidance documents) and in the determination of planning applications.

2.16 In planning new developments where there is no existing community to work with, the views of existing neighbouring residents, parish or town councils and other statutory and non-

statutory groups (as set out in [Appendix 2](#)) can be sought. As set out above, we are committed to the creation of strong communities and aim to ensure that the interests of future residents are taken into account in planning new developments. From previous experience and researching best practice, professional officers (including planners and those in other service departments) working with elected members are well placed to do this.



## 3. How we will consult on planning policy documents

3.1 In this chapter we explain the process of plan preparation and how we will involve the local community and statutory consultees within such. We also describe how the results of community consultation will be used and how sustainability appraisals will be conducted.

### What are our planning policy documents?

3.2 The local plan is a statutory document setting out policies and proposals for the development and use of land. The Local Plan for South Gloucestershire currently comprises a number of planning documents which guide decisions on future development. These are the Core Strategy (adopted December 2013) and supporting policies/proposals map, the West of England Joint Waste Core Strategy (adopted March 2011), the 'saved' policies of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan (adopted January 2006) and the South Gloucestershire Minerals and Waste Local Plan (adopted May 2002). Further details of the development plan policies and their status is available on the [council's website](#).

3.3 Work is under way to prepare the Policies, Sites and Places Plan, which will allocate smaller scale (non-strategic) sites for various types of development and contain detailed policies for development management which will supersede the remaining 'saved' policies of the South Gloucestershire Local Plan 2006 and the Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2002. Further information about the Policies, Sites and Places Plan is available on the [council's website](#).

3.4 Supplementary planning documents (SPD) 'amplify' policies that are set out in the local plan. This means that they do not actually make policy, instead where necessary they help to explain in more detail specific parts of policy within the local plan. The current set of SPD and those under production can be viewed on the [council's website](#).

3.5 When raising awareness and advertising consultation periods on both the local plan and supplementary planning documents, we will explain what is happening at each stage and how the community can make a difference and have a say. We will aim to ensure this is clear and in plain English.

3.6 As a general principle therefore, we will give as much notice as possible of forthcoming consultation periods so that members of the community may plan accordingly. We will also try, but cannot guarantee, to avoid consultation periods falling during the main substantial public holidays, i.e. Easter, the summer holiday period or Christmas.

### Specific consultation bodies and other consultees

3.7 The organisations listed at [Appendix 2](#) will be engaged and consulted with as relevant in the preparation of the local plan and supplementary planning documents. Usually, the broader the range of issues contained in a planning policy document, the more consultees will be consulted. Each organisation will be written to and/or emailed and invited to make representations at relevant

stages of the local plan process. The list given in Appendix 2 is indicative of the types of organisations that the council will seek to involve at appropriate stages – it is not complete or exhaustive.

3.8 For planning policy documents which are likely to have impacts on adjoining local authority areas, the council will engage with the relevant local authorities at the earliest possible stage in the preparation of the document. This will help to ensure communities and organisations in the adjoining area(s) are notified and have opportunities to be involved in the preparation of planning policy documents. It will also enable the council and adjoining local authorities to identify any cross-boundary impacts and necessary mitigation measures, as well as co-ordinate consultation activities, thereby complying with the duty to cooperate (see para 3.19).

3.9 The council aims to give the whole community the opportunity to influence the content of the plans for future development in the district. To this end, the council maintains an extensive consultation database of interested parties, including voluntary organisations and community groups based in and around South Gloucestershire. Relevant groups will be informed at each key consultation stage and advised of the procedure for making representations. If requested, individual meetings with local interest groups will be arranged where time and resources permit. If you would like to be added to the council's consultation database so that you are kept informed of progress and key milestones in the preparation of planning policy documents, please contact us:

by telephone - 01454 863469

by emailing - [planningLDF@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:planningLDF@southglos.gov.uk), or

by post to:

Strategic Planning Policy & Specialist Advice Team  
Environment and Community Services Department  
PO Box 299  
Civic Centre  
Bristol  
BS15 0DR

### General publicity on local plans and supplementary planning documents

3.10 The council's website will be a key source of information in this regard and will be kept up to date. All documentation that can be made available electronically will be put online with the ability to make representations via email.

3.11 In preparing local plans and supplementary planning documents the council will take all representations received into consideration and will perform the following tasks:

- the consultation document, together with any supporting documentation, will be made available for inspection either in hard copy or online at the council's one stop shops and local libraries (and the mobile library where appropriate)
- publish the document and its supporting documentation on the council's website

- publicity or a press notice (depending on the stage of preparation) in a local paper with details of when and where the documents can be inspected. We will ensure that adequate publicity is given to the documents
- notify any individual or organisation that has asked to be kept informed of the progress of the local plans or SPD of the publication of draft documents and of adoption

## Key steps in producing local plans

3.12 The statutory stages in the preparation process for these documents is laid out in the [Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#). There are three broad stages of community involvement in the production of local plans – these are summarised below and a diagram summarising the stages of preparation can be viewed at para 3.29 below. The community and stakeholders will be involved in each stage to ensure the documents are effective and reflect community priorities.

Stage		What does it involve?
1	Preparation of a Local Plan (Regulation 18) and informal engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certain ‘specific’ and ‘general’ consultation bodies are invited to make representations about what a local plan ought to contain</li> <li>• Survey and evidence gathering</li> <li>• Collating up to date information on social, environmental and economic matters</li> <li>• May include a whole range of consultation and engagement processes, both targeted and not targeted</li> <li>• An initial sustainability appraisal, informed by a scoping report should be presented.</li> </ul>
2	Publication of a Local Plan (Regulations 19) and Representations relating to a Local Plan (Regulation 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of a proposed local plan and associated documents are made available for inspection for (a minimum of) 6 weeks.</li> <li>• A sustainability appraisal should be presented.</li> <li>• Interested parties (in addition to the specific and general consultation bodies) are invited to make formal representations.</li> <li>• The document will be published electronically to the council's website and made available to view in a hard copy format at the council's libraries and one stop shops.</li> <li>• Responses made to this draft will be considered in preparing the Submission version of the plan.</li> </ul>
3	Submission of a Local Plan (Regulation 22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A copy of the proposed local plan and associated documents is submitted to the secretary of state for ‘examination’.</li> </ul>

3.13 The tests of soundness are set out in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (NPPF) (para 182): “The Local Plan will be examined by an independent inspector whose role is to assess whether the plan has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is sound. A local planning authority should submit a plan for examination which it considers is ‘sound’.

3.14 Independent examination (Regulation 24): An independent inspector is subsequently appointed to examine the plan (see para 3.16 below). The council provides the independent inspector with the formal representations made at the previous stages. At this stage, the council cannot consider new representations, although opportunities exist for additional statements to be made to the Inspector to elaborate on representations previously made. This part of the process is led by the inspector, who sets the agenda for the hearing sessions and the matters which will be discussed, as well as taking into account other matters arising through written submissions. At this

stage, the inspector may invite representations in relation to how the plan (or part of it) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the duty to cooperate and any other relevant legal and procedural requirements, and whether it is considered to be 'sound'.

3.15 The council will appoint a programme officer who will notify consultees of the convening of a pre examination meeting (if required) and the public examination itself. A notice will also be published in the local press detailing the time and place where the examination will be held and the name of the Inspector. Those who have responded to consultations on the document will be given the opportunity to attend the examination hearing sessions and elaborate on any issues raised in their representations.

3.16 Further information about the stages of plan-making and examination are available in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) (NPPG).

3.17 Publication of the inspector's recommendations (Regulation 25): Following this examination the inspector will produce a report setting out recommendations to changes that he/she feels necessary for it to be considered sound. The inspector's report is not binding on the council, but the recommendations made cannot be ignored and must be given very serious attention. Not accepting these would mean that the plan is likely to be challenged and will be regarded as having little status/unsound. The council can also suggest their own modifications to the inspector during the examination, as well as making minor non- material changes themselves.

3.18 Adoption of a local plan (Regulation 26): Following receipt of the inspector's report the council will make the necessary changes to the document and then adopt and publish the document together with its sustainability appraisal. Once adopted the plan achieves the full status of the development plan as the basis for determining planning applications (as per Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 38(6)).

## Duty to cooperate

3.19 In addition to statutory consultation requirements, Section 110 of the Localism Act 2011 introduced a duty to co-operate in relation to planning of sustainable development. The 'duty to cooperate', as it is generally known, requires local planning authorities to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with one another and with other specified bodies known as 'prescribed bodies' (such as the Environment Agency, English Heritage and the Homes and Communities Agency) to maximise the effectiveness of local plan preparation in the context of strategic matters that cross local authority borders.

3.20 The duty to cooperate is a substantially more significant task than merely consulting certain organisations within specified periods. It requires ongoing co-operation from the very start of the process, and is the first test that will be considered in an examination on a local plan. There are legal implications if it cannot be demonstrated that the requirements of the duty to cooperate have been complied with.

3.21 Because the duty to cooperate is separate from community involvement, and will also be dependent on the timescales and processes of other bodies, this SCI does not set out proposals for how cross-boundary engagement will be undertaken through the process of plan preparation.

Nevertheless, it is an important part of plan making which the council will need to ensure, through working with its partners, that relevant communities in adjoining areas are engaged at the earliest possible stage in the process.

3.22 Further information about the duty to cooperate is available in the [National Planning Practice Guidance](#) (NPPG). Information about how the four West of England unitary authorities work together is available on the [West of England Local Enterprise Partnership website](#).

### Key steps in producing supplementary planning documents (SPD)

3.23 Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) supplement policy in higher level development plan documents. They are not able to make entirely new policy themselves. Examples of SPDs include briefs for specific sites, particularly where they are identified in DPDs, or detailed guidelines on matters such as sustainable design or parking standards. As these are lower-level documents, there are fewer consultation or involvement stages, see table below. A diagram summarising the stages of preparation can be viewed at para 3.29 below.

Stage	What does it involve?
1	<p><b>Pre-Production</b> (Evidence Gathering)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Informal community involvement</li> <li>• Input may be sought from particular bodies that are relevant to the subject matter of the SPD prior to preparing the initial draft in Stage 2.</li> <li>• Initial involvement is not a statutory stage in preparing an SPD.</li> </ul>
2	<p><b>Public participation</b> (Regulation 12) and <b>Representations on Supplementary Planning Documents</b> (Regulation 13)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information gathered at the pre-production stage to produce a draft SPD</li> <li>• Copies of the draft SPD (and any associated documents e.g sustainability appraisal and/or equalities impact assessment) for a minimum of 4 are made available for inspection for (a minimum of) 4 weeks and more usually 6 weeks.</li> </ul>
3	<p><b>Production of final Supplementary Planning Document.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responses made to consultation on the draft SPD will be considered in preparing the final version.</li> <li>• A statement will be prepared setting out: who has been consulted; a summary of the main issue raised; and how they have been addressed in preparing the final SPD</li> </ul>
4	<p><b>Adoption of a Supplementary Planning Document</b> (Regulation 14)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The final SPD will then be adopted and published accompanied by an adoption statement.</li> <li>• A copy of the adoption statement will be given to all those who responded as well as those who requested to be kept informed of the outcome</li> </ul>

### Consultation on sustainability appraisals (SA)

3.24 Sustainability appraisal is required for local plans and may be required for some types of SPD. This will test the policies and proposals against sustainability objectives and enable them to be modified where appropriate to mitigate potential adverse effects. Put simply, it assesses the environmental, economic and social impacts of a plan or policy. Sustainability appraisals will be published for consultation alongside local plan and supplementary planning documents.

