



South Ribble Local Development Framework Statement of Community Involvement

Approved
December 2013

1. Introduction

Role and Purpose

- 1.1 The role and purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is to provide the community with clarity on the levels of involvement that they should expect in planning processes. It gives a level of certainty to key stakeholders and the general public as to how they can be involved in plan making and development management processes. The consideration of planning applications and the preparation of planning policy documents must comply with the standards set out in this document.

General Principles of Planning Consultation

- 1.2 The Council will apply some general principles to any planning consultations it carries out. These are:
- Involvement will be open to all, regardless of gender, faith, race, disability, sexuality, age, rural isolation and deprivation;
 - We will seek views of interested and affected parties as soon as possible;
 - Consultation publications will be clear and concise and avoid unnecessary jargon; and
 - As part of the Local Development Framework, we will inform people who respond to consultations of later stages, if they request that we do so.

Role of Councillors

- 1.3 Councillors have an important role within the planning system, as both decision makers and as community representatives. The general public can make their views known to their local ward Councillors, who can make representations on their behalf. Councillors are a vital link between the local community and the Council. Councillors also make decisions on planning issues, such as adopting Planning Policy documents and in deciding planning applications.

2. Involving the Community in the Local Development Framework

Introduction

- 2.1 It is the duty of the Local Planning Authority to prepare an up-to-date Local Plan, known as the Local Development Framework (LDF). This plan, and its component parts, must be supported by evidence and be consistent with National Policy. They must also be drawn up with involvement from the community.
- 2.2 This document seeks to explain what that involvement will be and what stakeholders and the community can reasonably expect.

Development Plan Documents

- 2.3 Development Plan Documents (DPDs) contain policies for development and related issues. They must be supported by evidence and accord with national policies. Consultation is required at various stages as the plan is produced. They are then submitted to the Government, and an independent planning inspector carries out a

Public Examination in Public (EIP) into the document, considering views of interested parties, before forming an opinion on the merits of the document.

When We Will Consult?

2.4 The plans that the Council is producing and their timetables for production are published in the Local Development Scheme. The table below outlines the stages that the Council will undertake in order to produce the Development Plan Documents of the Local Development Framework.

Development Plan Document Stages and Consultation

Stage	Description
Evidence Gathering (Regulation 18)	Consultation documents issued at this stage of the process are usually known as issues and options. We will be seeking ideas, views and information on the issues that the document will address, and ideas on options for addressing these.
Plan Preparation (Regulation 18)	Consultation documents issued at this stage are usually known as Preferred Options. This document will be the first version of the plan, and will be drawn up using evidence, information from the first stage consultation, and guidance within National Policy. Consultation will be for a minimum of 6 weeks.
Publication (Regulations 19 & 20)	Following on from the consultations and evidence gathering, the proposed plan will be published. There will be a consultation period of a minimum of 6 weeks to allow stakeholders and the community to make formal representations on its soundness. All of the responses received at the previous stage will be published as part of the consultation, along with the Council's response to them.
Plan Submission and Examination (Regulations 22, 23 & 24)	The plan will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in order for an independent examination to take place. Anyone who responded to the Publication Stage consultation will be informed of the details of the hearing. All of the responses received at the previous stage will be published, along with the Council's response to them. The Inspector will consider all representations and there will be an opportunity for interested parties to speak at the hearing. The Inspector may suggest modifications to the plan which will be consulted on after the examination. Consultation will be for a minimum of 6 weeks.
Plan Adoption (Regulations 25 & 26)	The Inspector will then issue a report declaring whether the plan is sound. If the plan cannot be found sound, the Council would have to go back to stage 2 of the process. If the plan is found sound, subject to any further changes suggested by the Inspector, the Council will move to adopt it.

Who We Will Consult?

