

## Stafford Borough Local Development Framework

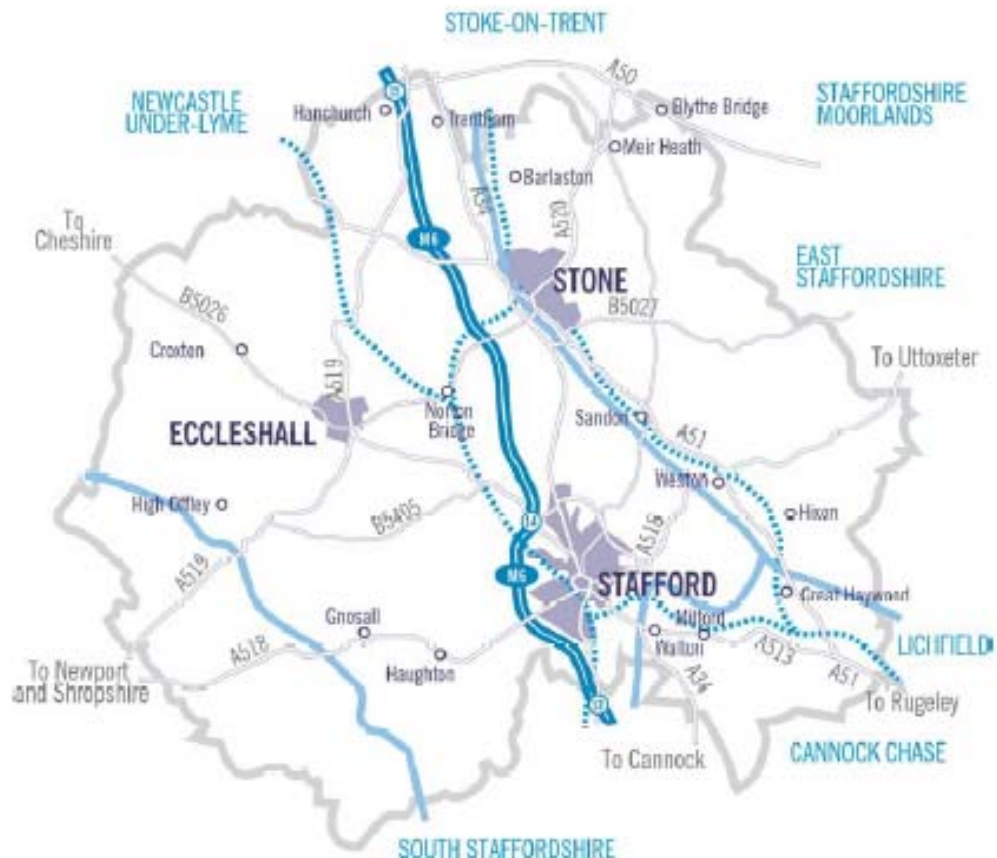
# PLANNING for our FUTURE

### Statement of Community Involvement (Submission Document)



Stafford  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

# This 'Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI) is relevant to everyone living, working or visiting Stafford Borough...



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# Stafford Borough Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

## Contents

| Section Number | Section   | Page Number |
|----------------|---|-------------|
|                | <b><i>What does the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) do?</i></b>                |             |
| 1              | What does the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) do?                              | 1           |
| 2              | Vision of Statement of Community Involvement  | 2           |
| 3              | What standards does the SCI have to meet?   | 2           |
| 4              | Do all Council planning policies and planning applications have to comply with the SCI? | 2           |
| 5              | How will the SCI actually be tested?  | 3           |
|                | <b><i>Where does it fit within the Council?</i></b>                                     |             |
| 6              | Stafford Borough Community Plan   | 4           |
| 7              | Links between the Community and Council services  | 4           |
|                | <b><i>Who do we consult with?</i></b>   |             |
| 8              | Who do we consult with...?  | 6           |
| 9              | Role of Council Members   | 7           |
| 10             | Understanding Stafford Borough's community  | 7           |
| 11             | Engaging Stafford Borough's community...  | 8           |
| 12             | Equality and opportunity in LDF participation and planning representations              | 11          |
|                | <b><i>When to get involved!</i></b>   |             |
| 13             | How to get involved...!   | 12          |
| 14             | Continuous community involvement  | 14          |
| 15             | Methods and stages of consultation  | 17          |
|                | <b><i>Reference Guides to LDF &amp; SCI</i></b>   |             |
| 16             | Further information   | 18          |
| 17             | Glossary  | 20          |
| 18             | Local Development Framework (LDF) diagram   | 21          |