3.25 The requirement for sustainability appraisal came from the requirements of the European 'Strategic Environmental Assessment' Directive 2001/42/EC, which seeks to assess plans to see specifically how they will affect the environment. Strategic environmental assessment is a distinct requirement from sustainability appraisal, although both processes are combined into a single

sustainability appraisal process for the purposes of producing local plan and supplementary planning documents.

3.26 In developing the sustainability appraisal for each policy document the statutory consultees and other relevant stakeholders will be consulted on the 'scope' of the sustainability appraisal. This will be done by producing a 'scoping report' that will be circulated to interested parties and statutory consultees. A scoping report sets out the main issues and how the sustainability appraisal will be carried out.

3.27 There are three statutory consultees that, as a minimum, the scoping report must be circulated to for comment. These are:

- Natural England
- the Environment Agency; and
- English Heritage

3.28 A scoping report was produced in 2008, which was used to appraise the core strategy. In view of the time that has elapsed since then, it is considered appropriate to review the 2008 report, by updating the review of relevant plans and programmes and amending the SA framework objectives.

3.29 Figure 1 (below) summarises the steps involved in preparing both local plans and supplementary planning documents, alongside the associated stages in the sustainability appraisal process.

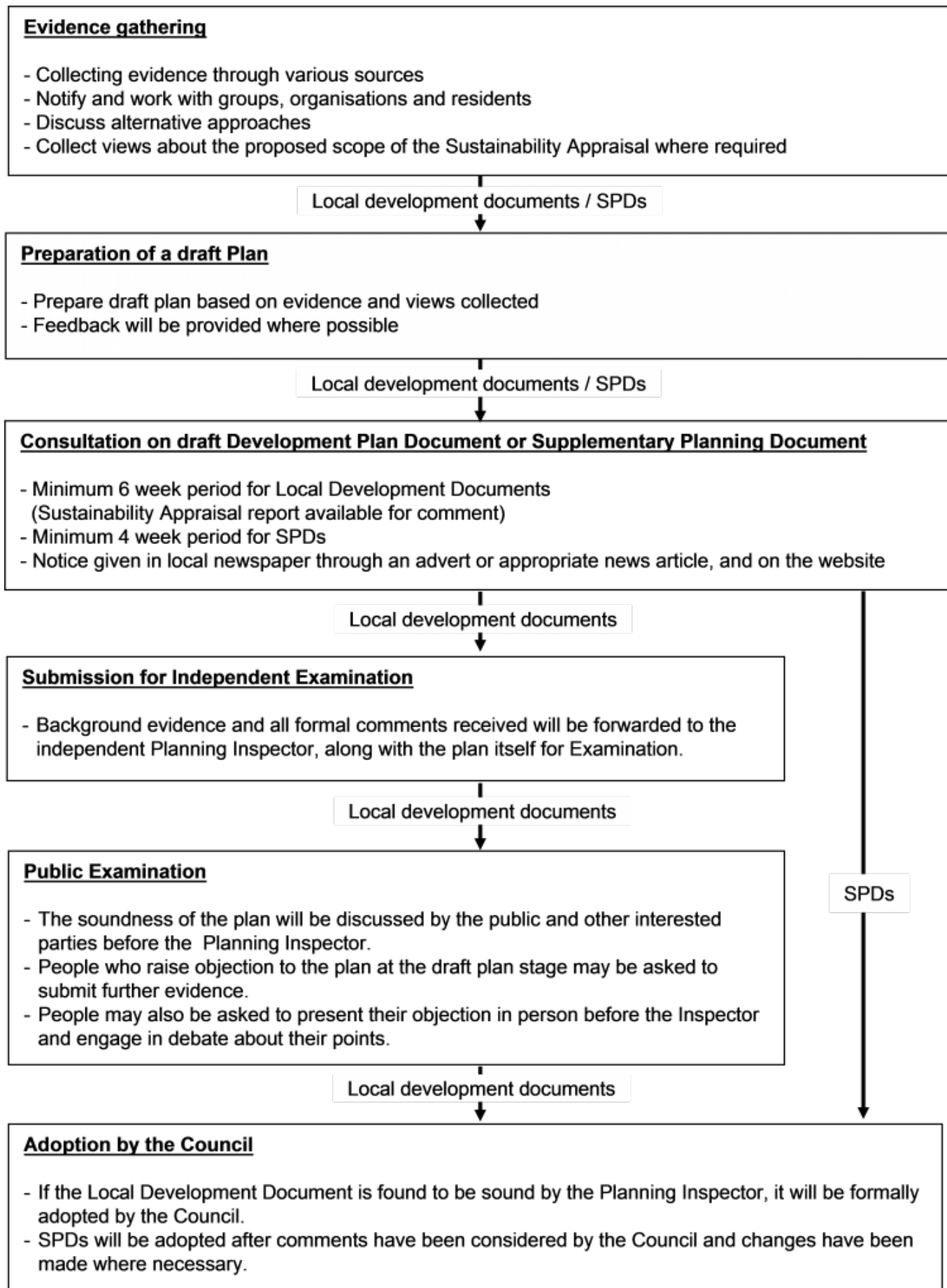


Figure 1: Summary of key stages for planning policy and sustainability appraisal document



*preparation.*

## Involvement in the Joint Spatial Plan (JSP)

3.30 The four authorities of Bath and North East Somerset, Bristol City, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire Councils are preparing a planning strategy for the West of England. The joint strategic planning strategy will identify the number of new homes and jobs to be planned for in the West of England between 2016 and 2036. It will establish how new homes and employment floorspace will be distributed across the four authorities, identifying broad locations to accommodate the new development requirements. The strategy will also inform the four authorities' future local plans which will deal with detailed policy development and allocations.

3.31 The strategy will have the status of a development plan document in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. It will therefore be subject to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 regarding its preparation. Community engagement on the JSP will reflect the four authorities' statements of community involvement.

## Neighbourhood planning

3.32 Neighbourhood planning was introduced by the Localism Act 2011. It allows community bodies to draw up their own plans and policies (neighbourhood plans, neighbourhood development orders or community right to build orders) - provided they are in general conformity with the council's strategic planning policies - allowing them to influence decisions about development in their area.

3.33 As they are not prepared by the council, the SCI does not prescribe what methods of community engagement they must follow. The size and complexity of the plan or order and the appropriate level of community engagement will be decided on by the qualifying parish council or neighbourhood forum. Nevertheless, neighbourhood planning should follow wherever possible the general principles and techniques set out in the SCI.

3.34 The council does have a statutory obligation to be involved in certain stages of neighbourhood development plan preparation as detailed in the appropriate regulations.

3.35 The council has a statutory "duty to support" communities involved in neighbourhood planning, although what this entails is open ended but is likely to include providing technical advice and evidence on planning policy matters or support with public consultation. The council will play the role of a partner in the work. Further information on neighbourhood planning can be viewed on the [council's website](#).

3.36 Neighbourhood planning will overlap with the scope and content of the policies, sites & places (PSP) plan. The PSP plan will be part of the statutory local plan for South Gloucestershire and will be prepared by the council. This plan will provide up to date development management policies and neighbourhood policies including small scale site allocations. In the spirit of localism the council will work closely with our communities in the preparation of the PSP plan. It will allow communities to identify and influence land use policies and new development in their local areas.

## Methods of involving and engaging

3.37 The tables below summarise examples of consultation/involvement methods that could be employed at each document production stage and which groups will be involved at each stage, but other methods could also be used. A selection from the portfolio of techniques described will be chosen as appropriate. [Appendix 3](#) adds to this by setting out in greater detail the use and effectiveness of each of these methods. [Appendix 4](#) then lists how these techniques will be used to target different sections of the community.

3.38 Not all sections of the community will want to be involved in the same way. How people wish to be involved may depend on the issues at stake or the stage in the planning process that has been reached. There may be other methods not listed here that could be used and we would like to hear any other ideas for effective communication.

**Table 1**

### Likely methods used and groups involved at each local plan involvement stage

Involvement Stage	Example of likely consultation/involvement methods	Which type of groups can expect to be involved
<b>Preparation of a Local Plan</b> (Regulation 18)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Questionnaires</li> <li>• Letters/email</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Council newsletters</li> <li>• Website</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Representative organisations/interest groups who can contribute to the identification of issues and options</li> <li>• Elected members &amp; parish/town councils.</li> <li>• Prescribed bodies</li> <li>• General public</li> <li>• Contacts on the consultation database</li> <li>• People/organisations who have requested to be kept informed</li> </ul>
<b>Publication of a Local Plan</b> (Regulation 19) and <b>Representations relating to a Local Plan</b> (Regulation 20)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council newsletters</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Focus groups/stakeholder meetings</li> <li>• Letters/email</li> <li>• Exhibitions</li> <li>• Draft document (if appropriate)</li> </ul>	<p>As above, plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relevant developers and planning consultants with clients with local land interests</li> </ul>
<b>Submission of a Local Plan</b> (Regulation 22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft document available on website, at one-stop shops and libraries</li> <li>• Letters/email</li> <li>• Council newsletter</li> <li>• Media</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As above</li> </ul>

**Table 2**

### Likely methods used and groups involved at each supplementary planning document (SPD) involvement stage

Stage	Example of likely consultation/involvement methods	Which type of groups can expect to be involved
-------	--	--

<b>Pre-Production and informal Community Involvement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Workshops</li> <li>• Questionnaires</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific consultees</li> <li>• All site specific or district-wide groups and stakeholders as appropriate to the particular SPD</li> </ul>
<b>Public participation</b> (Regulation 12) and <b>Representations on SPDs</b> (Regulation 13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letters/email</li> <li>• Council newsletter</li> <li>• Media</li> <li>• Draft document available on website, at One Stop Shops and libraries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specific consultees</li> <li>• All site specific or district-wide groups and stakeholders as appropriate to the particular SPD</li> <li>• Statutory stakeholder groups</li> </ul>

## Using the results of community involvement and feeding back

3.39 Responses made during consultation stages will be considered and the results/evidence used to inform decisions and/or shape the documents, alongside government legislation, regulations and national policy. Reports will be prepared at the end of statutory consultation periods on how views have been considered and documents changed in light of community involvement. These will summarise the main issues and identify how they have been taken into account.