- 2.5 The Council will seek to obtain the views of as many people and organisations as possible as part of this process. The Council has set up a database of people and organisations who will be contacted at each consultation stage. Anyone can request to be added to this database at any time. In addition, anyone who responds to a consultation at any stage will be asked if they wish to be contacted at further stages. The database will be subject to regular updates and people will be asked if they wish to remain on the database at intervals throughout the process.
- 2.6 The consultation will be publicised as widely as possible to allow as many people, organisations, businesses and interest groups as possible, an opportunity to be involved.
- 2.7 There is also a range of organisations that the Council has a statutory duty to consult. These organisations include Councils, infrastructure providers and government bodies, and are detailed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012. The list of those that the Council has a statutory duty to consult is shown in the table below. Please note: this list may change if further planning regulations are introduced.
- 2.8 The Council has a duty to co-operate with a number of organisations. We are required to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with these organisations. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) defines issues that require cooperation as:
 - The homes and jobs needed in the area;
 - The provision of retail, leisure and other commercial development;
 - The provision of infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and the provisions of minerals and energy;
 - The provision of health, security, community and cultural infrastructure and other local facilities; and
 - Climate change mitigation and adaptation, conservation and enhancement of the natural and environment, including landscape.
- 2.9 The organisations which are covered by this duty are detailed in the latest planning regulations, which at the time of publication of this document were the Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) 2012. This may be amended if further regulations are published.
- 2.10 Both the statutory consultees and the organisations which the Council has a duty to co-operate with are listed in the table below.

Statutory Consultees	Duty to Co-operate Organisations
Environment Agency	The Environment Agency
English Heritage	English Heritage
Marine Management Organisations	Natural England
Natural England	Civil Aviation Authority
Network Rail	Homes and Communities Agency
Highways Agency	Central Lancashire NHS Trust
Telecommunications Operators	Office of Rail Regulation
Primary Care Trust	Lancashire County Council (Highways Authority)

Electricity and Gas Companies	Lancashire Enterprise Partnership
Sewerage and Water Companies	Marine Management Organisation
The Homes and Communities Agency	
Parish Councils within the Borough	
Adjoining Parish Councils	
County Council	
Lancashire Constabulary	
Coal Authority	
Adjoining Local Authorities	

How We Will Consult?

2.11 The Council will adopt a range of consultation methods to ensure that as many people, businesses and organisations as possible can be involved in the process. These are:

- All individuals, businesses, and organisations on the consultation database will be contacted direct. Where an email address is supplied, the contact will be via email, otherwise a letter will be sent;
- We will publicise consultations using methods such as leaflets, posters, the Council website, press releases and a press notice, displays in Council offices;
- Consultation events will be held in public places throughout the borough – these may include evening sessions;
- Officers will be available at the Council offices during normal office hours upon request to give information/answer questions;
- Consultation documents will be available to view at all libraries in the borough;
- Where possible, officers will attend parish and town council meetings on request; and
- Consultation documents will be available to download from the Council's website, or will be supplied either on CD or as a paper copy on request.

Neighbourhood Development Plan

2.12 Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) were introduced into the planning system through the Localism Act 2011 as an opportunity to allow communities to set planning policies to guide development in their areas (alongside the Development Plan).

2.13 The responsibility to produce a Neighbourhood Development Plan lies with the qualifying body – either a Parish Council or a Neighbourhood Forum, in a non parished area. However, there are certain responsibilities that the Local Authority has in relation to these plans.

2.14 The qualifying body is responsible for consulting upon a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan before they submit to the local authority.

2.15 In terms of consultation the following comments apply for the authority:

When will we consult?

- When a Neighbourhood Development Plan application is submitted a consultation will occur on an Area Application Stage and a Neighbourhood Forum Application Stage, if appropriate (the latter is not relevant to Parish Councils). This stage will be subject to a six week consultation.

- When a submission Neighbourhood Development Plan is received by the authority a six week consultation will be undertaken at this stage.
- An Neighbourhood Development Plan is subject to an examination by an Independent Planning Inspector, full details of the Inspector and examination process will be made publically available.
- An Neighbourhood Development Plan will also require a referendum, of which all details will be made publically available.

Who will we consult?

- There is a requirement to consult those who live, work and carry out business in the area.
- All those on the Neighbourhood Development Plan database who have previously responded and requested to be kept informed of the process.

How will we consult?

- All individuals, businesses, and organisations on the NDP consultation database will be contacted direct. Where an email address is supplied, the contact will be via email, otherwise a letter will be sent;
- We will publicise consultations using methods such as leaflets, posters, the Council website, press releases and a press notice, and displays in Council offices;
- Officers will be available at the Council offices during normal office hours upon request to give information/answer questions;
- Consultation documents will be available to view at all libraries in the borough;
- Consultation documents will be available to download from the Council's website, or will be supplied either on CD or as a paper copy on request.

