

Cheshire West & Chester Council

# Local Plan



## **Statement of Community Involvement**

2022

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Cheshire West  
and Chester



## Statement of Community Involvement 2022

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## 1: Introduction

**1.1** The Cheshire West and Chester Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2022 sets out how the Council involves key stakeholders and local communities in the preparation of planning policy and when determining planning applications. This includes:

- Future updates to our Local Plan and/or other development plan documents
- Other supporting planning documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents
- Providing support to local communities working on neighbourhood plans
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Determining planning applications

**1.2** The Council is required to prepare and maintain a SCI by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The SCI reflects the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017, the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

**1.3** A review of the SCI is required every 5 years under the 2012 regulations, to ensure it complies with statutory requirements and is up to date. This SCI replaces the previous SCI (2017) and reflects latest Government policy and guidance.

**1.4** Due to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic in 2021, the Government introduced some temporary changes relating to how consultations could be undertaken and the physical inspection of documents. Other restrictions such as social distancing affected the ability to hold face to face events or meetings. Should Government guidance change again in the future these changes will be implemented locally and will replace the requirements set out in this updated SCI.

**1.5** The updated SCI (2022) considers current best practice and the benefits of new digital/online technology and communication tools to ensure consultations are wide reaching and cost-effective. Whilst digital engagement methods are encouraged, alternative methods will also be available as mitigation for those without access to online services. This SCI sets out a range of consultation methods that may be used in Plan preparation. The methods used will depend on the type of document, stage of the process and resources available. It provides realistic expectations for our consultees of the planning system and processes.

### Why is involving the community important?

**1.6** Consultation and engagement are high priorities for Cheshire West and Chester in all areas including the preparation of the Local Plan. The planning system includes a strong emphasis on continuous community involvement and planning at a local level which is intended to make the plan preparation process more inclusive and accessible. The aim of greater community involvement is to strengthen the engagement of local people in the development of planning policy and provide

opportunities for them to shape the place in which they live to create better and more sustainable communities.

## 2: Policy context

### National Planning Policy Framework

**2.1** Cheshire West and Chester will have regard to national policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in the preparation of planning policies.

**2.2** NPPF requires that Local Plans should be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees. Policies should be clear and unambiguous to guide decision makers on planning applications. Plans should be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation <sup>(1)</sup>

### Local Development Scheme

**2.3** The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the Council's timetable for the preparation of local development documents. This allows local communities, stakeholders or interested parties to find out which planning policy documents are being prepared and a timetable for preparation. This outlines the stages of preparation and an indication of when the community can get involved.

### Development Plans

**2.4** The Cheshire West and Chester development plan is made up of the strategic and non-strategic policies which are in force at a particular time. This currently includes the adopted Local Plan (Part One) Strategic Policies (29 January 2015); the Local Plan (Part Two) Land Allocations and Detailed Policies (18 July 2019) and Neighbourhood Plans that cover specific parts of the borough.

**2.5** Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) or development briefs may be prepared to support the delivery of the Local Plan and provide more detailed advice and guidance on site allocations and development management policies. SPDs are subject to the 2012 Regulations in terms of their preparation and requirements for consultation.

### Neighbourhood Planning

**2.6** Neighbourhood planning allows local communities to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan containing planning policies for their area. When completed Neighbourhood plans, alongside the Local Plan, form part of the development plan for the borough.

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1 NPPF, paragraph 16.

**2.7** A "qualifying body" (which may be a parish or town council, or if no parish council is in place, a neighbourhood forum) may choose to prepare a neighbourhood plan for their area <sup>(2)</sup>. This qualifying body is responsible for the majority of the community consultation involved with the preparation of the neighbourhood plan, but there are specific stages at which the Council will notify and consult interested parties. Chapter 7: 'Neighbourhood Planning' has more information on these stages for Neighbourhood Plans.