3.40 Not everyone will support proposals emerging through the local plan and supplementary planning document preparation process, or have their views accepted by the council. Some issues cannot be influenced, as local policy must be in conformity with the policies set out in [the National Planning Policy Framework](#). For other matters there may be scope to take on board changes and amendments that are suggested by the community. We are committed to giving people the opportunity to make their views known and to have them considered. This information will be used to inform decisions alongside other comments we receive, government guidance and/or policies and our evidence base. By involving people from the outset we hope to balance competing needs and reach a consensus. We will be clear from the outset of all community involvement activities, about their scope and possible influence, to avoid raising unrealistic expectations.

3.41 We aim to provide feedback on all consultation exercises. Letters/emails of acknowledgement to respondents at the end of statutory consultation periods will be sent out. This will include a summary of how the information will be used and the next steps in the process. We will also advise by letter/email respondents, statutory bodies and anyone who has asked to be notified about key milestones in plan preparation. All local plan ‘Submission’ documents will be accompanied by a ‘Statement of Compliance’, which will highlight how the statement of community involvement has been followed, the main issues raised by the consultations undertaken and how these have been addressed in the document.

3.42 These reports on the results of consultation will be made available on the council’s website [www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk) and in paper copy at the council’s one stop shops (Yate, Thornbury, Patchway and Kingswood) and at all South Gloucestershire libraries (including the mobile library).

3.43 For more information on any of the processes described in this section, please contact the strategic planning policy and specialist advice team (by email to [PlanningLDF@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:PlanningLDF@southglos.gov.uk) or by telephone to 01454 86 3469).

## 4. How we will consult on planning applications

4.1 Finding out what the community thinks about new development is a fundamental part of our planning service. South Gloucestershire Council is pro-active in this regard and does more than is necessary to meet the minimum statutory requirements. Our policy is to ensure every planning application is supported with a level of publicity and consultation that is appropriate to the size and nature of the proposal. This section sets out our approach and processes for involving the local community, developers and statutory bodies in consultation on planning applications. Further information on planning application consultation may be found in Appendices 5, 6 and 7.

4.2 If you are unsure as to whether you need planning permission, advice can be obtained from the council's planning contact centre on 01454 868004 or from the council's website [www.southglos.gov.uk/planning](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/planning). There may be a charge for this service. Further information is available on the [council's website](#).

### Our overall approach and service values

4.3 Publicising and consulting on planning applications clearly and in plain English is a key function of the council's planning service. Consultation allows better understanding of local issues, views and aspirations. It also plays a key role in influencing outcomes and decisions. We recognise it is not possible to satisfy everyone and achieve consensus all of the time. Nonetheless, as a council, we feel it is important that people have an opportunity to know what is happening, to have their say and to understand how decisions on planning applications are being made, even though people may disagree with the decisions of the council, or those that others have made.

### How we publicise and involve people in planning decisions

4.4 The Government has set out statutory requirements that we have to follow.<sup>[1]</sup> We have an extensive system for notifying and consulting people that involves web based techniques alongside more traditional methods. The range of methods we use for all applications is as follows:

- we post a site notice on all sites for major, listed building and conservation area applications. We send a notice to all other applicants asking that they display it on their site
- we notify neighbours<sup>[2]</sup> by letter giving them 21 days in which to comment. The letters tell people the date by which they have to reply, the officer handling the application and how they can inspect the plans. Some organisations such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation for applications for development potentially affecting a SSSI
- depending on the location, scale and use proposed, the council may seek to involve communities in adjoining local authority areas<sup>[3]</sup> to help assess the impacts of development
- details of all planning applications, including the application forms, drawings and any supporting statements are available to view on the council's website<sup>[4]</sup>. The website also includes an online form to allow easy submission of any comments about an application. Details about how to access the council's website are included in all correspondence we send to people about planning applications

- weekly lists showing planning applications received and decided by the council as well as planning and enforcement appeals received and decided by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) are published to the council's website
- details of all planning applications can be viewed at the council's four one top shops at Thornbury, Yate, Kingswood and Patchway
- customer enquiries on planning applications can be made by phoning our corporate contact centre on 01454 868004
- some applications (listed building, conservation area and certain types of major applications) legally require newspaper publicity. These will appear fortnightly in the statutory notices section of The Bristol Post which has full coverage within South Gloucestershire
- elected district councillors are notified of all applications. Members of the public are able to contact their local councillor to discuss planning applications
- Parish and town councils are consulted on all planning applications in their areas
- depending on the type and location of the application we are required by law to consult with a range of statutory and non-statutory bodies, such as the Environment Agency and Highways Agency
- professional advice may also be sought from teams and departments within the council who have expertise in landscape design, ecology, trees (arboriculture), environmental protection (noise, pollution, drainage, licensing), transport, urban design, planning policy and legal matters. Where the council consider it necessary, external advice is sought, for example, from/on land contamination, aviation, agricultural and equestrian issues, viability issues, structural engineers and barristers/QCs
- once a planning application has been decided, the full text of the officer's report and the decision notice, including conditions or reasons for refusal, are also published on our website. The report will always summarise any comments received and provide the officer's assessment of the application

## The value of pre-application discussions

4.5 The local plan provides the policy framework that sets out expectations for developments and is supported by a range of Supplementary Planning Documents and guidance that are available on the council's website at [www.southglos.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/planningpolicy)

4.6 The council offers pre-application advice to those thinking about submitting a planning application but who want to get an idea of the suitability of their scheme before its submission:

- verify the list of local information requirements each planning authority may require to support the planning application
- reduce the likelihood of submitting invalid applications
- help you understand how planning policies and other requirements affect your proposals
- help you assess the likelihood of your scheme getting planning permission
- helps applicants avoid unnecessary expense

4.7 A charge is made for all pre-application advice. A list of the current charges can be found at [www.southglos.gov.uk/planning](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/planning).

4.8 Prospective applicants should complete the 'Pre-application advice form' (available on the [council's website](#)), to which a response will be made.

4.9 For significant development, major, very major or significant sites, please refer to paragraph 4.23 for preferred pre-application processes.

4.10 For further advice please refer to the council's website at [www.southglos.gov.uk/planning](http://www.southglos.gov.uk/planning) or contact the planning helpdesk on 01454 868004.

## Permitted development

4.11 It is important to note that certain proposals are 'permitted development' by virtue of government legislation. As such, the council cannot influence these proposals since many do not require a planning application. However, some 'permitted development' requires the consultation of adjacent neighbours or the 'prior approval' of the local planning authority/council.

## Use of technology

4.12 The use of websites, email and the electronic storage and exchange of information is a part of modern day life for many people. Over the last few years the council has developed its planning webpages to offer a wide choice of information and advice to people who prefer and expect to receive and handle information via websites and by e-mail. Over time the council will aim to place more emphasis on electronic consultation. Without having to visit council offices, users of the planning service can now:

- submit, pay for and track planning their applications online
- use the Council's 'Local Connection' website facility to find out about planning applications in their area – [southglos.gov.uk/planning](http://southglos.gov.uk/planning)
- view the weekly lists of new applications on line
- view planning appeal weekly lists
- from our website search for application details and correspondence by street name, post code or reference number, or by searching the weekly or monthly list of applications, making it easy to see which applications might affect you
- view all correspondence relating to all applications and choose to comment online

4.13 However, while websites and e-mail provide people with more choice to contact the council at times and ways that suit them, we know this does not always suit everyone. The council is keen to promote the use of its website for handling planning applications. However, this will not be to the disadvantage or exclusion of people and organisations that either do not have access to the internet or prefer to use more traditional methods and techniques.

4.14 As part of the council's wider Information and computer technology strategy, we are intending to move to consulting all parish and town Council's (who receive details of all planning applications in their respective areas) through our web-based consultation system. Assuming this is broadly accepted, this will help improve the level of service we can offer to them. A support package is available to assist parish and town councils with this transition and has already commenced with support being given by the council for new computer hardware for town and



parish council use. Any parish and town council that does not want to receive planning application details in this way can still choose to receive hard copies but a charge may have to be made to cover production costs.

## How are planning applications determined and decisions made?

4.15 Depending on the type of application and level of comments made, planning applications will be decided either under what is known as 'delegated powers' (where the power to determine specified applications has been specifically delegated by the council to the planning department's Director), or by elected councillors at an area development control committee meeting. The rules that set out which applications are and are not delegated can be found in the council's constitution (part 3, section 4, sub-section C) which is available on [the council's website](#) or on request.

4.16 The majority of applications are handled under delegated powers. This involves the case officer preparing a short report, which is scrutinised and authorised by the development manager or their deputy. The council's elected members determine all other applications, although every council member does have the opportunity to remove delegated powers from particular applications if they so wish – this is called 'calling in'.

4.17 The council also operates a 'circulated schedule' procedure whereby each week certain reports are circulated to all members. Members then have five working days to consider the officer's recommendation, and have the option to refer the application to committee. Applications may appear on circulated schedule if they:

- are applications made by the council
- are where a representation contrary to the planning officer's recommendation has been received
- are for a certificate of lawfulness

The applications are circulated to members of the council to consider if it is necessary to 'call in' for a site visit or for determination by the planning committee. The committee report schedules are available a week before the committee meeting. The minutes of a particular committee are available by viewing the papers for the following meeting at which they are approved.

4.18 For all applications, the case officer prepares a report summarising the consultation responses and other issues that are all taken into consideration when determining the application. Further information about the planning application process is available on the [council's website](#).

## Commenting on planning applications

4.19 You don't have to be a developer or an identified statutory consultee to make comments on a planning application. While certain bodies and organisations will make comments in accordance with their public service duties – for example parish and town councils, in terms of representing local communities and the Environment Agency, in respect of flooding and flood risk, anyone is entitled to make comments.

4.20 People can also request to speak at the planning committee meeting at which a planning



application will be discussed. The procedure for public participation at development control committee meetings and sites inspection sub committee meetings is set out in the [Council's Constitution](#) The council has published further advice about speaking at a planning committee and how to make sure comments cover valid planning grounds. These are also available on request and can also be downloaded from the [council's website](#).

4.21 The council needs to balance the ability to take decisions within national guidelines for determining applications whilst still allowing applicants a reasonable opportunity to amend their schemes. It is at the council's discretion as to whether amendments to submitted information will be accepted. Where pre-application advice has been sought and given, but the application is submitted contrary to that advice or without significant amendment to reflect the advice, then the council is unlikely to seek amendments during the determination of the submitted application. Where an application is submitted which is clearly in conflict with policies this is likely to be refused without negotiation. Where an application is submitted which could be made acceptable with amendment, if there is sufficient time to secure an amendment, re-consult (where necessary) and determine the application, the applicant will be given 10 days to submit revised plans. It is at the council's discretion as to whether it is necessary to re-consult when additional information is received. If there is insufficient time the applicant will be invited to withdraw the application or to extend the period of determining the application by written agreement. Further information on consultation and pre-decision matters is available in the [National Planning Practice Guidance \(NPPG\)](#).

