



Statement of Community Involvement

How to have
your say on
planning issues

Draft - January 2005

(This document is published for consultation and may be revised in the light of comments received.)

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Introduction

What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

- ◆ The statement of community involvement is being prepared as part of the new Local Development Framework. The aim is to ensure early community involvement in the planning process. It is a document setting out the Councils commitment to involving the community in the preparation of documents for inclusion in the Local Development Framework.
- ◆ The Statement of Community Involvement will set out how and when the Council intends to involve the community, (that is: businesses; residents; land owners; parish councils; statutory agencies and interest groups) and what form that involvement will take. Local ownership gained through early participation should lend support to the policies, which will shape the form and distribution of future development, giving a degree of credence and legitimacy to the policies and to development proposals which will arise from them.

What is a Local Development Framework?

- ◆ The Local Development Framework is one of the key elements of the new system planning system which came into force in September 2004.
- ◆ The Local Development Framework, is the name of a set of documents which will provide the planning policy framework for promoting and controlling development in the District over the next 15 years. This Statement of Community Involvement forms an integral part of the LDF and sets the consultation framework for the preparation, monitoring and review of all the documents to be included within it.

The principle documents referred to (and their abbreviations) are as follows:

- ◆ SCI Statement of Community Involvement
- ◆ LDF Local Development Framework
- ◆ LDD Local Development Documents

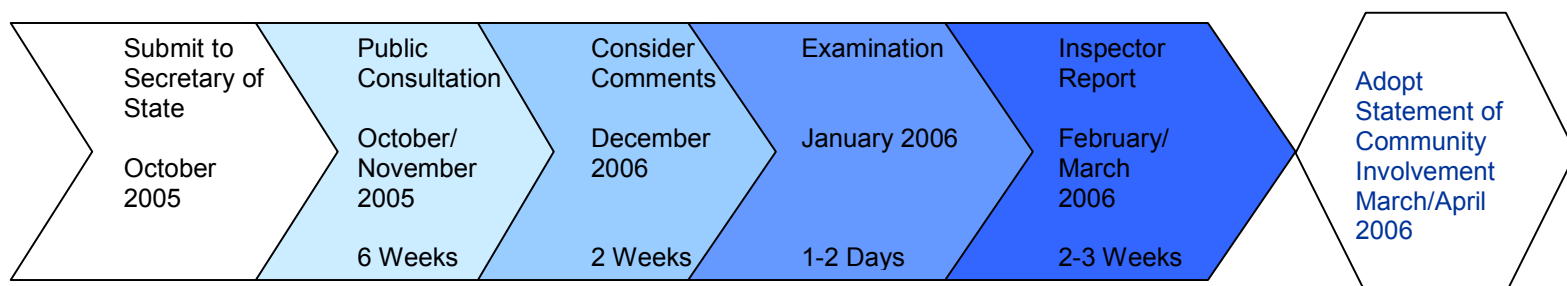
- ◆ DPD Development Plan Documents
- ◆ LDS Local Development Scheme

Format for this SCI

◆ The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how, when & who the council will seek to involve in both of its planning functions. This document therefore covers both the preparation of documents which form the LDF and the planning application process. The document is in 3 parts. The first part covers the general principles of the SCI. The second part considers the ways in which the community will be involved in the preparation of planning policy through the LDF process. The third part summarises how the community can be involved in the consideration of planning applications through the councils development control function.

Timetable for the preparation of this SCI

◆ It is hoped that the SCI will be the first document in the LDF to be adopted. This draft is the pre-submission consultation document. Comments received on this document will be used to inform the preparation of a public consultation draft, before a final version of the SCI will be prepared for submission to the Secretary of State and made available for public comment in October and November 2005. Examination of the SCI would then be expected in January 2006, with adoption following receipt of the Inspectors binding report in March 2006.



Reviewing the SCI

◆The Council will monitor the effectiveness of the SCI in meeting the objective of engaging with the community on planning matters. In particular the consultation methods and the lists of specific consultees and interested parties will be assessed at key points in the process. Where it becomes evident that the SCI is failing to meet its objectives, or where significant changes are required, the Council will consider reviewing the SCI. Any review of this document will necessitate following the same statutory process of public involvement, submission to the Secretary of State, examination and adoption. A review of the document is therefore unlikely to take place prior to the completion and adoption of the DPDs which are considered essential to form the LDF. That is: the Core Principles of Development and Location Strategy; the Housing and Economic Development Policy Document; and the Generic Development Control Policy Document.