Supplementary Planning Documents

2.16 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) give more detailed advice than contained in a Development Plan Document. These have a more limited role, for instance, they cannot introduce new policy or change land allocations.

2.17 As with a Development Plan Document, they must be supported by appropriate evidence and accord with national policies. The Council will carry out at least one stage of consultation on a Supplementary Planning Document before it is adopted. A Planning Inspector is not involved.

When We Will Consult?

2.18 The Council will prepare a draft Supplementary Planning Document, based on the local policy, drawing from available national policy and guidance. Once a draft has been completed, a consultation will be carried out. This consultation will be for a minimum of four weeks. Where necessary, changes will then be made to the document.

2.19 Following on from the consultation on the draft Supplementary Planning Document, a consultation statement, and the amended SPD, will be published at least 4 weeks before the document is formally adopted by the Council. This statement will list all the responses received, with the Council's response, and any changes that have been made to the document as a result of the comments received.

Who We Will Consult?

2.20 Members of the public, local businesses, organisations and interest groups, as with a Development Plan Document will be consulted, as well as statutory consultees as required in the Town and Country Planning Regulations.

How We Will Consult?

2.21 As with a Development Plan Document, the Council will adopt a range of consultation methods to engage with as many people and organisations as possible. These will be:

- All individuals, businesses, and organisations on the Consultation Database will be contacted direct. Where an email address is supplied, contact will be made via email, otherwise a letter will be sent;
- The consultation will be publicised via press releases and will also be on the Council's website;
- Consultation documents will be available to view at all libraries in the borough and at the Council offices; and
- Consultation documents will be available to download from the Council's website, and in paper format upon request.

Consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement

2.22 Although part of the Local Development Framework, the SCI is not required to undergo the same level of consultation that other documents are. The draft SCI will undergo a consultation period of 4 weeks. The Council will notify all statutory consultees and those who we have a duty to co-operate. In addition to this, the Council will contact interest groups and organisations, and the consultation will also be publicised via the Council's website.

Consultation on the Community Infrastructure Levy

2.23 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a standardised, non-negotiable local levy that is placed on new development for the purpose of helping to fund the delivery of infrastructure that will be required as a result of the development. The Council adopted its first Charging Schedule in July 2013, and it came into effect on 1st September 2013. This will be kept under review and consultation will therefore take place again within the lifetime of this SCI.

Regulation 123 List

2.24 The Regulation 123 List will be updated at appropriate intervals. There will be a minimum 4 week consultation on the list. The Council will notify all statutory consultees and key stakeholders of the consultation, as well as publicising the consultation via press notice and on the Council's website.

Charging Schedule

2.25 The process for consulting on the Charging Schedule will be more comprehensive than the consultation on the Regulation 123 list. The tables below show the stages in the production of the schedule when the Council will consult:

Stage	Description
Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule	The Council will consult on a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, based on evidence collected. Consultation will be for a minimum of 4 weeks. Any representations received will be considered, and changes made to the schedule, where appropriate.
Draft Charging Schedule	The Council will the produce a Draft Charging Schedule, for consultation, again, for a minimum of 4 weeks. Any representations received will be considered, and changes made to the schedule, where appropriate.
Formal Examination	The CIL documents will then be sent to be examined by an independent Inspector. Objectors to the document may be allowed to appear at the Examination. Any recommendations in the Inspectors Report will be binding on the Council. If there are significant issues, we Schedule may be withdrawn and a revised version may be submitted for Examination.

2.26 At all consultation stages for the Charging Schedule, the Council will seek the views of statutory consultees, businesses and the local community. To do this, we will contact all those registered on the Council's consultation database, as well as publicising the consultation via press releases and on the Council's website.

3. Involving the Community in Planning Applications and Masterplans

Consultation by Developers

3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework encourages early engagement with communities, before a planning application is submitted. The Council encourages developers to talk to those who may be affected and refine their proposals while they are at a formative stage. Among those likely to be interested are neighbours, utility and infrastructure providers and, for larger proposals, Councillors and the wider community.