4.22 Appendices 5 and 6 provide a summary of the consultation methods for involving people in planning applications. This expands on the procedures set out in the paragraphs above.

### **Pre-application engagement for major development sites**

4.23 The council consults widely for every planning application received but recognises that some proposals, because of their size, nature, complexity or likely impact, will benefit from early engagement well before an application is submitted.

4.24 A number of changes are proposed to the process for pre-application engagement on major sites following a review of existing procedures set out in the 2008 SCI. The changes proposed are not extensive and are intended to clarify the terminology used and ensure consistency of use for the various stages of the planning process. These changes are also intended to increase elected member, town and parish councils and public involvement through the application process.

4.25 Major development is grouped into two bands – 'major sites', and 'very major sites'. The definition of these sites is set out in the table below.

4.26 For major sites the council will encourage developers to undertake pre-application consultation tailored to the scale, complexity and nature of the proposals. This could range from a simple letter to neighbours and local councillors inviting comment, through to a full exhibition or workshop. The subsequent design and access statement (DAS) should reflect how any issues raised have been addressed in the proposals.

4.27 For major sites, and where required through statute, the council will expect preparation of a

design and access statement (DAS). The DAS provides a framework for applicants to explain how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrates that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. A DAS must explain how the design principles and concepts have been applied to the proposed development. It must also demonstrate how the proposed development's context has influenced the design. The statement must explain the applicant's approach to access and how relevant development plan policies have been taken into account, any consultation undertaken in relation to access issues, and how the outcome of this consultation has informed the proposed development. Applicants must also explain how any specific issues which might affect access to the proposed development have been addressed. The level of detail in a design and access statement should be proportionate to the complexity of the application, but should not be long.

4.28 The council will expect public engagement and consultation in the preparation of the design and access statement. Comments made should be recorded and addressed in refining the design response to the site and the preparation of design principles that will guide development.

4.29 The council supports the principle of a plan led planning system and will expect sites of typically over 1,000 dwellings (or equivalent) or those which would depart significantly from established planning policy, to be promoted through the local plan and SPD processes for site briefs set out in Section 3.

4.30 Where a developer/agent intends to submit an application for a non-allocated site, the council will expect the developer/agent to undertake pre-application community engagement of a scale and type proportionate to the development.

<b>MAJOR, VERY MAJOR OR SIGNIFICANT DEVELOPMENT SITES</b>			
Stage	Major Sites	Very Major or significant sites**	Who?
Planning Policy	Issues report Public engagement/ consultation (desirable)	Issues report Public engagement workshop Potentially a supplementary planning document	Council Council Council
Outline planning application	Design and access statement Pre-application community consultation	Design and access statement Master plan Pre-application community consultation	Developer Developer Developer (in consultation with council)
Prior to reserved matters application		Scalable masterplan Design code submitted (and agreed by the council where appropriate). Consultation with members and key stakeholders where appropriate	Developer Developer  Developer

<b>Definitions: (See also <a href="#">Appendix 7</a>)</b>	
Major Site	10-199 dwellings 1 – 4 ha 1,000 – 10,000m <sup>2</sup> commercial floor space

Very Major or significant sites**	Over 200 dwellings Over 4 ha Over 10,000m <sup>2</sup> commercial floor space
Issues report	Sets out factual information about the site including site history, policy context, survey material required, key constraints, opportunities, and likely areas for Section 106 contributions. Succinct format, with site location plan. Prepared by the council or the developer/promoter of the site, subject to discussion of the approach being agreed at the outset
Public Engagement Workshop	Site visit and consultation workshop in which key issues about the site development are presented for discussion with key stakeholders. Workshop to be organised by the developer/promoter using an approach agreed with the council.
Design and Access Statement	The design and access statement provides a framework for applicants to explain how a proposed development is a suitable response to the site and its setting, and demonstrates that it can be adequately accessed by prospective users. It sets out the vision and broad design principles to guide the development of the site at reserved matters stages of planning.

**Notes:**

*\* This table only relates to existing allocated sites and major windfall sites of up to 400 dwellings or equivalent.*

*\*\* Significant impact developments – These are developments which by reason of the nature of the development proposed, the likely impact or the sensitivity of the site or its setting are considered to give rise to significant impacts which have more than local consequences.*

4.31 Proposals for waste and minerals related developments vary in scale, potential impact and design issues. Proposals for public engagement for this type of development should be discussed with Officers and agreed at a very early stage based on principles established for other forms of development.

### **Involvement on major and very major planning applications with potential cross-boundary impacts**

4.32 Major and very major planning proposals have the potential to have impacts in adjoining local authority areas. The council wishes to ensure that neighbouring communities, organisations and local authorities likely to be affected by major or very major planning applications are informed about and have opportunities to shape these proposals, including identifying any actions that may be necessary to reduce the harm / impact of development. This will be achieved by effective engagement at:

1. Pre-application stage

Where a pre-application proposal is under consideration and there are likely to be cross-boundary impacts, the council may informally consult the relevant adjoining local authorities at the earliest practicable opportunity.

For major or very major applications the council will expect prospective planning applicants at the earliest possible stage in developing their proposals to carry out effective engagement with local

communities in adjoining local authority areas.

## 2. Receipt of planning application

Where planning applications are received for major or very major sites which may have cross-boundary impacts, the council may consult the affected adjoining local authorities in the following ways:

- the council's application case officer may discuss the proposal with planning officers from the adjoining council(s) and identify how any issues of concern could be resolved and / or mitigated
- liaise with the adjoining council(s) regarding any procedures they have for working with neighbourhood/ community based forum. Attendance at these meetings may be required where relevant and appropriate
- information presented to the planning committee making a decision on the planning application will include details of any impact of the proposal on the adjoining area(s) and comments received
- joint briefings and site visits by the planning committees of the relevant councils may be held when necessary

4.33 Where cross-boundary impacts arise and planning obligations are required to mitigate these impacts, an appropriate mechanism to secure these obligations will be discussed with the neighbouring authority.

## What do we do when people make comments?

4.34 Prior to a decision, planning application case files contain all of the comments received during public consultation. These are available to view on our website or electronically at any of our four one stop shops. Members of the public can also call into one of the council's one stop shops to enquire about arrangements for planning committee meetings. In general, all comments are open to the public for inspection unless they are protected by legal privilege or contain sensitive commercial, financial or personal information.

4.35 The council has statutory targets for determining applications; 13 weeks for major applications, 16 weeks for an environmental impact assessment (EIA) application and 8 weeks for all others. The council will use the information received in the application stage to inform the determination of the application. This is considered along with the appropriate local plan policies, national guidance and other supporting 'material considerations' such as relevant supplementary planning guidance/documents and technical advice.

## What happens after a decision is taken?

4.36 Whether a decision is made by officers under delegated powers, or by elected councillors at an area development control committee, and in addition to the applicant, anybody who responded to the consultation is informed of the decision and the reason for the decision. The council's website also holds a copy of decision notices.

4.37 We include a feedback form with every decision letter that is sent to the applicant. The aim of this form is to assess how satisfied applicants are with the service they receive as their applications are determined. We receive around a 15% response rate and the results are considered by the Council as part of performance monitoring and the overall satisfaction rate is reported as one of the local indicators of performance for the service.

### **How are people involved when planning decisions are appealed against?**

4.38 There are no third party rights of appeal. Only applicants can appeal against a planning decision. The appeal is made to the planning inspectorate (PINS).

4.39 It is our practice to advise anyone who was consulted or responded to the original planning application that an appeal has been received. These and any copies of previous correspondence will be sent to the planning inspectorate.

4.40 The Government has set out statutory advice that the council must follow for hearings and public inquiries. For hearings and public inquiries a site notice is published giving the date, time and location of the hearing/inquiry. In some instances local people may be able to attend hearings and inquiries by making arrangements with the Inspector. Further details about the planning appeal process are available from the [PINS website](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/planning-inspectorate) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/planning-inspectorate>).

4.41 Anyone who wishes to be notified of an appeal decision can request to receive this information from PINS. The council will publish appeal decisions to its website alongside the relevant planning application.

[1] These are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure Order) and Section 67 and 73 of the Planning and (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

[2] What is considered a 'neighbour' varies by application type. See Appendix 6 for further information.

[3] For major and very major planning applications with potential impacts in the Bristol City Council administrative area, the council may expect prospective planning applicants to initially contact the Bristol Neighbourhood Planning Network (NPN) at [networkadministrator@bristolnbn.net](mailto:networkadministrator@bristolnbn.net).

[4] [www.southglos.gov.uk](http://www.southglos.gov.uk)

## 5. Consultation on major infrastructure projects

5.1 Major infrastructure projects may comprise significant local projects that go through the normal planning application process, or nationally significant infrastructure projects (NSIPs) that are examined by the planning inspectorate and determined by the relevant secretary of state (SoS). NSIPs are large-scale developments of national importance such as new trunk roads, airports, harbours, power generating stations (incl. wind farms or nuclear), and electricity transmission lines. They require a type of permission known as a development consent order (DCO) and the relevant procedures are governed by the Planning Act 2008 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

5.2 The 2008 Planning Act introduced a new decision-making process for NSIP, including a duty on promoters to ensure that proposals for major infrastructure projects are properly prepared and consulted on before they submit an application for development consent.

5.3 During the pre-application process, the promoter must consult the relevant local authority/ies about their proposals and regard any views they may express. In addition to this, in order to seek to ensure that the development proposals take account of local community views and the impact of any development in the area, the promoter must prepare and publicise a statement of community consultation (SoCC). This sets out who the project promoter will consult with, where, how and when. In preparing the SoCC, the project promoter must consult with and have regard to the views of any relevant local authority on the content of the statement.

5.4 Under the NSIP process, early engagement with communities on the formulation and assessment of project proposals is encouraged and opportunities are available for individuals and groups to have their views considered. There is a duty to consult with the local community at the pre-application stage, although project promoters may decide to run additional informal or formal consultations during the pre-application stage.

5.5 The planning inspectorate is responsible for examining the application in line with the relevant national policy statements. It is required to process the case within a prescribed time period and will make a recommendation to the relevant secretary of state (SoS). The SoS will ultimately make the decision on whether to grant or to refuse the DCO and not South Gloucestershire Council. South Gloucestershire Council are however consultees to this process for relevant projects, and have the opportunity to input and respond at various stages including at the examination.

5.6 This process is intended to provide better and clearer opportunities for the public and local communities to get involved from an early stage in decisions that affect them and their area.

5.7 Applications submitted to the local planning authority for any elements of associated or related development not included within the main development consent order (DCO) application, would be subject to the normal planning application consultation procedures.