### Annual Monitoring Reports

**2.8** The Annual monitoring report (AMR) sets out whether the Council is meeting the key targets of the adopted Local Plan and provides information on whether the adopted policies are being effectively implemented. The AMR provides supporting evidence on the key social, environmental and economic issues that might affect future development in the borough. It is also used to inform the preparation of future planning policies alongside the SA/SEA and or other technical evidence reports as part of the survey stage of plan-making. <sup>(3)</sup>

### Community Infrastructure Levy

**2.9** The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which local authorities can apply on new development in their area. It helps the Council to deliver the infrastructure needed to support development in parts of the borough.

**2.10** The levy only applies in areas where the Council has consulted on, and approved, a charging schedule which sets out its levy rates and has published the schedule on its website. CIL is prepared and consulted on in accordance with the relevant planning regulations. Further information on the Cheshire West and Chester CIL can be found at: [Cheshire West and Chester Council - Community Infrastructure Levy](#)

### Council Plan 2020-24

**2.11** Cheshire West and Chester Council, will continue to deliver value for money by engaging with local people and stakeholders, prioritising our resources and through more innovative ways of working. The Council continues to improve the customer experience, the way that we engage with local people, embracing technology to improve efficiency. Effective community and stakeholder involvement is important to produce a relevant and effective Local Plan and to meet our statutory requirements.

### Links with other Council strategies

**2.12** In preparing the local plan, we will consider the links with other relevant national and local strategies such as the National Waste Strategy, the Council's Local Transport Plan, the Health and well-being strategy/Place Plan 2019-2024, Climate Emergency Plan and other environmental,

2 Localism Act 2011, Schedule 9

3 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, s13



housing, economic, health and transport strategies. To realise our planning policies, we will consider other initiatives which have included community participation and work with relevant agencies to address issues comprehensively.

## **Appraisals and Assessments**

### **Sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment**

**2.13** The Local Plan is informed and accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (SA), incorporating the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of plans and programmes. This considers the likely significant effects of the Local Plan on environmental, economic and social factors. The SA/SEA will be prepared in line with the modified requirements set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and any further changes set out in legislation and accompanies the main stages of Local Plan preparation. The SA/SEA is an important feature of the development plan system which seeks to ensure that policies and proposals reflect sustainable development principles. There are statutory consultees under the SEA regulations, who will be consulted during the SA/SEA as required during the plan making process. Neighbourhood Plans Supplementary Planning Documents will be screened and may require SA/SEA if there likely significant effects identified.

### **Habitat regulations assessment**

**2.14** The local plan may also require a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) if it is considered likely to have likely significant effects on European designated sites protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The HRA includes an assessment of the impact of the plan in combination with other plans and programmes on European sites, both within the borough and in neighbouring areas. There are statutory consultees under the Habitats Regulations, who will be consulted on the HRA and plan making process as required under the legislation. Neighbourhood Plans Supplementary Planning Documents will be screened and may require HRA if there likely significant effects identified.



### 3: Approach to community involvement

**3.1** The Council's strategic aims and principles for consultation on planning matters are:

- To consider the views of local people, alongside our statutory requirements and contribute towards sustainable development in the borough;
- To provide a transparent and accessible service, to provide sufficient information to enable an effective response to consultation
- Through the LDS, provide clear information on consultation opportunities and when/how people can have their say
- Aim to avoid jargon in our communications, where possible. The planning system can be complex and where technical terms are required they will be explained in a glossary.
- To provide opportunities at an appropriate stage for people (regardless of age, sex, ability, ethnicity or background) business, the community and voluntary sector, partnerships and others to make their views known on future planning policies
- To support local communities, through neighbourhood planning, by providing advice on conformity with strategic planning policies
- To make use of the Council's website to share information, utilise digital communications or online engagement techniques to communicate effectively with our stakeholders
- Make comments publicly available so that participants can understand the range of issues being considered. <sup>(4)</sup>
- At key stages of plan preparation, we will provide effective feedback on the issues raised
- We aim to make use of the groups and networks that already exist, such as local community and interest groups where appropriate.