Core Principles

The purpose of this document is to set out standards and arrangements on how we consult and how we report back to those engaged in the process. Through cost effective external communications we will seek to:

- ◆ **Raise awareness locally of planning issues, particularly the development of policies in the Local Development Framework**
- ◆ **Apply good consultation practice and partnership working.**
- ◆ **Ensure that all the people who want or need information or to be involved can be, whatever their circumstances.**
- ◆ **Open channels for two way dialogue with the community**
- ◆ **Respond actively to regional and national policy.**
- ◆ **Maximise the potential of electronic communications**

Purpose of Consultation

The purpose of consultation is to involve a wide range of interested parties and individuals in decision-making and policy formulation by creating a 'dialogue' and sharing information. By doing so the council can:

- ◆ **Involve others and gain commitment**
- ◆ **Identify opportunities, ideas and alternative solutions**
- ◆ **Test options and ideas**

The benefits of community involvement in the planning process:

Community involvement is a two way process which can bring benefits to both the Council and to the community by:

- ◆ giving greater public ownership to local development documents and support for development proposals
- ◆ achieving development that is appropriate to and meets future needs of communities
- ◆ providing the opportunity to influence the decision making process
- ◆ contributing to the well being of the community
- ◆ suggesting new ways and ideas for achieving objectives
- ◆ improving community cohesion and sense of inclusion
- ◆ ensuring a transparent and open planning process

How we consult and communicate

◆ Consultation on the old style Local Plan was quite extensive, many of the standard consultation and community involvement techniques now used by councils were developed for Local Plan consultation purposes. However the Council recognises that there is scope to improve how we listen to and communicate with stakeholders.

◆ There are a number of barriers to effective consultation which need to be overcome. It is important to identify these barriers and adopt a strategy to ensure that all sectors of the community are involved in the process. This SCI provides the means to achieve a systematic approach to consultation and provides a commitment to valuing the involvement of participants within the process.

◆ We will endeavour to use appropriate consultation methods which are fit for their purpose according to need and preferred styles. The table at appendix 1 of this document sets out the forms of community engagement which will be used for each document in the LDF and at what stage in their preparation. We will continue to evaluate the methods that work and those that do not. Consultation mechanisms will include:

◆ **Newspaper articles, press releases, advertisements, radio announcements and the councils newsletter**

◆ **Seminar/forum for invitees from press, local groups, parish councils, tenants compacts etc**

◆ **Mobile Public exhibitions and / or public workshops**

◆ **Using existing networks and community groups and parish councils**

◆ **Use of Local Area Assemblies and (YELLS once established)**

◆ **Proactive use of the Web site with easy links to other related sites**

◆ **Working in conjunction with the Community Strategy partners**

Ensuring Community Representation

It is important to try and achieve consultation that is representative of the community, the involvement of under represented groups is therefore particularly important. We will make all reasonable efforts to make everything we do equally accessible to everyone, within acceptable cost constraints. Hard to reach groups in the district are identified as:

- ◆ **young people**
- ◆ **people from ethnic minority groups**
- ◆ **people with disabilities**
- ◆ **the elderly**
- ◆ **rural communities**
- ◆ **gypsies/travellers**
- ◆ **the homeless**

The Role of Elected Members

◆ One of the key purposes of the planning system is to control development in the public interest. In performing this role, planning necessarily affects land and property interests, particularly the financial value of landholdings and the quality of their settings. It is important, therefore, that planning authorities make planning decisions affecting these interests openly, impartially, with sound judgement and for justifiable reasons.

◆ Those affected by a planning decision or other planning proposal will often seek to influence it through an approach to their elected District Councillor or to a Councillor on the relevant decision making committee. This lobbying is a normal and perfectly proper part of the political process. However, Members must restrict themselves to giving procedural advice, including suggesting to those who are lobbying that they should speak or write to the relevant officer, in order that their opinions can be included in the officer's report to the committee. Councillors are guided by Codes of Conduct

How planning links with the Community Strategy process

◆ The Government clearly identifies Local Development Documents as one of the key mechanisms for delivering Community Strategy objectives. Many of the elements of the Community Strategy will have spatial aspects that can be addressed through the land use planning system. South Kesteven's Community Strategy is due to be reviewed in 2005. There is therefore an opportunity to link this review with the preparation of the LDF.

How will the SCI link with the Council's Consultation Strategy?

◆ The Council has developed a corporate Consultation Strategy to guide community involvement in decision making across the Council's activities. This Statement of Community Involvement has been developed to complement and build upon the principles set out in the corporate strategy. It provides an overview of the Council's general approach to consultation followed by more detailed standards for community engagement for all Local Development Documents and planning applications (through the Development Control function). Once approved, the Council will need to comply with the requirements set out within this document for engaging the community.

Available Resources for Consultation

◆ The Council has set a budget for preparing the LDF. This budget is finite, therefore community engagement must be undertaken within the restrictions set by the budget. This makes provision for the preparation of documents and consultation materials as well as funding of specific consultation periods. Additional sources of funding are not likely to become available. It is, therefore, important that community involvement is undertaken in an efficient and effective manner, and that the consultation techniques used are the most appropriate and cost effective.

◆ Wherever possible consultation on different DPDs will be undertaken in tandem. In addition we will investigate the opportunity to coincide with consultation on the review of the Community Strategy. Existing forums and liaison groups will also be utilised wherever possible and consultation on specific issues will be targeted at specific groups and individuals known or thought to be interested in that matter.