5.8 Further information on the Planning Act 2008 and NSIPs process, and projects that may be proposed in our area, can be obtained from the [planning inspectorate's website](#). Further guidance notes can be accessed at the links below:

- [How the process works](#)
- [The developer's pre-application duties](#)
- [Responding to the developer's pre-application consultation](#)
- [How to register and become an interested party in an application](#)
- [Influencing how an application will be examined – the Preliminary Meeting](#)
- [Participating in the examination](#)



## 6. Resource availability and review

### Resources

6.1 This SCI is based on a realistic and robust assessment of likely resource availability over the coming years.

6.2 The majority of the consultation measures can be met using resources available in-house. Should it prove necessary and/or beneficial, the council will investigate the possibility of using external resources, such as consultants where appropriate, to conduct or assist with community consultation, engagement and involvement processes. Where consultation is led by a developer, the council must be satisfied that engagement has been appropriate and meaningful.

6.3 The strategic planning policy and specialist advice team manager will be responsible for managing the overall consultation process for the local plan (and supporting planning documents) and its. Public consultation in relation to registered planning applications will be the responsibility of the council's development manager.

6.4 In some cases, managers and their teams in other council service areas will be responsible for the production of certain supplementary planning documents, the associated sustainability appraisals and the community consultation and engagement involved with their production.

6.5 Corporately, the council aims to ensure that wherever possible consultation on the local plan (and supporting planning documents) takes place in tandem with other consultation exercises in order to avoid 'consultation fatigue' and to make best use of available resources. For example, the local plan is the principal mechanism for delivering the land use and spatial elements of 'Our place' priority of the council's sustainable community strategy. The council will therefore work with the South Gloucestershire Partnership to 'double-up' with consultation on the sustainable community strategy wherever the opportunity arises.

6.6 Individual members of the public and organisations have a range of skills that can be brought into the involvement process. The 'community network' will be encouraged to disseminate information, where appropriate maybe by word-of-mouth, to other members of the community who may not have been aware of consultation exercises and planning issues that might affect them.

### Review of the SCI

6.7 The SCI will be revised having regard to any particular problems or successes that we experience in consulting on the individual components of the local plan (and supporting planning documents). This means that consultation techniques that have not been well responded to may be replaced by alternative tools and processes in the future. Effective monitoring of consultation and engagement exercises can help determine the following:

- has the community been fairly represented?
- have techniques been appropriate and successful?

- has the process been value for money?
- has involvement contributed to decision making?
- has involvement helped speed up the process?

6.8 The council will endeavour to carry out assessments in order to gauge the effectiveness of the involvement techniques that were used through a particular consultation. This would most likely take the form of a questionnaire/feedback form given to those who have responded to the consultation.

6.9 At the formal submission stage of local plan documents, and following the close of consultation on supplementary planning documents we will produce a statement that explains how the consultation that has taken place has been in-line with the SCI and the resources available. This will help to review the effectiveness of the methods used to involve and engage the community.

### Fair interpretation and openness

6.10 We will ensure that representations made during consultation periods are assessed in an entirely objective manner. We comply with UK data protection legislation in our treatment of personal data provided to us. Formal representations made concerning planning policy documents will be accessible to the public. Respondents' personal details such as their names and addresses cannot be kept confidential, and in making comments on any planning documents it must be understood that this information may be disclosed to anyone seeking it under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. "Confidential" and anonymous representations cannot be accepted.

6.11 In line with the requirements of the relevant regulations details of stakeholders/consultees contacted, a summary of the main issues arising, and what changes, if appropriate, the council will make as a result of the consultation responses, will be set out.

### Complaints

6.12 The council aims to involve people in an effective way during the preparation of the local plan (and supporting planning documents) and when considering planning applications. Any complaints about the community involvement activities in relation to preparation of the local plan (and supporting planning documents) we undertake should be sent in the first instance by email to [ECSfeedback@southglos.gov.uk](mailto:ECSfeedback@southglos.gov.uk) or by post to:

ECS Customer Feedback Team  
Civic Centre  
High Street  
Kingswood  
Bristol  
BS16 0DR

6.13 Complainants should be clear about their point of complaint and identify an achievable desired outcome. A written acknowledgement, with information on when a response can be expected, will be sent within 6 working days of receipt of a formal complaint. If a complaint is being

dealt with at stage 1 of the procedure, the complainant can expect to receive a full response within 10 working days. If the complainant remains dissatisfied following the response, they can request for their complaint to be escalated to stage 2. Our website has full details of the council's [procedure for dealing with complaints](#).

6.14 The complaints procedure is not intended to deal with complaints about the merits of planning decisions and cannot be used to overturn a planning decision. However if any party is dissatisfied with the manner in which a planning application has been handled in terms of its administration, then they can complain to the council in the first instance (as above), or if this does not lead to resolution of the complaint, then to the Local Government Ombudsman.

# Appendix 1 – Glossary of terms

## **Affordable housing**

Housing provided, with subsidy, for people who are unable to resolve their housing needs in the open market because their incomes are insufficient to meet market prices or rents. It is defined in Annex 2 of the NPPF.

## **Authority’s monitoring report (formerly the annual monitoring report)**

A report prepared by the local planning authority assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a local plan. The AMR is produced annually and published to the council’s website.

## **Community Network**

Any and all people that make up individual communities, or the community as a whole. Often this network will be headed by prominent figures of the community, such as leaders of organisations that could assist with awareness raising of planning issues due to them often having large numbers of contacts throughout the community

## **Core strategy**

A development plan document which sets out the long term spatial vision and strategic objectives of the planning framework for an administrative area. It identifies where new development will take place, its type and scale, protects what is valued about the area and includes the policies needed to deliver the vision and objectives. It is prepared in line with the sustainable community strategy. (see also development plan documents).

## **Development**

“The carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land, or the making of any material changes in the use of any building or other land.” (Town & Country Planning Act (1990) Part III Section 55).

## **Development plan document**

Development plan documents are prepared by local planning authorities as part of their local plan. All DPDs must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination, before they can be adopted. Once adopted, development control decisions must be made in accordance with them unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

## **Duty to cooperate**

The Localism Act (2011) places a ‘duty to cooperate’ on all local authorities and a number of other public bodies which requires on-going, constructive and effective engagement to develop strategic policies and consider joint approaches to plan making.

## **East fringe of Bristol**

The area of land in South Gloucestershire adjoining the eastern part of the boundary with Bristol City and south of the M4 motorway, including the communities of Downend, Emersons Green, Mangotsfield, Staple Hill, Soundwell, Kingswood, Warmley, Cadbury Heath, Oldland Common, Longwell Green and Hanham

## **Environment Agency**

Government agency responsible for environmental regulation. Its legal duty is to protect and improve the environment of England and Wales. Created in 1996.

## **Ethnic minority**

Any ethnic group except white British.

## **Evidence base**

The data and information about the current state of South Gloucestershire.

## **Gypsies and Travellers**

There are currently two definitions of Gypsies and Travellers, a planning definition and a housing definition.

The planning definition is set out in Annex 1 of Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (2012) and covers:

Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.

The housing definition is set out in section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 and includes:

- persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan; and
- all other persons of a nomadic habit of life, whatever their race or origin, including
  - such persons who, on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependant's educational or health needs or old age, have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and
  - members of an organised group of Travelling Showpeople or circus people (whether or not travelling together as such).

## **Hard to reach groups**

Three broad definitions:

Minority groups: The traditionally under-represented groups, the marginalised, disadvantaged or socially excluded. This includes service users who fall into well-used categories, often linked to population characteristics, such as minority ethnic groups, travellers or asylum seekers.

Slipping through the net: The overlooked, 'invisible' or those unable to articulate their needs. This includes those caring for others, those with mental health problems, service users who fall just outside the statutory or usual remit of a provider, or whose needs are apparently not so great as to grant access to a service.

The service resistant: Those unwilling to engage with service providers, the suspicious, the over targeted or disaffected. This includes families 'known' to agencies such as social services, who are wary of engaging with providers, or others who are distrustful and potentially hostile to service providers, possibly due to a link to drug use, alcohol abuse or criminal behaviour.

### **Listed buildings**

Buildings of special architectural or historic interest designated by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport under the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

### **Local development scheme (LDS) now referred to as local plan delivery programme**

A public statement identifying which local plan documents and supplementary planning documents will be produced by the council over a rolling three year period, and when.

### **Localism Act 2011**

An act of parliament that changes the powers of local government in England. In terms of planning, the Act abolished regional strategies but introduced the duty to cooperate in the preparation of development plans. It also brought about changes to the way community infrastructure levies should operate.

The Act allows neighbourhood plans to be developed but to be adopted they have to pass both an inspection stage and a local referendum. The Act specifies how planning decisions can be legally enforced and allows planning authorities to decline to process planning applications which include any area affected by a planning enforcement notice. The Act also abolished the infrastructure planning commission and put new powers in place to cover national infrastructure projects.

### **Local plan**

The plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (see core strategy or development plan documents). Current core strategies or other planning policies, which under the regulations would be considered to be development plan documents, form part of the local plan. The term includes old style local plans which have been saved under the 2004 Act and neighbourhood development plans.

### **Local strategic partnership (LSP)**

A local strategic partnership is a single non-statutory, multi-agency body, which matches local authority boundaries, and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.

## **Minority group**

Traditionally under-represented groups, the marginalised, disadvantaged or socially excluded, e.g. black and ethnic minority groups, Gypsies and Travellers or asylum seekers.

## **Mixed use development**

Developments that include a mixture of more than one of the following; housing, employment, leisure, shopping and community facilities.

## **[National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#)**

The national planning policy framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It must be taken into account in the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. Replaces the previous suites of planning policy statements (PPSs) and planning policy guidance notes (PPGs).

## **[National Planning Practice Guidance \(NPPG\)](#)**

Planning practice guidance published to help explain how the national planning policy framework should be applied.

## **[Neighbourhood Plan](#)**

A plan, introduced by the Localism Act, prepared by a parish/town council or neighbourhood forum for a local area, which contains a vision and general planning policies and proposals for the future development and use of different plots of land.

## **Neighbourhood planning**

A community initiated process where people get together through a local forum or parish/town council and produce a plan for their neighbourhood setting out policies and proposals for the development they wish to see. There are three elements of neighbourhood planning:

- Neighbourhood plans – prepared by the town/parish council or neighbourhood forum for a particular neighbourhood area
- Neighbourhood development orders - grant planning permission for a specific development or type of development in the local area
- Community right to build orders – an order made by the local planning authority which grants planning permission for the local community to bring forward development in their area where the benefits stay within the community

## **North fringe of Bristol**

The area of land in South Gloucestershire adjoining the northern part of the boundary with Bristol City and contained within the M5, M4 and M32 motorways, including the communities of Filton, Patchway, Bradley Stoke, Stoke Gifford, Harry Stoke and Frenchay).