#### Equality and Diversity

**3.2** Cheshire West and Chester Council is committed to promoting equality and meeting the varied needs and circumstances of its customers and employees. The Council will make all reasonable efforts to make sure our community involvement is equally accessible to everyone. We will make use of the Council's website to make consultation documents available. Printed documents will be made available in line with the regulations. Council information is also available

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4 Our privacy notice sets out how data will be handled [site map - Accessibility Information \(cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk\)](#)

in audio, braille, large print or other formats on request. Equalities Impact Assessment is undertaken during preparation of the Local Plan to consider the likely impact of the policies on certain groups in society and to help prevent any negative effects or discrimination. The process also aims to advance equality and foster good relations. The findings of the assessment feed into the development of the Plan. The Equalities Impact Assessment is normally published as an appendix to the SA.

## 4: Who can get involved

**4.1** The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) sets out the legal requirements for consultation and public engagement during the preparation of planning policy documents. It sets out specific and general consultation bodies <sup>(5)</sup> The regulations require us to consult these at various stages in the preparation of development plan documents and others where relevant. Specific consultation bodies may include organisations such as Natural England, the Environment Agency or Historic England. General consultation bodies are community and voluntary bodies with an interest in the borough and bodies that represent different racial, ethnic, national or religious groups, disabled persons or persons carrying on business in the borough.

**4.2** Under the duty to cooperate <sup>(6)</sup> the Council is required to work with other neighbouring local planning authorities and prescribed bodies on strategic planning matters. Duty to cooperate organisations include neighbouring local authorities and other prescribed bodies set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 regulations. Appendix A provides further information on these consultees.

**4.3** The Council also seeks to involve as many people and groups as possible in developing planning policies for the authority. Anyone who has a role or an interest in shaping the future of the area, including local people, local organisations, local community groups, landowners/developers, other organisations and government departments has a contribution to make to the preparation of the Local Plan and other local development documents.

**4.4** Not everyone will need to get involved with every document and not all our methods for engaging people will be used each time. The methods chosen will relate to the type of document, scale of involvement and the stage of preparation reached. Some documents such as the Local Plan will deal with widespread aspects of planning looking at the future development of the whole Council area. This will need input from people across the borough and organisations from wider areas.

**4.5** The table below details some of the groups who may wish to contribute to the plan-making process.

Council Members	Town and Parish Councils
Councillors are in post to represent their constituents and as such have a key role to play not only in decision making but also in gathering information on the views of the communities they represent.	Parish and town councils, both in and adjacent to the authority have a key role to play in representing local interests in planning policies.

5 Regulation 2

6 introduced under the Localism Act 2011

<b>Council Members</b>	<b>Town and Parish Councils</b>
<b>Local People and organisations</b>	<b>Agents, developers and landowners</b>
This includes people who live, work or visit the borough or have another interest in the borough.	This group can provide helpful expertise and insight on market conditions and whether development can be delivered. Their knowledge and expertise will be particularly relevant to making sure we can achieve what is proposed in the Local Plan.
<b>Business groups</b>	<b>Specialist organisations</b>
This includes groups or organisations with business interests in the borough. We may use existing business networks / groups, to involve businesses in the preparation of local development documents including the Local Plan.	Specialist knowledge can be invaluable to the development of planning documents and a vital source of information. We may consult specialist organisations, for example experts in the provision of renewable energy or operators of minerals and waste facilities. This may also include specific consultation bodies such as Natural England or Health and Safety Executive.
<b>Duty to cooperate and prescribed bodies</b>	
The Council is required to work with neighbouring local planning authorities and other prescribed bodies on strategic planning matters under the regulations.	

#### 4.6 Consultation database

**4.7** Through our consultation database, local people or interest groups can register their interest in planning documents and consultation opportunities. Further information is available by contacting [planning.policy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk) or registering online at: [Cheshire West and Chester Council - Registration](#)

## 5: When to get involved

**5.1** Plan making can be a long process, but there are several clear and statutory stages, which set out when consultation should take place. Consultations will be undertaken in line with statutory timescales of relevant legislation.