Part One: Planning Policy

1.1 Statutory Minimum Consultation Requirements

◆ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004¹ set out the minimum statutory requirements for consultation on Local Development Documents. These requirements are set out in Regulations 25 and 26, and can be summarised as follows:

Regulation 25

◆ Before complying with Regulation 26 (see below) the council must undertake pre-submission consultation with

- each of the **specific consultation bodies** listed at 2 in the regulations (and shown on page 90 of PPS12²) where the Council considers the subject of the LDD affects that body; and
- any of the **general consultation bodies** (listed on page 91 of PPS12) which the Council thinks are appropriate for that particular document.

Regulation 26

◆ Before preparing and submitting a Development Plan Document to the Secretary of State the Council must:

- make copies of all the relevant documents available at their principal office, other places in the authority considered appropriate and on their web site
- all appropriate documents are sent to the appropriate consultees (as referred to in Regulation 25), and
- give notice by local advertisement of the availability of the documents, where and when they can be inspected.

◆ The regulations also set out that the statutory consultation period at pre-submission and submission stages should be 6 weeks.

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 available from www.odpm.gov.uk

² PPS 12 (Planning Policy Statement 12 Local Development Frameworks) available from www.odpm.gov.uk

- ◆ South Kesteven District Council is committed to meeting these minimum requirements and demonstrates in this SCI the additional measures that will be employed for different parts of the planning process to ensure greater community involvement.

1.2 Access to information

Information relating to the drafting of Local Development Documents will be made widely available through a variety of methods:

- ◆ **Information will be made available in both paper and electronic formats.**
- ◆ **Copies of all documents will be made available to view at local and mobile libraries and the Council's main and area offices.**
- ◆ **Document enhancement for the visually impaired or translation from English is available from request.**
- ◆ **The council's web site will offer a single point of call for information dissemination and an e-mail address will offer a single point of contact.** <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/>, email; planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk

1.3 The Role of Planning Aid

- ◆ East Midlands Planning Aid is a voluntary service linked to the Royal Town Planning Institute, offering free, independent and professional advice on town planning matters to community groups and individuals who cannot afford to employ a planning consultant. Planning Aid is a vital part of the planning system. It enables local communities, particularly those with limited resources, to participate effectively in planning matters.
- ◆ Every effort will be made to seek to ensure that members of the community are aware of the advice and support that may be available from this source.
- ◆ Further information about Planning Aid is available from the District Council or via the RTPi web site at : <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice/pa-paid.html>

1.4 Involving the Whole Community

◆ For the purposes of forward planning, it is important that a broad range of groups are targeted for consultation. The key groups are listed below:

- General public
- District Councillors
- Regional Assembly
- Neighbouring councils and the County Council
- Parish Councils
- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- Businesses
- Developers/Agents
- Statutory bodies and groups
- Interested parties and local groups
- The Media

Involvement of Councillors

District Council

◆ The Council has established a Local Plan Advisory Group (LPAG) based upon its Development and Environment Scrutiny Committee. This group is politically balanced and has no decision making powers, reporting directly to the Council's Cabinet. The LPAG will meet periodically as and when the different stages of plan preparation are reached, ensuring that Members are fully involved in the policy preparation process.

Parish Council

◆ Parish Councilors will also be involved in the process. Parish Councils are one of the specific consultation bodies referred to in the minimum requirements set out in Regulation 25. In addition some parish councils have or are preparing parish plans which may be helpful in informing the LDF process. Parish Councils are one of the Council's key stakeholders and as such play an important part in Local Area Assemblies, therefore direct contact with parish councils will be maintained throughout the plan preparation process.

South Kesteven Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

◆ The South Kesteven LSP comprises members of local businesses, colleges, the District and County Council's, the Health Service, the police and a local housing association. The LSP is responsible for preparing and reviewing the Community Strategy. The objectives of the LSP as defined by the Community Strategy is to "work together to improve the quality of life in South Kesteven by ensuring an environment in which people are healthy and feel safe, with leisure, learning and quality employment opportunities for all". As the LDF will be a key vehicle for delivering these objectives, the LSP will need to be a key partner in the preparation of LDF documents.

Involvement of the public, businesses and local and national interest groups

Development Plan Document consultees

◆ A list of DPD Consultees is at the end of this section of the SCI that will be consulted throughout the plan making process. This list is compiled from those required to meet the minimum requirements in Regulations 25 and 26 (referred to above).

Interested parties

◆ Periods of public consultation and community involvements will be undertaken at key points within the process. A detailed timetable, identifying key milestones in the preparation of the LDF is set out in a separate document called the Local Development Scheme (LDS). This is available for inspection at www.southkesteven.gov.uk and from the Council's offices. These stages will be widely publicised and involvement encouraged. All comments and suggestions made through these consultation periods will be considered as part of the policy formulation process.