## **Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**



National planning legislation from central government aimed at improving the planning process and enhancing community involvement in it. Visit

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-communities-and-local-government>

## **The Regulations for the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the public participation and consultation required when preparing and revising a local plan. Regulations 18, 19, 20 relate to informal and formal consultations for Stage 2 of local plan preparation. Regulation 24 relates to Stage 3 or independent examination of the document.

### **Planning guidance**

Non-statutory strategy and policy documents which inform or amplify policies in planning policy at the local level. These will include old style supplementary planning guidance, supplementary planning documents prepared under the new planning system and set out in the council's local development scheme/local plan delivery programme, town centre strategies, parish plans, design guidance, concept statements, site development briefs and master plans. These will normally be prepared by the council, or endorsed by it where they are prepared by third parties.

### **Planning performance agreement (PPA)**

A project management tool which sets timescales for actions between the local planning authority and an applicant. It should cover the pre-application and application stages but may also extend through to the post-application stage. A planning performance agreement provides greater certainty and transparency in the process for determining a large and/or complex planning application, and can help to ensure that a clear and efficient process is in place for dealing with an application. Further details can be found in the council's [Planning Performance Agreement Charter](#).

### **Stakeholder**

A person, group, company, association, etc. with an economic, professional or community interest in the district or specific part of it, or that is affected by local developments.

### **Statement of community involvement (SCI)**

The statement of community involvement sets out the local planning authority's policy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of local development documents and planning applications.

### **Statement of compliance**

The statement of compliance must be submitted to the secretary of state at submission stage. It sets out how the statement of community involvement has been followed in the preparation of the document, the main issues raised and how these have been addressed.

### **Strategic environmental appraisal (SEA)**

A generic term used internationally to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes.

### **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

Sustainability appraisal is as a systematic and iterative appraisal process, incorporating the requirements of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive. The purpose of sustainability appraisal is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the strategies and policies in a local development document from the outset of the preparation process.

### **Supplementary planning document (SPD)**

A local development document that has not been subject to independent testing and does not have the weight of development plan status. SPDs replace supplementary planning guidance that was part of the old planning system. SPDs also help to amplify the policies contained in development plan documents.

### **Travelling Showpeople**

Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their family's or dependent's more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined above.

## Appendix 2 – Indicative list of consultees

(Please note, this list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations occur)

### Specific consultation bodies/ prescribed bodies

- British Telecommunications Plc
- Civil Aviation Authority
- English Heritage
- Environment Agency
- Highways Agency
- Marine Management Organisation
- National Health Service Commissioning Board
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Relevant Electricity, Gas, Water and Telecommunications Companies
- South Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group
- The Coal Authority

### Parish and town councils in South Gloucestershire

- Acton Turville Parish Council
- Almondsbury Parish Council
- Alveston Parish Council
- Aust Parish Council
- Badminton Parish Council
- Bitton Parish Council
- Bradley Stoke Town Council
- Charfield Parish Council
- Cold Ashton Parish Council
- Cromhall Parish Council
- Dodington Parish Council
- Downend and Bromley Heath Parish Council
- Doynton Parish Council
- Dyrham and Hinton Parish Council
- Falfield Parish Council
- Filton Town Council
- Frampton Cotterell Parish Council
- Hanham Parish Council
- Hanham Abbots Parish Council
- Hawkesbury Parish Council
- Hill Parish Meeting
- Horton Parish Council
- Iron Acton Parish Council

- Little Sodbury Parish Council
- Mangotsfield Rural Parish Council
- Marshfield Parish Council
- Oldbury on Severn Parish Council
- Oldland Parish Council
- Olveston Parish Council
- Patchway Town Council
- Pilning and Severn Beach Parish Council
- Pucklechurch Parish Council
- Rangeworthy Parish Council
- Rockhampton Parish Council
- Siston Parish Council
- Sodbury Town Council
- Stoke Gifford Parish Council
- Thornbury Town Council
- Tormarton Parish Council
- Tortworth Parish Council
- Tytherington Parish Council
- Westerleigh Parish Council
- Wick and Abson Parish Council
- Wickwar Parish Council
- Winterbourne Parish Council
- Yate Town Council

### Duty to cooperate prescribed bodies

- Environment Agency
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage)
- Natural England
- Mayor of London
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Homes and Communities Agency
- each clinical commissioning group established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006
- National Health Service Commissioning Board
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Transport for London
- each Integrated Transport Authority
- each highway authority within the meaning of section 1 of the Highways Act 1980 (including the Secretary of State, where the Secretary of State is the highways authority)
- Marine Management Organisation.

### Neighbouring local authorities (bold) and their bordering parish/town councils

- **Bristol City Council**
- **Bath and North East Somerset Council**

- Batheaston Parish Council
- Charlcombe Parish Council
- Keynsham Town Council
- North Stoke Parish Council
- Saltford Parish Council
- St. Catherine Parish Council
- Swainswick Parish Council
- **North Somerset Council**
- **Wiltshire Council**
- **Colerne Parish Council**
- Grittleton Parish Council
- Luckington Parish Council
- Nettleton Parish Council
- North Wraxall Parish Council
- Sopworth Parish Meeting
- **Monmouthshire Council (Wales)**
- **Gloucestershire County Council**
- **Stroud District Council**
- Alkington Parish Council
- Ham and Stone Parish Council
- Hillesley and Tresham Parish Council
- Kingswood Parish Council
- North Nibley Parish Council
- **Forest of Dean District Council**
- Aylburton Parish Council
- Tidenham and Woolaston Parish Council
- Tidenham Parish Council
- **Cotswold District Council**
- Didmarton Parish Council

## Other Consultees

- Avon and Somerset Constabulary
- Avon Garden Trust
- Avon Wildlife Trust
- Bristol International Airport
- British Horse Society
- British Legion
- Canal & River Trust
- Church and Faith groups
- Church Commissioners
- Community Associations
- Cotswolds Conservation Board
- Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
- Design Council

- Diocese of Gloucester
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Fields in Trust
- Forest of Avon
- Forestry Commission
- Freight Transport Association
- Friends of the Earth
- Friends, Families and Travellers
- Gypsy Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Home Builders Federation
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Learning and Skills Council
- Local MPs and MEPs
- National Farmers' Union
- Now TA Social Enterprise
- Outdoor Advertising Council
- Post Office Property Holdings
- Public Health England
- Ramblers Association
- Relevant bus and rail operators
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
- Scout/Guide Groups/Youth Clubs
- South Gloucestershire Asian Group
- South Gloucestershire Chinese Association
- South Gloucestershire Partnership
- South Gloucestershire Safer and Stronger Community Groups
- South West Alliance of Nomads
- South West Registered Social Landlord Planning Consortium
- The Barton Trust
- Traveller Law Reform Coalition
- Various South Gloucestershire Regeneration Partnerships
- Woodland Trust

# Appendix 3 – Ways of consulting, involving and informing

## Methods of involving

Please note that the table below sets out a suite of possible methods which will be used to engage with the community. The specific methods used will be determined by the type and scale of consultation the council is undertaking at a given stage.

Involvement method	Use and effectiveness
Focus groups	Participants invited to semi-structured interviews, meetings or workshops. Useful for area based discussion and the presentation of options. Views of representative groups can be obtained. Small group format is useful in allowing a variety of participants to provide detailed input in an informal atmosphere.
Public meetings	Meetings held at a public venue for the community to receive information and express their views on relevant issues. Allows engagement with a large number of people at once and they can receive direct feedback. However some people may be uncomfortable expressing their views in front of a large number of people.
Workshops	Invitation only event for those people most involved with the document/application. Aim of identifying issues and possible solutions. Can be held in different locations with different sectors of the community. A variety of activities, styles and techniques of engagement can be used in workshops, depending on the audience attending, the subject matter and the aims of the workshop. They can be run by council officers or by external facilitators.
Planning Aid	Government funded service aimed at targeting communities which do not normally get involved in the planning system.
Steering/advisory groups	Include internal and external stakeholders. Focus on consideration of options and/or providing guidance.
Citizens panels	Representative groups of residents from across the district asked for their views.

## Methods of informing

Informing method	Use and effectiveness
Internet/Website	Can provide detailed information on a regular basis to a wide audience at minimal cost.
Letters/email	Direct provision of information with selected interested parties or the wider consultation database.
Leaflets	Cost effective means of informing a large number of people. Relies on effective, targeted distribution.
Media coverage	Regular press releases for the local press, radio and TV. Good for raising awareness across a wide audience. Can utilise free newspapers and council publications.
Exhibitions	Visual displays of information put up in public venues. Good for generating awareness and informal face-to-face dialogue.
Posters	Effective for publicising events and generating awareness. Relies on effective, targeted distribution.

## Methods of consulting

<b>Consultation method</b>	<b>Use and effectiveness</b>
Internet/website	Documents for viewing/downloading and online forms for submitting comments. Reduces the need for paper usage, thus more environmentally friendly and cost saving.
Letters/email	Direct provision of information with interested parties
One-to-one meetings	Able to obtain detailed comments and possibly resolve potential issues.
Questionnaires	Able to obtain preferences and comments. Unlikely to be used by those without an interest in the planning system.
Written material available for inspection and comment	Documents and comment forms made available at the Council's principal offices and other key locations such as libraries.

N.B. This list of methods is not exhaustive. Further methods may also be drawn upon at various stages of involvement, consultation and informing.



# Appendix 4 – Target groups and how they will be involved in preparing planning policy documents

Please note that the table below sets out a suite of possible methods which will be used to engage with the community. The specific methods used will be determined by the type and scale of consultation the Council is undertaking at a given stage.

Target group	Typical groups	Potential issues	Main methods
Local residents and neighbours of site allocations and development sites	Individual residents and families and residents associations	May not be familiar with the planning process. Likely to have strong views and early involvement important to promote understanding on all sides.	Media coverage, public meetings, leaflets and posters in key locations, public exhibitions, questionnaires, internet/website.
General public	Residents, those who live in areas adjoining South Gloucestershire, commuters, visitors to the district, people who work in the district.	General awareness raising of planning issues often required.	Media coverage, public meetings, leaflets and posters in key locations, public exhibitions, questionnaires, internet/website, citizens panel
Councillors	South Gloucestershire councillors	Need to be fully engaged throughout the plan preparation process particularly through steering groups, working parties and participation in public meetings	Steering/advisory groups, workshops, letters/email, councillor briefing sessions/meetings, council intranet
Town and Parish Councils	All town and parish councils in and neighbouring South Gloucestershire	Likely to participate effectively in direct consultation, public meetings and focus groups. Important contacts for a range of local organisations and residents.	Media coverage, public meetings, letters/email, leaflets, posters, exhibitions, internet/website, workshops in line with requirements of the parish charter.
Adjacent Local Councils	Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset, Wiltshire County, Gloucestershire County, Stroud, Forest of Dean, Monmouthshire (Wales)	Familiar with planning and consultation processes; they will respond to consultation letters and are likely to maximise opportunities for electronic communication.	Internet/website, letters/email. In line with the requirements of the duty to cooperate. Joint working
Specific bodies	All those listed in <a href="#">Appendix 2</a> as statutory consultees	Familiar with planning and consultation processes. They will respond to consultation letters and are likely to maximise opportunities for electronic communication.	Internet/website, letters/email
South Gloucestershire Council Officers	Officers with relevant expertise from across the planning department as well as all other departments where appropriate	Familiar with planning/consultation processes; are likely to maximise opportunities for electronic communication.	Internet/email Workshops Meetings
Business community	Local businesses/retailers, chambers of trade and commerce, town centre managers	Spatial planning has key impacts on businesses but employers have traditionally not given priority to planning policy issues.	Media coverage, leaflets, internet/website, focus groups.