3.2 The Council believes that it is in the developer's best interest to do so, as it can bring the following benefits:

- Addressing problems/issues before the planning application is submitted, may reduce the chance of a refusal;
- Refinements to the proposals are made at an early stage;
- Ensures accurate information is circulated to potential objectors, which pre-empts damaging ill-informed rumours and misconceived objections; and
- In the long run, it reduces the time and cost of reaching a successful outcome.

Pre-application Consultation for all Development

3.3 The earlier consultation takes place when proposals are being formulated, the better. Pre-application consultation by developers can highlight issues that may be resolved prior to submitting the application, thereby possibly contributing to a speedier and/or more successful decision. It ultimately can save the developer time and money to consult in advance of submitting a planning application.

3.4 There are a number of easy techniques that all developments can employ, including major, minor and householder developments:

- Provide neighbours with *draft* plans and invite comments and ideas for improving those plans;
- Request feedback within a specified timescale (e.g. 1-2 weeks), making it clear that this is the best time to take their comments on board, *before* the plans are finalised;
- Check with infrastructure providers and key consultation bodies that their requirements are satisfied – e.g. that you are not building over or near to service cables or pipes; and
- Have pre-application discussions with development management officers, in the form of meetings and/or site visits, as the Council actively encourages.
- The Council encourages applicants to use its pre-application advice service. Early communication with the Council can result in a much quicker application process, and with a greater chance of success. Details of this service can be found at <http://www.southribble.gov.uk/Section.asp?sectiontype=listseparate&catid=1023&docid=2958>

Pre-application Consultation for Major Development

3.5 Where the proposal constitutes “major development”, more formal consultation is encouraged. “Major development” is defined as involving 10 or more dwellings, *or* where the site area exceeds 0.5 hectares (residential development) *or* involving over 1000 square metres of floorspace *or* exceeding 1.0 hectare site area (non-residential development).

3.6 Development Management officers will give advice on the most appropriate methods, who to consult in the local area and where to hold a public exhibition. The following examples may also be helpful:

- Make detailed proposals available for public view at the site e.g. Draft layout plans, drawings, photo montages, visuals, street scenes & sketches mounted on the site boundary, including 3-D representations where possible;
- Public exhibitions / community engagement events / Interactive Workshops;
- Circulate a leaflet or letter outlining the proposals within the vicinity to both residents and ward Councillors; and
- Arrange a meeting with groups in the community (e.g. Parish Council, residents associations, interested parties, ward Councillors, neighbours), giving sufficient advance notice

3.7 Developers are encouraged to submit a consultation statement with their planning application. This should include:

- The techniques they employed to gain stakeholder comments, including correspondence, public notices, a record of persons attending exhibitions & meetings, etc.;
- A summary of the responses received;
- A list of the main objections that have been raised;
- Any other matters raised;
- The developer’s comments on the responses; and
- The amendments made to the proposals as a result of the comments.

Masterplan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.8 The Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD allocates a number of large strategic employment and housing sites where the preparation of a comprehensive Masterplan is required. The Council welcomes early discussions with landowners/developers on the scope, content and the preparation process for each Masterplan. A Masterplan should set the vision for the site and the strategy for implementing that vision.
- 3.9 The Masterplan should be the subject of consultation with all stakeholders and interested parties using similar methods as detailed above. Following consultation it shall be agreed with the Council and thereafter adopted for the purposes of development management to inform the determination of planning applications related to the site.

The Council's Consultation on Planning Applications

- 3.10 Although the community are consulted on individual planning applications, they must recognise that planning applications must be determined in accordance with adopted DPDs and SPDs. It is important that the community recognises that the key stage, when it will have most impact on planning decisions, is when DPDs are being prepared.
- 3.11 We consider the key to community involvement on planning applications is disseminating accurate information about the applications received. Experience has shown the community is generally forthcoming with comments on applications of interest, and responses received in writing are reported in the planning officer's report.
- 3.12 The Council consults on planning applications as follows:
- Neighbours notified by letter or site notice (or both where appropriate).
 - Statutory consultees relevant to the application, such as the Highways Authority, the Environment Agency, etc. are notified, with 21 days to respond.
 - The weekly list of planning applications is circulated by email to Ward Councillors, Parish Councillors. This list is also emailed to any group or individual who has requested a copy.
 - The weekly list of planning applications received is available free of charge on the Council website.
 - The Council website offers a search facility, called Public Access, where a summary of the application details including application forms, plans, other consultee responses, and other supplementary information can be found. There is also the facility to make a response on-line via a comments form.
 - Plans and drawings that have been submitted in support of a planning application are available for inspection at Council reception.
 - All comments received on planning applications are included and considered in the planning officer's report. In addition to this, all representations received will be available to view on the Council's website and at the Council offices. Personal details will be removed and will not be published.
- 3.13 In addition to the above, in relation to major applications, those affecting a public right of way, listed building, within a conservation area, a proposal which forms a departure to the adopted Plan, or an application requiring an Environmental Impact Assessment.,
- A public notice will be displayed in the Lancashire Evening Post.