◆ Wherever possible existing interest or stakeholder groups and forums will be used to target consultation and seek to avoid consultation overload.

◆ A database of interested parties has been established and will be maintained throughout the LDF process. This database will be used to periodically update on progress and invite

involvement in the LDD process. Anyone who becomes involved in the LDF process through public consultation periods will have his or her contact details added to this database.

◆ To add your details to this database please contact the Planning Policy team on: 01476 406469 or email: planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk

Local Area Assemblies (LAAs)

◆ The Council has established six Local Area Assemblies covering the four towns and the northern and southern rural parishes. The primary purpose of the LAAs is to provide a forum for discussion between the three tiers of local government (County Council, District Council and Parish Councils) and as a place where local residents can have their say. The LAAs were established in the summer of 2004 with the first meetings being held in August and September that year. It is intended that the LAAs will meet twice yearly and over time will develop their own agendas and membership. The LAAs are seen as an important vehicle for community involvement in the LDF process.

Young People

◆ Young people have been identified by the council as a hard to reach group and ways of engaging young people are being explored. Involvement with schools and youth groups will be promoted at key consultation stages.

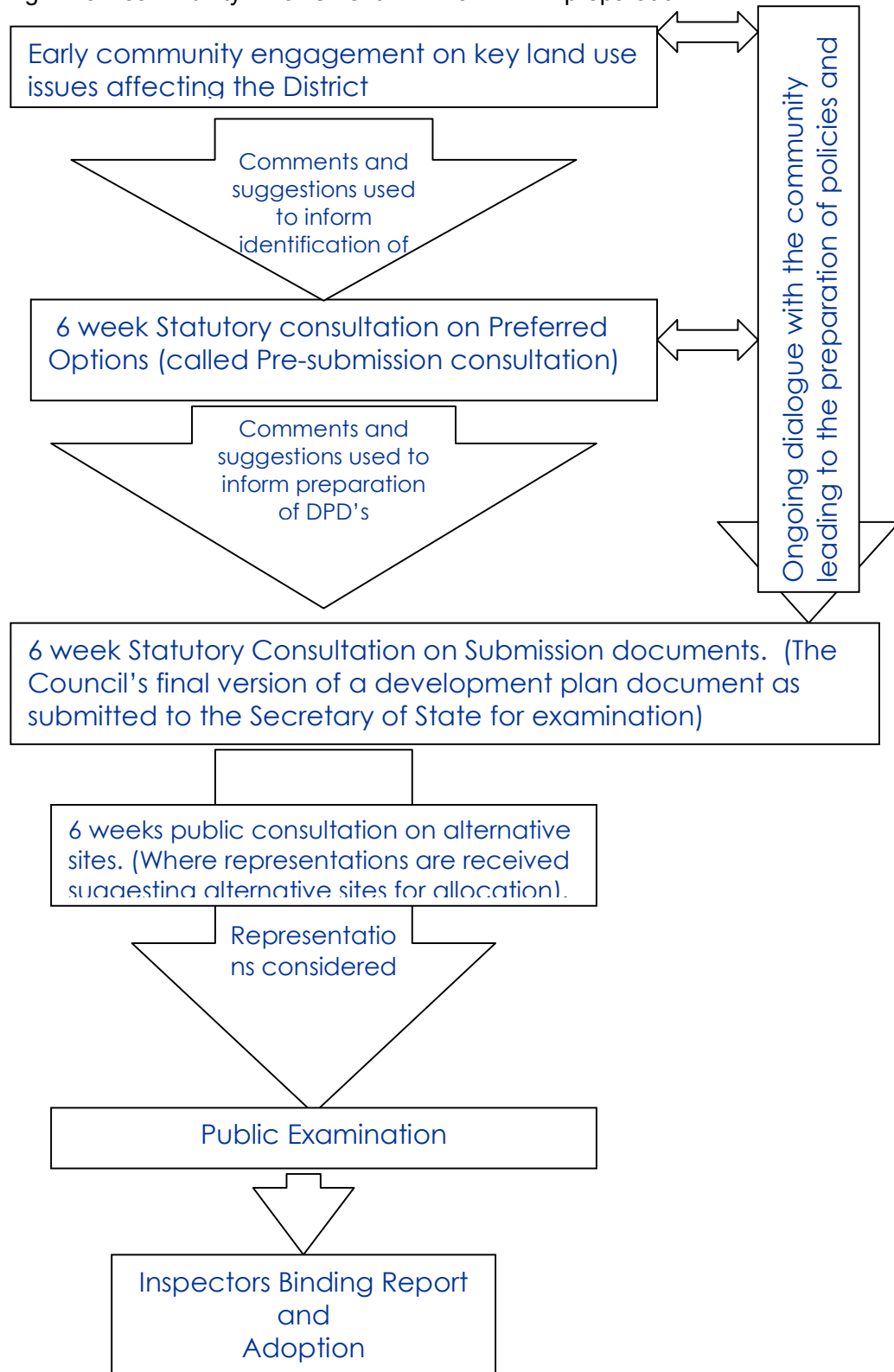
◆ The Council intends to set up Youth Engagement and Local Liaison (YELL) meetings to involve youth groups and individuals in Council projects and decision-making. These groups have not yet been established, however when they are they will be used as a means of engaging with young people in the LDF process.