<b>Target group</b>	<b>Typical groups</b>	<b>Potential issues</b>	<b>Main methods</b>
Developers, landowners and agents	Home Builders Federation, individual house builders and developers	The input of key landowners will be critical, so they may need to be identified and contacted directly.	Media coverage, leaflets, public meetings, internet/website, focus groups, one-to-one meetings.
Planning Consultants	Various firms with offices in the sub-region as well as other national firms	Familiar with planning and consultation processes. They will respond to consultation letters and are likely to maximise opportunities for electronic communication.	Internet/website, letters/email
Other housing groups	Housing associations, Avon Travellers Support Group	May be variability of experience with the planning system, so a wide range of methods will be used.	Media coverage, leaflets, letters/email, one-to-one meetings, focus groups, workshops. Consultation documents available in alternative appropriate formats.
Voluntary and Community Groups, residents and community associations	Yate Voluntary Link, Filton People	Might not be familiar with planning issues, but will be an important source of local knowledge.	Media coverage, leaflets, letters/email, focus groups, workshops
Religious, racial, ethnic and language groups	Equal Opportunities Commission, South Gloucestershire Asian Group, Black Development Agency, South Gloucestershire Chinese Association, Bangladeshi Association	May need to target format and language of consultation documentation. May not be familiar with planning issues.	Media coverage, leaflets, letters/email, focus groups, workshops, one-to-one meetings.
Disability Groups	Disability Rights Commission, other groups representing particular disability groups	Might not be familiar with planning issues, but will be an important source of local knowledge.	Media coverage, leaflets, letters/email, one-to-one meetings, focus groups, workshops. Consultation material should be available in alternative formats
Elderly	Help the Aged, Age Concern, South Gloucestershire Senior Citizens Forum	Might not be familiar with planning issues, but will be an important source of local knowledge.	Media coverage, leaflets, letters/email, facilitated focus groups, workshops.
Young people and the learning community	Youth clubs, school governing bodies, Learning and Skills Council, University of the West of England, South Gloucestershire Youth Forum	Might not be familiar with planning issues, but will be an important source of local knowledge.	Media coverage, leaflets, letters/email, focus groups, workshops.
Health and Welfare	Health authorities, primary care trusts, emergency services, South Gloucestershire Local Strategic Partnership	Important source of specialist knowledge.	Letters/email, one-to-one meetings, focus groups, workshops.
Hard to reach groups	Children and young people, Gypsies and Travellers, homeless groups and people who traditionally haven't engaged with consultation programmes, such as those on low incomes, ethnic minorities, etc	Groups representing sections of the public that have traditionally been more difficult to reach than the rest of the population. Unlikely to respond to traditional consultation techniques – need for innovative approaches and careful targeting.	Specially tailored and arranged focus groups and workshops, media coverage, posters and exhibitions, one-to-one meetings where appropriate.

<b>Target group</b>	<b>Typical groups</b>	<b>Potential issues</b>	<b>Main methods</b>
Arts and Sports representatives	Sport England, Art SW.	Important source of specialist knowledge. May not be familiar with the planning system.	Media coverage, leaflets, letters, email, focus groups, workshops.
Interest groups	National and local groups covering varied or single issue interests	Important source of specialist knowledge.	Media coverage, leaflets, internet/website, letters/email, focus groups, workshops.
Transport	Coach, train and bus companies, Highways Agency, sustainable transport groups, footpath and bridleway groups.	Important source of specialist knowledge. Groups will vary in their knowledge of planning processes and are therefore likely to be involved in a variety of consultation methods.	Media coverage, leaflets, internet/website, letters/email, focus groups, workshops, questionnaires.
Environment	Conservation groups, e.g. Natural England, RSPB, Avon Wildlife Trust, Forestry Commission, farming groups, archaeological groups, historical bodies and groups.	Important source of specialist knowledge. Groups will vary in their knowledge of planning processes and are therefore likely to be involved in a variety of consultation methods.	Media coverage, leaflets, internet/website, letters/email, focus groups, workshops, questionnaires.
Utilities, telecoms and infrastructure	Environment Agency, gas and electricity suppliers, water and sewerage companies, renewable energy groups, telecommunication groups/companies.	Important source of specialist knowledge. Groups will vary in their knowledge of planning processes and are therefore likely to be involved in a variety of consultation methods.	Media coverage, leaflets, internet/website, letters/email, focus groups, workshops, questionnaires.
South Gloucestershire Local Strategic Partnership	Representatives from local public services, private business and voluntary groups.	Important body in terms of a wide range of relevant organisations. Membership would provide contacts for focus groups and a means to identify best methods of engaging with hard to reach groups.	Media coverage, leaflets, internet/website, letters/email, focus groups, steering groups.

# Appendix 5 – Advertising planning applications

The following procedures support the guidance set out in [Section 4 of this SCI](#).

## Neighbourhood notification letters

When the council is asked to determine a planning application it will publicise to local residents that a planning application has been received by a neighbourhood notification letter.

## Site notices

Planning applications received will be publicised by a site notice or a notice in a local newspaper, or in some cases both.

Site notices will be posted by the case officer or we ask applicants to display it on their site usually on the main entrance to the proposed development in a position where the public can easily read it without entering the application site. Site notices contain basic information which can assist people to know what's proposed in their area and can help them to know where they can find out more information. A notice will normally give a date by which comments should be made, the name and telephone number of the case officer, as well as a website for viewing the application online.

Local planning authorities are legally required to publicise certain applications by notice in a local newspaper in which the land is situated in the statutory notices section of one of our newspapers circulating in the district. The newspaper used depends on the parish in which the application is made.

Anybody originally notified about an application, and everyone who has made comments on it, will be notified of amended plans that are received, and which the Council considers require further publicity.

## Time periods

Only when the publicity period has expired can a planning application be decided. 21 days needs to elapse after the site notice has been posted, any statutory press advertisement was published, or the date on the neighbour notification letter for this to take place.

Information contained in either the neighbourhood notification letter, notice or press advertisement explains where and how people can view planning applications.

## Making comments

Comments on applications should always be made in writing. This can be done via our online form or by post. In circumstances where the publicity period has expired it may not be too late to make comments. This can be established by telephoning the customer enquiries team.

Written comments should be addressed to: Department for Environment and Community Services, PO Box 299, Strategic Planning, Civic Centre, High Street, Bristol, BS15 0DR

When sending letters please quote:

- the planning application number
- the address of the property to which it relates
- your own address

Offensive, racist, discriminatory and other statements that are not relevant will not be published nor taken into account. Offensive statements lower a person's reputation personally or within their trade, profession or business. Racist statements are those that discriminate against individuals on racial grounds including their race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origins. Statements that discriminate on grounds of any protected characteristic (defined under the Equalities Act) will also not be published or taken into account. Anonymous comments will not be published or taken into account. Where individuals have particular sensitivity about making their comments public, they can approach their local Ward councillor and ask that they submit comments on their behalf.

All comments will be taken into account before a decision is reached provided they are received in time. All comments are placed on the application file and published on our website and are available for public inspection.

If the application is to be considered by the development control committee, anyone making written comments will be notified of the date of the meeting and how they can address the committee if they wish. Once a decision has been reached, people who have made comments will also receive details of the decision.

## Public speaking

Where an application is to be determined by a development control committee, an opportunity is provided to address the committee. The opportunity to speak is provided for:

- the applicant or supporters of the application
- objectors to the application
- each of these groups is entitled to speak for five minutes

## One stop shops / Customer enquiries contact centre

Customers can call into any of the council's one stop shops (at Kingswood, Thornbury, Patchway and Yate) where trained staff are available to answer general planning queries. A telephone contact centre is also available where trained staff are also available to answer planning queries. The telephone number of the contact centre is 01454 868004.

# Appendix 6 – Minimum consultation methods for planning applications

Type of application	Group consulted	<b>Method - existing and proposed</b> Proposed methods relate to the gradual introduction of electronic consultation which will move at a different pace in various areas
<b>Major development</b> (10 or more residential units, or over 0.5 ha, other development over 1000 square metres in floorspace or over 1 ha in site area). To include most waste and mineral schemes.	Statutory consultees –as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically by agreement)
	Neighbours –all adjoining occupiers having a common boundary with the site, and properties directly opposite. All occupiers of land within 100m of the vehicular and pedestrian access points (measured linearly along the road, including properties on the opposite side of the road). If the subject of an enforcement investigation, the complainant.	By letter (press notice published and site notice posted for major developments). Application details available to view at the council's offices, and online.
<b>Minor development</b> (9 or fewer residential units, or residential development of less than 0.5 ha, other development less than 1000 square metres floorspace or less than 1 ha in site area)	Statutory consultees –as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically by agreement)
	Neighbours –all adjoining occupiers having a common boundary with the site, and properties directly opposite. All occupiers of land within 30m of the vehicular and pedestrian access points (measured linearly along the road, including properties on the opposite side of the road). If the subject of an enforcement investigation, the complainant.	By letter (press notice published and site notice posted for certain types of development). Application details available to view at the Council's offices, and online.  Applicant also requested to post on site a site notice for 21 days
<b>Change of use/conversion</b>	Statutory consultees –as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically by agreement)
	Neighbours –all adjoining occupiers having a common boundary with the site, and properties directly opposite. If the subject of an enforcement investigation, the complainant.	By letter (press notice published and site notice posted for certain types of development). Application details available to view at the council's offices, and online. Applicant also requested to post on site a site notice for 21 days