- 3.14 When a planning application is amended, the Council may re-consult neighbours and other consultees, depending on the significance or scale of the changes to the planning application. If the changes proposed to the application do not represent a significant difference to the application, then the Council will not re-consult.
- 3.15 On major applications, and other controversial proposals, the decision is taken by the planning committee. A local councillor can request that an application is taken to committee, if they feel there are important planning issues the committee should consider. Decisions on the majority of minor and household applications are delegated to the Director of Planning. A copy of the scheme of delegation is available from the Development Management team on request or on the website.

Deciding Planning Applications

- 3.16 Consultation responses are always reported in the planning officer's report, and contribute to the officer's recommendation on a planning application. Respondents and those commenting on an application, should be aware, however, that decisions on the planning merits of an application are usually taken in accordance with planning policy, and this is normally given precedence in the event of a conflict, as decisions which do not accord with planning policy tend to fall on appeal. Planning policy is subject to rigorous community involvement as described in section 2 of this SCI, and is not easily overturned at planning application stage.

Planning Committee

- 3.17 The Agenda for the Planning Committee will be available to view on the Council's website 5 working days prior to the committee being held. The minutes to previous meetings are also available to view.
- 3.18 Members of the public are invited to speak publicly at planning committee either to oppose or support an application. There are however, some restrictions on this:
- There is a time restriction of 4 minutes per person;
 - A maximum of 5 people will be able to speak in support, and 5 to object, to any application; and
 - It is advised that if there are a large number of objections, that spokespeople are nominated to speak on everyone's behalf; and
 - Local Councillors can speak on behalf of the community.
- 3.19 Persons wishing to speak at Planning Committee need not give notice beforehand. The Chairman of Planning Committee invites statements and comments from members of the public at the appropriate time. The committee members then discuss the planning application, during which time no further comments are allowed from the public.

After a Decision is Made

- 3.20 As part of the Council's commitment to community involvement, the Council:
- Makes decision notices available on the Council's website (this enables interested persons to view the conditions placed on a development).
 - A weekly list of planning decisions is circulated by email to Ward Councillors, Parish & Town Councillors and any group or individual who has requested an electronic copy.

Planning Appeals

- 3.21 When an appeal against refusal of planning permission is lodged, the Council notifies neighbours and persons who had made representations on the original planning application.
- 3.22 Appeals are heard by a planning inspector, by written representations, an informal hearing, or in a more formal planning inquiry. The inspector will consider written representations from the community, and in hearings/inquiries usually provides for members of the community to verbally state their case. Information on appeals can be found on the Planning Inspectorate Website, <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/planninginspectorate>.

Further Information

- 3.23 For further information about this document, please contact the Forward Planning Team on 01772 625388, or email forwardplanning@southribble.gov.uk.

Glossary

CIL	The Community Infrastructure Levy is a new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the council, local community and neighbourhoods want.
DPD	Development Plan Document – A statutory policy document of the LDF, such as the Core Strategy and Site Specific Allocations
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment – applicants for certain types of development are required to submit an environmental statement accompanying a planning application. This evaluates the likely environmental impacts of the development, together with an assessment of how the severity of the impacts could be reduced.
LDD	Local Development Document – all documents (statutory and non-statutory) making up the local development framework.
LDF	Local Development Framework – A folder of all the documents that comprise the Local Development Plan.
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement – sets out how, when and where the Council will consult with local and statutory stakeholders in the process of planning for the local authority.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document – gives guidance on specific policy topic areas or detailed guidance on the development of specific sites.