1. 5 Reporting Back

◆ Whilst it is hoped that an ongoing dialogue will be established during the early stages in preparation of the Development Plan Documents, two key statutory consultation stages (and a third where representations suggesting sites for allocation have been made) are required by the regulations. Anyone who makes a comment on the DPDs will be included on our database of interested parties and will automatically be kept informed at all subsequent stages of the process. The Council is committed to reporting back to those making comments, showing how and where comments have influenced the documents preparation. The diagram below (fig 1) indicates how the comments received will impact upon the different stages in the preparation process.

◆ The process assumes that the greatest level of community involvement will occur in the early stages of the process. At submission stage it is expected that involvement will be focussed on specific representations which have not been resolved in the early stages, and on the soundness of the document in respect of conformity and statutory requirements. These matters would then be considered by an independent inspector at an examination. This stage provides the opportunity for those with outstanding or unresolved issues to have them considered by a Planning Inspector. However, it is expected that the majority of such matters will have been considered in detail and resolved before the DPD reaches the submission and examination stage.

Fig 1 How community Involvement will inform DPD preparation



1.6 Communication Techniques

Newsletters

- ◆ To ensure that the whole community is informed at key stages of Plan preparation, we will distribute in paper form (either as a leaflets or a newsletter) key elements of the consultation at the key milestone stages. The Council's district newspaper "District Line" will be used as the main method for wider communications across the district.

Public Exhibitions

- ◆ A series of exhibitions will be held across the District at key consultation stages. Where possible we will try to utilise pre-arranged events e.g. local shows or fun days. Exhibitions will display information on the policies and proposals in the Plan and be staffed by planning officers involved in Plan production. People will be free to submit written comments at the exhibitions or use one of the other methods outlined in this document at some other time during the formal consultation period.
- ◆ The Council also has a mobile exhibition unit, which will be placed in strategic locations around the district to provide information and to give people an opportunity to submit their comments, suggestions and ideas.

Web Site / e-mail

- ◆ Interaction with the public through electronic methods will be encouraged and all documentation relating to the LDF will be made available on the Council's Web site. The Council is committed to keeping the information on the web site relevant and up-to-date. However, it is important to note that not all local residents have access to IT, especially the elderly and therefore we will continue to produce paper versions concurrently for the foreseeable future.
- ◆ The website is an efficient tool, allowing information to be accessed quickly and in detail. It promotes self-service and is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The council's web site address is <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/>.

◆ All correspondence and publications will include the Council's web site. Whilst the telephone remains the key method of contact, the website is becoming a primary reference and communication channel. Members of the team can be contacted via e-mail at <mailto:planningpolicy@southkesteven.gov.uk>

◆ People who have asked to be kept informed of the LDF process and are on our database have the option to be informed by email. Where email is used direct links to the council's web site will be given and electronic documents will be provided.

Press and Public Relations

◆ The local press is an important vehicle for communicating with people. It is important that the press is given as much information about the new process as possible in order that they understand what is being communicated and why. The LDF team will issue regular press releases to inform the community of various key consultation dates and to report on responses received. Once the statutory process begins there will also be a requirement placed upon the Council to issue formal notices in the press at certain times during the process.

Public consultation events

◆ The Council will ensure that our main stakeholders are consulted, primarily through existing stakeholder groups and forums but also through direct contact.

◆ Part of the consultation process will include events held at accessible venues across the District which will allow members of the public to have direct contact with Officers responsible for drafting the Local Development documents.

Internal Communications

◆ The Council will established an internal cross-cutting consultative panel to ensure that the policies and proposals included within the LDF meet the Councils corporate objectives and do not conflict with other strategies promoted by the Council.

◆ In addition there is ongoing liaison between Officers in planning policy and development control to establish the effectiveness of existing planning policies and current gaps in policy coverage. Regular consultations will be undertaken with development control officers throughout the plan preparation process.