**5.2** The tables below summarise the main stages of community involvement for the Council's local development documents. The main focus of consultation will be the Local Plan. Other planning policy documents that might be prepared include Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). All documents will be prepared in line with the relevant regulations.

### 5.3 Local Development Scheme (LDS)

**5.4** The Local Development Scheme sets out which planning policy documents the Council is preparing, including the stages and timetable for preparation <sup>(7)</sup>Progress of the LDS is measured through the Council's Annual Monitoring Report, which is publicly available on the Council's website.

### Local Plan

**5.5** Statutory requirements for consultation and involvement in the local plan are set out in Part 6 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended. A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) must be carried out during the preparation of the Local Plan. This is an iterative process alongside the stages of plan-making shown below. The SA, together with other relevant appraisals (outlined at Page 6) will be carried out in accordance with the relevant regulations.

Stage	Community Involvement
Survey, evidence gathering and issues (regulation 18)	<p>This stage involves gathering evidence, reviewing matters which may affect future planning and development in the borough (known as the 'survey stage') and identifying any key planning issues that the plan may contain.</p> <p>The Council's website will be used to publish evidence base documents that inform plan preparation. Parts of the local plan evidence base may be consulted on as part of plan preparation, to better understand specific issues.</p> <p>The Council will seek input from relevant key stakeholders, organisations and individuals during the early stages of plan preparation. Methods of consultation</p>

<sup>7</sup> Requirements for preparation are set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, as amended

Stage	Community Involvement
	<p>during this stage are flexible and a range of methods may be used as set out in section 6, dependant on the issues considered. There are specific requirements under regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, ('the Local Plan Regulations') which will be met. Stakeholders are encouraged to access the Council's website for the latest information, or to register on the Council's consultation database to be notified when new documents are published at key stages (see 4.6 ).</p>
Publication of a local plan (regulation 19)	<p>This is the plan the Council considers as sound before examination. The plan, proposed submission documents and a statement of the representations procedure will be available in line with the regulations. The Council will notify specific and general consultees when and where the documents are available for inspection. Documents will be published on the Council's website.</p> <p>Responses made to this stage of consultation should therefore only be concerned with matters of 'soundness' linked to NPPF.</p> <p>The council will produce a summary of the main issues raised by the responses at regulation 18 and 20, and this will also be examined as part of the submission material.</p>
Submission and Examination	<p>The publication plan, representations made and submission documents are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination on behalf of the Secretary of State. As part of the examination process, the Inspector may recommend further consultation on main modifications prior to adoption.</p>

### Supplementary Planning Documents

**5.6** Supplementary Planning Documents are prepared to provide further detailed advice on planning policies. They are a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan. SPDs are subject to the 2012 Regulations in terms of their preparation and requirements for consultation. They support development plan policies that have already been the subject of extensive consultation. We will meet the statutory requirements for at least 4 weeks

consultation on a Draft SPD. Consultation is likely to be focused on those bodies and individuals with an interest in the particular subject, but comments are welcome from other groups/individuals. Documents made available in line with the statutory requirements.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)**

**5.7** If the Council was intending to amend the CIL charging schedule it would have to publish a draft charging schedule indicating the new rate per square metre it intended to charge development in different areas of the borough. This information would be available in line with statutory requirements and on the Council's website, for communities to assess and comment on. Following this consultation period the draft charging schedule would be put forward for examination where the Planning Inspectorate would review the information and communities can make representations and be heard at the examination. Following the examination the Council would publish the charging schedule if approved by the Inspectorate.



## 6: How to get involved

**6.1** The information below sets out how the Council could seek to involve people in the Local Plan process. Not all of these methods will be used for each stage of the preparation of the Local Plan and will depend on the nature of the consultation and Council resource available). There may also be unexpected events, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, that mean consultation methods have to be tailored to legal requirements and Government guidance. The Council will meet the statutory requirements for the availability of documents at specific stages <sup>(8)</sup> which will also take account of any future changes to Government guidance or legislation.