<b>Householder development</b>	Statutory consultees –as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /town councils – within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically by agreement)
	Neighbours Rear extensions: owners/occupiers on both sides and to the rear Front extensions including porches: owners/occupiers on both sides, and immediately opposite if development within 21 metres Side extensions: owners/occupiers immediately adjacent to the proposal and any property directly to the front or rear if within 21 metres of the proposal If the subject of an enforcement investigation, the complainant.	By letter (press notice published and site notice posted for certain types of development). Application details available to view at the Council's offices, and online. Applicant also requested to post on site a site notice for 21 days
<b>Larger home extensions - neighbour consultation scheme</b> (for a period of 3 years, between 30 May 2013 and 30 May 2016 householders will be able to build larger single-storey rear extensions under permitted development)	Parish /Town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically)
	Neighbours: all adjoining occupiers having a common boundary with the site	By letter
<b>Advertisements, listed building consents, works to trees, operational development</b>	Statutory consultees –as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically by agreement)
	Neighbours: all adjoining occupiers having a common boundary with the application site, and properties directly opposite if considered appropriate by the case officer.  If the subject of an enforcement investigation, the complainant.	By letter (press notice published and site notice posted for certain types of development, e.g. all conservation area and listed building applications). Application details available to view at the council's offices, and online. Applicant also requested to post on site a site notice for 21 days (if not a statutory requirement)
<b>Certificates of lawfulness</b>	Statutory consultees –as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically by agreement)
	Neighbours: all adjoining occupiers having a common boundary with the application site, and properties directly opposite if considered appropriate by the case officer. If the subject of an enforcement investigation, the complainant	By letter (press notice published and site notice posted for certain types of development, e.g. all conservation area and listed building applications). Application details available to view at the council's offices, and online. Applicant also required to post on site a site notice for 21 days

<b>Prior notification - agricultural and demolition</b>	Statutory consultees –as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically by agreement)
	Neighbours: all adjoining occupiers having a common boundary with the application site, and properties directly opposite if considered appropriate by the case officer. If the subject of an enforcement investigation, the complainant	By letter Application details available to view at the council's offices, and online.
<b>Prior notification - telecommunications</b>	Statutory consultees –as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /Town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically by agreement)
	Neighbours: all neighbours within 100 metres of the site, schools within 400 metres. If the subject of an enforcement investigation, the complainant	By letter Application details available to view at the council's offices, and online. Site notice posted.
<b>Prior notification - change of use</b>	Statutory consultees as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (as amended)	By letter (electronically)
	Parish /town councils –within whose area the site falls	By letter (electronically)
	Neighbours: all adjoining occupiers having a common boundary with the application site	By letter Application details available to view at the council's offices, and online. Site notice posted
<b>Non-material amendments</b>		Minimum determination period of 14 days Weekly list



# Appendix 7 – Key terminology for significant planning applications

## Design and access statements

A design and access statement (DAS) is a document accompanying and supporting a planning application to illustrate the process that has led to the development proposal, and to explain and justify the proposal in a structured way. A design and access statement must be submitted with most types of planning applications, but not with ‘householder’ applications. They provide an opportunity for developers and designers to demonstrate their commitment to achieving good design and ensuring accessibility, as well as allowing them to show how they will meet the various obligations placed on them by legislation and policy. The level of detail required in a design and access statement will depend on the scale and complexity of the application, and the length of the statement will vary accordingly. Article 8 of The Town and Country Planning Development Management Procedure Order (DPMO) 2010 sets out when a DAS is required and what information should be included in it.

## Development brief

A Development Brief is a document prepared by a Local Planning Authority, a developer, or jointly, providing guidance on how a specific site, or a combination of adjacent sites, of significant size or sensitivity should be developed in line with the relevant planning and design policies. It will usually contain some indicative, but flexible, vision of future development form and should precede and inform the preparation of an illustrative master plan. It should also describe the proposed development process, as well as outlining Section 106 agreement requirements. Ideally it is agreed by all parties and adopted as a supplementary planning document.

## Illustrative master plan

An illustrative master plan is a document and plan that sets out a vision for a site and a strategy for implementing that vision. It is ‘illustrative’ in the sense that it illustrates clearly the principles of design, which underpin the proposed development. An illustrative master plan is prepared by the applicants as the basis of an outline planning application. It will usually be produced by the applicant’s design team, working in consultation with officers, during the course of the outline planning application. An illustrative master plan builds upon the environmental statement and upon preceding urban design guidance, such as a development brief to show in more detail how a site will be developed in line with relevant planning and design policies. Its content will vary depending on the size and complexity of the site in question, but it will usually contain: a three dimensional vision (plans, sections, elevations, three dimensional drawings); a character description; preliminary designs for landscape and key public open spaces; movement to and through the site (public transport, cycle, walking and cars); together with a detailed phasing regime. The illustrative master plan will also contain a suite of supporting strategies including strategies for the provision of affordable housing, distinctive architecture, waste reduction, recycling and collection, resource minimisation and public art.

In the case of a very large site, where one outline application will not cover the whole area and which will be developed over a long period of time, the illustrative master plan will also set out the proposed master planning process. In these cases, the council endorse the illustrative master plan, which would then be a material consideration in determining any subsequent reserved matters applications. In such cases the illustrative master plan will show the geographical phases for which detailed master plans will be prepared post the granting of outline planning permission, as well as establishing the parameters for design coding.

### Detailed master plan

A detailed master plan is a document and scalable plan that shows how the principles established in an illustrative master plan are to be implemented across a particular geographical phase of a large site. A detailed master plan is prepared by the applicants post the granting of outline permission for the development of a large site, but prior to the submission of reserved matters applications for the geographical phase in question. It builds upon preceding design work to establish a greater degree of certainty and fix on matters such as siting, height, massing and land budget. Its contents vary depending on the size and/or complexity of the site, but it will usually contain: a three dimensional vision (plans, sections, elevations, three dimensional drawings and possibly a model); direct sunlight analysis; diffuse daylight analysis; a character description; and detailed designs for key public open spaces. It will also show how the supporting strategies contained in the illustrative master plan will be implemented across the site in question and, subject to endorsement by the council, can be a material consideration in determining subsequent reserved matters applications.

### Design codes

Design codes are a distinct form of detailed guidance comprising a set of written and graphic rules that establish with precision the two and three dimensional design elements of a particular development or area. The provisions within design codes are technical and precise. They instruct (and sometimes advise) the user upon the physical components of a place. Design codes are delivery tools and to be effective they need to be based upon a specific design vision for a site or an area. The design vision is usually established in a master plan. In effect design codes are an extension of the master planning process: i.e. the master plan sets out the vision for the development and the strategy for implementing that vision. The design code sets out the precise rules that must be adhered to in order to deliver the vision set out in the master plan.

### Framework plan (sometimes referred to as a concept plan or masterplan)

A spatial plan used as a prelude to a more detailed masterplan, as a tool to guide future development. It generates strategic options that set out the structure, aspirations, and limits within which more detailed work on planning, design and delivery can take place. The framework plan emphasises connections and interrelationships needed to coordinate development over what happens in detail on particular sites. It identifies themes and principles rather than detail, and is not prescriptive about outputs that may be fixed later in the design process.

## Framework agreement

An agreement between the council and developer partners to establish the terms and mechanisms by which phases of development and infrastructure provision will come forward. It may establish agreed costs of development, land values and the financial and land contributions to be made towards infrastructure provision. The details contained within the agreement are normally used to establish an agreed basis for Section 106 contributions to ensure coordination of infrastructure provision across land parcels.

# Appendix 8 – Minimum consultation required by Regulations for the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

## Minimum requirements for local plan documents

Stage of DPD production		Reg. No.	Minimum requirements required by regulations
<b>Preparation of a local plan</b> (Regulation 18)	Statutory stage	18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify bodies (<a href="#">detailed at Appendix 2</a>) of intention to prepare a local plan</li> <li>• Invite representation as to what the local plan ought to contain.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collecting evidence through various sources</li> <li>• Notify and work with groups, organisations and residents</li> <li>• Consider issues and alternatives</li> <li>• Prepare content of draft document and provide feedback where possible</li> <li>• Informal consultation periods</li> </ul>		
<b>Publication</b>	Publication of a local plan Representations relating to a local plan	19 and 20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory stage</li> <li>• 6 weeks (minimum) period (Reg. 35)</li> <li>• Copies of documents should be made available for inspection at the council's principal offices and on the council's website (Reg. 35).</li> <li>• The council invite written representations on the plan, sustainability appraisal and supporting evidence.</li> <li>• Notify bodies (<a href="#">detailed at Appendix 2</a>) of availability of consultation documents.</li> <li>• Representations must be received by the council by the date specified.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consideration of representations received</li> <li>• Summary of issues raised produced by the council</li> </ul>		
<b>Submission of a local plan</b> (Regulation 22)		22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'final' plan, sustainability appraisal, policies map, other supporting documents, all representations received and a statement of compliance will be submitted to the secretary of state for independent examination</li> <li>• The council will notify bodies (<a href="#">detailed at Appendix 2</a>) and anyone who has been asked to be informed of the plan's submission of the availability of the above documents for inspection at the council's principal offices and on the council's website (Reg. 35).</li> </ul>

<b>Examination</b>	Independent examination	24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 'final' plan, sustainability appraisal, policies map, other supporting documents, representations received and a statement of compliance will be submitted to the secretary of state for independent examination</li> <li>• The council will notify bodies (detailed at Appendix 2) and anyone who has been asked to be informed of the plan's submission of the availability of the above documents for inspection at the council's principal offices and on the council's website (Reg. 35).</li> <li>• The secretary of state will appoint an inspector to carry out an independent examination of the document.</li> <li>• The council will appoint a programme officer who will notify consultees of the convening of a pre examination meeting (if required) and the public examination itself. A notice will also be published in the local press detailing the time and place where the examination will be held and the name of the Inspector.</li> <li>• Following this examination the inspector will produce a report setting out recommendations to changes that he/she feels necessary for the document to be considered sound. The council can also suggest their own modifications to the Inspector during the examination, as well as making minor non- material changes themselves.</li> </ul>
	Publication of the recommendations of the Inspector	25	
<b>Adoption of a Local Plan (Regulation 26)</b>		26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Following receipt of the inspector's report the Council will make the necessary changes to the document and then adopt and publish the document together with its sustainability appraisal.</li> <li>• This will be advertised and made available at council offices and public libraries in the district. It will also be available on the council's website.</li> </ul>

## Minimum requirements for supplementary planning documents (SPD)

Stage of SPD production		Reg. No.	Minimum requirements required by regulations
<b>Pre-production</b>	Evidence gathering	-	-
<b>Production of draft and consultation</b>	Public participation on draft SPD	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Copies of documents should be made available for inspection at the council's principal offices and on the council's website (Reg. 35). Make available at principle offices and main libraries</li> <li>• Publish on council website</li> </ul>
	Representations on SPD	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4-6 week consultation period</li> <li>• Publish statement of compliance, Sustainability appraisal and relevant supporting documents</li> </ul>
<b>Adoption</b>	Adoption of SPD	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make SPD and supporting documents available at principle offices, main libraries and publish on website</li> <li>• Give notice to anyone who requested to be notified.</li> </ul>