APPENDICIES

Broad Consultation Framework

Timescale	Documents	Action to be taken	Distribution
Winter 2005	Draft Statement of Community Involvement	Seek opinions of key stakeholders on Draft Statement of Community Involvement & invite them to get involved	Internal consultees; key stakeholders, LAA's; LSP.
Spring 2005	<div>Draft Statement of Community Involvement</div> <hr/> <div>Key Issues & Options Paper</div>	Seek communities views on Draft SCI & on Key Issues and Options Paper & explain how they can be involved	Libraries, Council Offices; Specific consultation bodies; Council's newspaper- District Line; Press adverts & articles
Autumn/ Winter 2005	Statement of Community Involvement Final Version	Report back on consultation & submit to Secretary of State for approval	Libraries, Council Offices; Specific consultation bodies; Council's newspaper - District Line; mail out to interested parties on database. Mobile exhibitions & seminars/forums

Spring 2006	Statement of Community Involvement – Adopted Version	Report back on inspectors decision & proposals for adoption	As above
Summer/ Autumn 2006	Final version of Development Plan Documents	Report back on consultation & submit document to Secretary of State. (6 week public consultation required)	As above
Spring 2007	Examination of Development Plan Documents	-----	-----
Summer 2007	Publish Adopted Version of Local Development Framework	Report back on Inspectors decisions and proposals for adoption.	Libraries, Council Offices; Specific consultation bodies; Council's newspaper - District Line; mail out to interested parties on database. Mobile exhibitions & seminars/forums

STATUTORY CONSULTEES FOR DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS

Anglian Water Ltd

British Gas

British Telecom (or other electronic communications)

Cambridgeshire County Council

Countryside Agency

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
(DEFRA)

East Midlands Assembly

East Midlands Development Agency

East Midlands Electricity (or independent suppliers)

East Northamptonshire District Council

English Heritage

English Nature

Environment Agency

Government Office for the East Midland (GOEM)

Highways Agency

Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for England

Leicestershire County Council

Lincolnshire County Council

Melton Borough Council

Newark & Sherwood District Council

North Kesteven District Council

Northamptonshire County Council

Nottinghamshire County Council
Peterborough City Council
Rutland County Council
Severn Trent Water Ltd
South Holland District Council
Strategic Health Authority
Strategic Rail Authority
Transco
Welland Partnership
Lincolnshire Enterprise

Part Two: Development Control

- ◆ Community involvement involves notifying and engaging both the wider community and the individual. For both of these the process of dealing with planning applications can be split up according to the stage of the process.
- ◆ Government advice is to set out clearly defined codes of practice for neighbour publicity. However, no system for publicising planning applications can be foolproof, however extensive. There needs to be a balance between consideration of cost, speed of decision making and providing a reasonable opportunity for public comment. The current system does balance these conflicting issues.
- ◆ Consultation does not simply involve the public. We also consult the statutory consultees. A list is attached at the end of the report listing all those bodies which may need to be consulted on a planning application (See Appendix). Not all bodies are consulted on each application. Who to consult will vary with the nature of the proposal and location. Statutory consultees have 21 days in which to respond. In many instances the responses show a requirement for the case officer to contact the applicant for more information or for amendments.

2.1 How do we involve the community when we first receive a planning application?

Wider Community

- ◆ A weekly list of applications received by the department is sent, each week to the Grantham Journal and the Stamford Mercury. Some applications are publicised in the local newspaper, at the editor's discretion. Copies of the weekly list are also sent to the area offices at Stamford, Bourne and Market Deeping. Councillors receive these lists via email. Interest groups who request these weekly lists also receive these free of charge. All Parish Councils receive copies of recent applications for their meetings. The weekly list will be available on the Council website <http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/>

◆ We also advertise in the press, development that is likely to create wider concern. The following list indicates the likely types of development:

- Those affecting nearby property by causing noise, smell, vibration, dust or other nuisance.
- Attracting crowds, traffic and noise into a generally quiet area;
- Causing activity and noise during unsociable hours;
- Introducing significant change, for example, particularly tall buildings;
- Resulting in serious reduction or loss of light or privacy beyond adjacent properties;
- Those affecting the setting or an ancient monument or archaeological site;
- Proposals affecting trees subject to tree preservation orders.

◆ Site Notices are erected.

◆ We also advertise in the press all Listed Building applications and Conservation Area consent applications. In addition a site notice is erected.

Individual Consultation:

◆ Occupiers of premises most likely to be affected by a proposal are notified individually by letter that an application has been received and are invited to inspect the application and make any written observations within 21 days. If a neighbour is disabled or elderly and unable to get to the Council Offices we can provide them with a free copy of the plans. Copies of plans are available to others at a charge.

◆ The extent of neighbour notification is at the discretion of the case officer. In practice, this means properties affected by a proposal and / or bordering an application site will receive individual notification of that application. Clearly, within the rural area isolated proposals may not have neighbouring properties. In such cases, it is the case officer's judgements how far the neighbour notification should apply.

◆ Listed Building/Conservation Area Application: In addition to a site notice and press notice individual neighbour letters will be sent.

2.2 How do we involve the community during the processing of a planning application?

◆ A considerable amount of negotiation takes place on a large number of applications, particularly the major ones. This is a very important and a crucial part of the development control process, steering development towards a more acceptable form and therefore acting in a positive manner. This dialogue between planning officers, developers and their professional advisors and the local community is something which the Government and this Council actively encourages.

◆ In a number of cases, the proposal will generate much public interest and provide many letters of objection. Amendments to applications are normally made to seek a better quality of development, which may indeed overcome objectors' concerns.