**6.2** To ensure that we make the most efficient use of the resources available we will make use of existing networks and groups wherever possible.

**6.3** The main methods of community involvement on the Local Plan are:

- **Correspondence (letters/emails):** Emails are the main source of correspondence with our consultees, who are registered on our Consultation Database. This includes statutory consultees, relevant general consultees, other relevant stakeholders, individuals and organisations registered on our database who have asked to be kept informed of the local plan. It is the responsibility of consultees to ensure we have up to date contact information. We encourage everyone on the Local Plan consultation database to keep their details updated. Written postal correspondence will be used only where the recipient has no access to email, or where necessary to meet statutory requirements.
- **Digital consultation:** This may take place using the Council's online consultation portal and the use of digital engagement tools. It may include online consultation events, meetings or exhibitions depending on the stage of the Plan.
- **Local media:** We will liaise with the Council's Communications Team and may use press releases, public notices and/or social media at important stages of the Plan to promote and raise awareness of consultation.
- **Publishing documents:** Consultation documents available for public inspection on the Council's website and in line with the 2012 Regulations, as amended. Local residents could also access documents online at the borough's libraries.
- **Council Website:** We will share information on the Local Plan, supporting documents and consultations through the Council's website. This will be the main source of information on the Local Plan. Further information on the Local Plan can be found on the relevant section of the Council's website at: [Cheshire West and Chester - Local Plan](#)

- **Newsletters:** Occasionally, we may circulate a newsletter to email contacts on our Local Plan database, to raise awareness of a consultation, a specific issue or to signpost to further information.
- **Stakeholder and committee meetings (may be virtual):** Committee meetings could take the form of meetings held by town/parish councils or dedicated Council committees or panels. These may be held online/virtually. These can be a vital source of local and area or topic specific information. This includes written updates or Briefing Notes provided to groups.

**6.4** Some of these methods may also be used for other planning documents where appropriate, including Supplementary Planning Documents and Neighbourhood Plans.

### Responses to consultations

**6.5** For the Local Plan, consultation responses will be made publicly available <sup>(9)</sup>The Council will produce a statement of consultation where required under the regulations describing the consultation that has been carried out. The statement of consultation will set out who was invited to be involved in the plan preparation and how they were invited to be involved. It will provide a summary of the main issues raised and how they have been considered.

## 7: Neighbourhood Planning

**7.1** The Council will provide support to local communities wishing to prepare or modify a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Order. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 set out the requirements for neighbourhood plan preparation, including consultation requirements.

**7.2** Neighbourhood Plans are subject to SA/SEA and HRA screening as set out in section 2.13 and 2.14. More complex plans with site allocations are more likely to require a full SEA and HRA. Consultation on SEA/HRA will be undertaken in line with the relevant legislation. The Council offers the following general support to neighbourhood planning groups:

- A dedicated planning officer allocated to each neighbourhood plan group to provide support through the process;
- Neighbourhood planning pages on the Council's website ([www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning](http://www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning)) giving the latest information on neighbourhood plan progress in the borough and containing a toolkit with advice and guidance;
- A dedicated email address for NP correspondence ([neighbourhoodplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodplanning@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk)), which is also used for updating groups with information and news about legislative changes and funding opportunities;
- Advice on preparing neighbourhood area applications, consultation, evidence collecting, site allocations and policy writing;
- Informal advice provided on early stages of the plan, such as draft versions of vision, objectives and policies;
- Technical advice on SA/SEA and HRA
- Technical advice on any potential impacts on the North West or Welsh Marine Plan areas
- Advice to communities wishing to prepare Neighbourhood Development Orders or Community Right to Build Orders
- Advice to communities wishing to modify a made Neighbourhood Plan

**7.3** There may be times when neighbourhood planning support is temporarily reduced or suspended, for example in the period leading up to and during Local Plan examinations. During the covid-19 pandemic no referendums were allowed to take place. We will ensure that neighbourhood plan groups have as much notice as possible of such periods.