◆ Re-notification of neighbours on minor amendments significantly delays consideration of an application. In order to avoid unnecessary delay, only amendments that constitute a major change that affects individual property occupiers and interests (such as re-siting of roads in residential developments or altering the siting of extensions or building closer to neighbouring properties) will be re-notified. Essentially, the question of re-notification is at the discretion of the case officer within the aforementioned parameters. However, bearing in mind the pressure to determine applications speedily, a reduced time for a response to a re-notification is set (14 days). Similarly, amendments may well be negotiated on listed building applications, or applications within conservation areas. Significant amendments are re-advertised. No re-advertisement would normally take place on minor amendments. No hard and fast rules are possible and any re-notification is therefore at the case officer's discretion within the above framework.

Wider Community

- ◆ For significant alterations to plans the Parish Council and the relevant statutory consultees will be re-consulted.

Individual Consultation

- ◆ For significant alterations to plans the neighbours who wrote in will be re-consulted.

2.3 How do we involve the Community when the application goes to Committee?

Wider Community

- ◆ There is the right for objectors, supporters, the Parish or Town Council and the applicant to speak at Committee. The committee agenda is available to view on the Council's website. It is published one week prior to the Committee meeting. Applicants and any person or parish council who have made representations on an application to be heard by committee will be notified by letter. (A copy of the public speaking leaflet is attached in the Appendix).

2.4 How do we involve the community after a decision is taken on a planning application?

Wider Community

- ◆ A letter is sent to any Parish or Town Council who wrote in, advising them of the decision on the planning application (whether or not it was determined by officers under delegated powers or at Committee). The decision, if taken at Committee, is also publicised in the committee minutes on the Council's website. Any local interest groups who wrote in are also advised by letter of the decision.

Individual Notification

- ◆ Again all neighbours who wrote in are advised in writing of the decision on a planning application.

2.5 How do we involve the community if an appeal is received on a planning application?

- ◆ Only applicants have a right of appeal; there is no third party rights to appeal a decision.

Wider Community

- ◆ When an appeal is received the Parish or Town Council and local interest groups are notified in writing of the appeal and how to make their views known (either in writing, if a written representations appeal or in person at an informal hearing or public inquiry). If they had already made their views known to us their letter is copied and sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

Individual Notification:

- ◆ All those we originally wrote to or who wrote to us will be notified in writing of the appeal and how to make their views known. If they had already written to us their letter will be copied and sent to the Planning Inspectorate.
- ◆ For public inquiries we also erect a site notice and publicise in the press the date/time and location of the inquiry.

2.6 How do we involve the Community on prior approval applications?

- ◆ These are treated differently. In essence these types of proposal have permitted development for the principle. There are relatively minor issues which Councils can consider (typically the siting and appearance). These include some types of mast and agricultural buildings. There is a fixed 28-day timescale to determine them, otherwise they are approved. In view of this principle of development being permitted, and the very limited timescale, the publicity is via the weekly list. There are very few of these.

2.7 Enforcement

◆ Most enforcement cases arise following a referral from a member of the public. All referrals are treated confidentially, where requested. There is no consultation with the public on enforcement cases. Cases are often sensitive with the complainant keen to retain anonymity. Often cases are resolved by the submission of a planning application which is then publicised in the normal way.

2.8 How do we involve the community in proposals to lop, top or fell protected trees (i.e. trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area)?

◆ Proposals for works to trees in Conservation Areas will be determined within 6 weeks from the date of receipt and if consent is not appropriate, the Local Planning Authority will consider placing a Tree Preservation Order on the tree(s). Applications for works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order will be determined within 8 weeks or 2 months from the date of receipt.

◆ With respect to applications for works to trees in Conservation Areas, the consultation period will be 6 weeks, and in the case of applications for works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders, delegated authority is available for officers to determine the application except where representations are received which are contrary to the officer recommendation. In such cases, the application will be considered by the Development Control Services.

Wider Community

◆ District Councillors and Parish Councils will be informed if major tree surgery is to be undertaken.

Individuals

◆ Affected neighbours will be notified directly of applications for works to protected trees.

◆ Following a decision (which may be delegated), a copy of the decision notice will be sent to the applicant. Letters will

also be sent to all neighbours/parish councils who made a representation on the application informing them of the decision.

2.9 How we will involve the community in Hedgerow Removal Applications

◆ All applications for works to remove hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, will be determined within 6 weeks of receipt of a removal notice. Consultation letters will be sent out to all relevant statutory bodies (i.e. English Nature, Community Archaeologist and Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust) in addition to the Parish Council. All comments received will be taken into account in making a decision as to whether or not the removal should be granted.

How else do we involve the community?

Wider Community

◆ If requested and appropriate, officers will attend public meetings or residents association meetings to explain planning proposals.

◆ Parish Councils: If requested, and where appropriate, officers may attend Parish Council meetings and explain particular planning applications. Parishes receive full details of all relevant planning applications for their Parish Council meeting.