**7.4** Further information on the support the Council can provide at each stage of the neighbourhood planning process can be found in the Council's Neighbourhood Planning Protocol (2022) at <http://consult.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/file/4227625>. The table below summarises the stages of neighbourhood plans, neighbourhood development orders, or community right to build orders and Cheshire West and Chester's role in providing assistance:

Stage	Cheshire West and Chester Assistance
Neighbourhood Area designation	<p>Consult on the Neighbourhood Area designation, if this covers more than one Parish or in unparished areas.</p> <p>Consultation is not required where the proposed neighbourhood area is the same as a single parish boundary and the application is made by the Parish Council.</p>
Early preparation of the Draft Plan or Order	<p>The Council provides informal advice where required for example on vision/objectives, evidence or draft policies, or SA/SEA and HRA screening.</p>
Pre-submission consultation	<p>Formal comments provided in response to the formal consultation (which is led by the neighbourhood planning group).</p> <p>Guidance on producing supporting documents (Consultation Statement, Basic Conditions Statement) and checking the plan or order prior to submission.</p>
Submission and Publicity consultation	<p>The Council undertakes the publicity consultation in line with the regulations for a minimum of 6 weeks.</p> <p>Liaise with the qualifying body where appropriate to ensure copies of consultation documents are in appropriate and accessible locations.</p>
Examination and referendum	<p>Appointment of an independent examiner.</p> <p>Liaises with the qualifying body on procedure.</p> <p>Liaises with the examiner to provide information for the examination, to publicise the examination on the Council's website, to respond to any questions from the examiner and the fact check report.</p> <p>Provide advice and guidance to the neighbourhood plan group following receipt of the examiner's report.</p> <p>The Council takes the decision on whether to send the plan/order to referendum.</p>

Stage	Cheshire West and Chester Assistance
	Makes arrangements for the referendum, including the necessary Member approval.
Making of the Neighbourhood Plan or Order	If there is a positive outcome at referendum the plan or order is 'made' by the Council.
Modification of a made Neighbourhood Plan or order	Provide technical advice regarding monitoring and the modification of made neighbourhood plans or orders. The level of input will depend on the extent and nature of changes proposed.

## 8: Development Management and planning applications

**8.1** The Council is responsible for making decisions on a wide variety of planning and other applications. Cheshire West and Chester is committed to increasing and improving community involvement in the development management and decision making process. Guidance on submitting planning applications is available via the Council's website at [Apply for planning permission | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#) and the Planning Portal.

### Pre-application stage

**8.2** Developers are encouraged to engage with the Council prior to the submission of planning applications to reduce any potential problems and to ensure that applications are submitted with all the necessary information enabling them to be dealt with without delay.

**8.3** Advice and guidance on pre-application discussions is available in the UK Government's Planning Practice Guidance and the Council's approach is set out on the website at: [Pre-application advice | Cheshire West and Chester Council](#)

**8.4** The Council encourages developers involved in 'significant' planning applications to carry out independent public consultations prior to the submission of schemes, providing the community with an early opportunity to become involved in proposals for their area. This could take the form of public exhibitions, meetings workshops or media coverage etc. Results from any public consultation exercise undertaken by the applicant should form part of the application.

### Consultations on planning applications under the Planning Acts

**8.5** Public participation at this stage represents a crucial part of the planning application and development management process. Public participation provides the opportunity to significantly improve the proposed development and alleviate any objector's concerns at an early stage. Not all concerns raised can be considered in the decision making process. For example, the impact of a proposal on the value of property is not a material planning consideration. A material consideration is a factor of a proposal that should be considered as fundamental (or material) to reaching a conclusion on a development proposal. Examples of material considerations include; national planning policies, visual appearance (including building materials, height, design), issues over privacy, provision of infrastructure, and the impacts on the environment and conservation.

**8.6** National legislation and regulations set out the statutory requirements for public notification about planning proposals. This includes who should be notified and the methods that should be used. In addition, there are various other bodies, interest groups and organisations who may have interests in specific types of development or locations. These organisations will be consulted, where appropriate.