◆ Councillors are also involved in the consultation process. Councillors receive via email copies of the weekly list. Members can be provided with copies of individual applications. Members are aware of the need to keep the requests for copies to a reasonable level. Members have the right to request that any application be determined by the full committee.

APPENDCIES

Consultees for Planning Applications

Adjacent District Councils
Anglian Water Services Ltd
British Waterways
Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment
Community Archaeologist
Council for the Protection of Rural England
Countryside Agency
County Council Education Department
County Council Highways Department
County Council Waste Disposal Department
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Departments of the District Council
English Heritage
English Nature
Environment Agency
Forestry Commission
Georgian Group
Grantham Civic Society
Health & Safety Executive
HM Inspector of Pollution
Highways Agency
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission

Lincolnshire County Council
Lincolnshire Wildlife Trust
Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries & Food
National Trust
Network Rail
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
Parish Councils
Police Architectural Liaison Officer
Ramblers Association (Footpaths)
Rights of Way Officer
Severn Trent Water Ltd
Society for the Preservation of Ancient Buildings
Sport England
Stamford Civic Society
Town Centre Management Partnerships
Town Councils
Transco
The Theatres Trust
Victorian Society

Those consulted on any one application will vary depending on the location and nature of the planning application,

Public Speaking at Committee on Planning Applications

This Appendix explains how you can speak directly to councillors at Planning Committee meetings. It explains the Council's public participation policy at meetings and answers some questions you may have about the procedures, and what to expect at the meeting itself. It is based on simple rules formulated by the Council to make the system as fair and easy to operate as possible. This advice applies equally to applicants, their agents, supporters, objectors and to local council representatives.

Not all planning applications are considered by the full Development Control Committee. The Development Control Services Manager has delegated authority to determine certain applications without the need to present the application to the full Committee. It is not possible to speak in favour or against applications that are dealt with under these delegated powers.

When does the committee meet and how can I find out about it?

The Development Control Committee is held on Tuesdays, normally at three weekly intervals, in the Council Chamber at the Council Offices in Grantham and starts at 2pm. The agenda is published the week before the meeting, and can be obtained from the Chief Executive's Department of the Council. It is also available on the Council's website (<http://www.southkesteven.gov.uk/>) under 'Councillors & Committees'. In it is a detailed report of each application due to be presented to the Committee.

Applicants and any person or parish council who have made representations on an application to be heard by committee will be notified by letter.

What do I do if I wish to speak at Committee?

You must notify the Committee Administrator (details on the front page of the agenda), or Development Control Services, at least 24 hours prior to the meeting (usually 2pm on the previous Monday). Failure to meet this deadline will exclude you from speaking.

If I have made representations do I have to speak?

No. Written representations that have been received within the specified time period will be summarised and put into the committee report. It is entirely at your own discretion whether you ask to speak at the Committee.

Who is permitted to speak to the Committee?

The Planning Officer will give a short presentation to the Committee outlining the details of the proposal. After this the following individuals/organisations are permitted to address the Committee in the following order:

- ◆ A representative of the Town or Parish Council
- ◆ Objectors to the application
- ◆ Supporters of the proposal
- ◆ The applicant or agent for the proposal

How long can I speak for?

Each person is only allowed to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes. Only one speaker for the applicant and the Town/Parish Council is permitted to speak. If there are several supporters or objectors to an application then they are expected to appoint a representative(s) to present a joint case. The Chairman ensures equity of opportunity between the various parties.

Who can ask questions?

Questions can only be asked by Committee Members and not by speakers. It would be beneficial for you to seek answers to your questions before the meeting and to state your case on the information given to you. You must not interrupt other speakers or the Committee debate. For information, all public proceedings in the Council Chamber are recorded.

What issues can I refer to?

When addressing the committee you must ensure that you stick to 'material planning considerations'. A guidance note entitled "*Making Comments on Planning Applications*", explaining what can and cannot be taken into account when considering development proposals, is available from Land Use Planning Services. The following list contains examples of the type of considerations that will and will not be taken into account:

Material:

- ◆ Conformity with the development plan
- ◆ Highway safety issues
- ◆ Interference with residential amenities
- ◆ Design, appearance and layout
- ◆ Previous planning decisions

- ◆ Conservation of historic buildings and trees

Not Material:

- ◆ Matters covered by other laws or covenants
- ◆ Loss of view
- ◆ Effect upon the value of your property
- ◆ Personal dislike of the developer and his motives
- ◆ Suspected future development

If you attend the meeting and intend to speak please ensure that it relates to that item only. If you do deviate from the proposal under consideration the Chairman may stop you from continuing with your presentation.

Once an application has been heard by the Committee, and for example deferred for a site visit, no further public speaking will be permitted.

You must take particular care not to make derogatory or defamatory remarks about other people or organisations. Any such comments may result in speakers being open to legal action.