**8.7** For planning applications the Council will notify the public using letters, site notices, or press notices. Planning application information is also available on the Council's website.

**8.8** Notification letters will include a description of the proposed development, where the plans can be viewed, where comments should be sent, and the date on which the notification period ends.

**8.9** Site notices will contain similar details to that of neighbour notification letters, and each notice will be erected in a suitably prominent position. Site notices may be used where, for example, there is uncertainty about the ownership of adjoining land or the application is for major development.

**8.10** Press notices will be issued for major applications and significant departures from the Development Plan.

**8.11** Those who wish to make comments on planning applications need to do so within the notification period (usually 21 days), unless otherwise agreed with the planning case officer. Representations must always be made in writing, preferably via the Council's website. Copies of representations are public documents and will be made available to view via the Council's website.

**8.12** The Council will also carry out notifications and consultations required for other types of application, such as applications for Listed Building Consent, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements.

**8.13** Details of applications, including accompanying documents/plans, will be made available online via the Council's website.

### **Decisions on planning applications**

**8.14** The majority of planning applications are dealt with under delegated powers by planning officers. However, some applications need to be considered by Members on the relevant planning committee. All of the Council's elected Members are able to call in applications to be considered by a committee. Details of the powers conferred to each committee are set out in the Council's Constitution.

**8.15** If an application is to be decided at a committee, all members of the public who submitted representations will be notified. Details of the date, time, and location of the committee meeting will be published on the Council's website. The meeting will normally be webcast. The protocol on public speaking at the Planning Committees, which sets out the relevant arrangements and procedures, can be viewed on the Council's website or made available on request.

**8.16** Some planning applications will be subject to a section 106 legal agreement. This is an agreement between the developer and the Council addressing matters to ensure a development is acceptable. These are often used to secure and support the provision of infrastructure and services, such as education, highways, open/play space and affordable housing if these facilities cannot be provided on-site.



## **Reporting on responses made to planning applications**

**8.17** Material planning considerations raised by third parties who have been notified about planning applications will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, the Council. All members of the public who submitted representations will be notified of the decision. Notification will either be by post or email.

## **Enforcement**

**8.18** The Council expects all developers to comply with the requirements of planning legislation and not to carry out development until the necessary permission or consent has been obtained. The Council also expects all developers to comply with the conditions of their planning permissions that are clearly set out on the decision notice. Where breaches are suspected the Council has a full range of enforcement powers and where expedient will take appropriate action to ensure compliance.

**8.19** Most breaches of the planning rules are brought to the Council's attention by members of the public. The Council welcomes comments regarding the operation of development and encourages the reporting of suspected breaches of planning control. All breaches of planning control will be investigated. All complainants will be advised of the outcome of any investigations.

**8.20** Any person reporting an alleged breach of planning control will not have their identity revealed to others by officers or Members of the Council.

## 9: Monitoring and review

**9.1** We will keep up to date on any future changes to policy, legislation, government guidance and best practice, which may affect the implementation of the SCI or preparation of the Council's planning policies.

**9.2** Further reforms of the planning system have been outlined by Government through the Levelling Up White Paper (February 2022) and the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill (May 2022). The proposals intend to improve the planning system, which includes a range of measure such as changes to national policy, the way in which plans are prepared, decision making and the introduction of Environmental Outcomes reports. The Council will monitor progress of the planning reforms, and any effect this may have on community engagement, or the commitments set out in the SCI. It is anticipated that the Government may produce new guidance on community engagement in planning. The Council will continue to recognise the benefits and opportunities from new digital technology, and monitor how these could be used alongside existing methods of engagement.

**9.3** The SCI will be reviewed every 5 years, or to reflect any other changes that might be necessary to ensure effective community engagement takes place. Unforeseen events may result in the need for temporary changes to consultation requirements or methods of engagement within the SCI (as was the case with the Covid pandemic).