# Appendices

## Appendices

| Appendix | Title   | Page |
|----------|---|------|
|          | <b>Compliance and Equality</b>                                      |      |
| 1        | Tests of soundness and summary of relevant legal framework          | A1   |
| 2        | Proformas for Statement of Compliance with SCI                      | A4   |
| 3        | Stafford Borough Council equality policies                          | A7   |
|          | <b>Stafford Borough Council General Consultation</b>                |      |
| 4        | Resource audit of consultation techniques                           | A10  |
| 5        | Existing Stafford Borough Council community consultation mechanisms | A18  |
| 6        | Stafford Borough Council publications                               | A19  |
|          | <b>Stafford Borough Planning Services Consultation</b>              |      |
| 7        | Standard consultee list for development control consultations       | A20  |
| 8        | Consultee list for development plan consultations                   | A22  |
| 9        | Definition of Major Planning Applications                           | A25  |
| 10       | Planning Applications and Public Participation                      | A28  |

# Stafford Borough Statement of Community Involvement

## 1.0 What does the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) do?

- 1.1. This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out Stafford Borough Council's **commitment to engaging with the local community of Stafford Borough in preparing the new development plan** for the future, and in publicising and inviting comments on planning applications. It forms part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.2. This document **sets out the standards** that Stafford Borough Council intends to achieve in relation to involving the community in decision-making.
- 1.3. This **Statement of Community Involvement is not a timetable of when each plan-making stage will take place**, nor is it intended to be. The timetable of plan-making is set out in a sister document, the Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 1.4. **It also aims to give clarity and certainty to the general public and key stakeholders in terms of how to get involved at each stage of the plan-making process** and in determining planning applications (in a similar way to that of a Customer Charter).
- 1.5. This SCI provides detail on how the Council intends to approach community engagement in relation to different types of planning policy documents prepared by the Council (Local Development Documents) and at different stages of their preparation. **It also sets out how planning applications are publicised and how to put forward your views.** This SCI is part of Stafford Borough Council's step change from community consultation to community involvement.
- 1.6. Finally, **this document tells you who is involved in making planning decisions, their roles, and how you fit into the process.** If you want to talk to someone about having your say in planning, there is information at the back of this document on how you can do so (for ease of reference).

'The aim of this Statement of Community Involvement is to ensure, as far as possible, that all sections of the community, and other interested parties, have at least a reasonable opportunity to engage with the plan-making and planning application processes, and are not precluded from taking part in the planning system should they wish to do so'.

## 2.0 *Vision of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)*

- 2.1. This Statement of Community Involvement supports the following Vision for engaging with the Community;

**‘To tell people how they can get involved in the planning process so that everyone who wishes to, has an equal opportunity to do so, in a transparent and efficient manner’.**

## 3.0 *What standards does the SCI have to meet ?*

- 3.1. The Government has prepared a set of criteria for ‘testing the soundness’ of Statements of Community Involvement that are prepared by local authorities to ensure all communities have an equal opportunity to get involved in the new planning system. These criteria are defined in the Government’s Consultation Draft document ‘Local Development Frameworks, A Guide to Procedures and Code of Practice’ (paragraph B13). These ‘tests of soundness’ will be used to examine the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.2. The Secretary of State will appoint an independent Planning Inspector to hold an Examination into the submitted SCI. During this Examination the Inspector will consider the Council’s SCI against the ‘tests of soundness’. If the Inspector deems that the Statement of Community Involvement does not fully meet the tests changes may be required. The Council must incorporate those changes and then adopt the Statement of Community Involvement. The test criteria are listed in Appendix 1.

## 4.0 *Do all Council planning policies and planning applications have to comply with the SCI?*

- 4.1. Local Planning Authorities have a statutory requirement to comply with their Statement of Community Involvement when preparing any land-use planning document.
- 4.2. Stafford Borough Council will need to submit a ‘Statement of Compliance with the SCI’ alongside formal submission of Development Plan Documents (land-use policy documents replacing the adopted Local Plan) for Examination. This Statement will clearly set out exactly how the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement have been met, and will be published on the Forward Planning website [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/forwardplans](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/forwardplans).

- 4.3. Compliance with the SCI is one of nine ‘tests of soundness’ that will be considered by the inspector appointed by the Secretary of State to examine each Development Plan Document. **The inspector will produce a written report with detailed and binding recommendations that the Council is obliged to accept.**

## 5.0 *How will the SCI actually be tested?*

- 5.1 Performance indicators will be used to measure Stafford Borough’s Statement of Community Involvement in terms of;

- a) the effectiveness of community engagement, and
- b) the degree to which the community has had the opportunity to influence the scope and form of each plan-making stage, and decisions on planning applications.

- 5.2 The following performance indicators should be used;

- Number of people participating in consultation;
- Number of people logging onto the website for information
- Number of people responding online during formal public consultation;
- Ratio between survey coverage and number of responses received

- 5.3 These indicators will be used in any review of the SCI and changes will be considered where there has been a particularly low level of community participation. **There will be a constant drive to improve levels of participation from all sections in the community, focussing on those community groups or consultation areas that have had poor levels of engagement in the past.**

- 5.3 The Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed as an integral part of the Annual Monitoring Report, and more often if required, e.g. where it is considered that there has been a particularly low level of community participation.

## 6.0 *Stafford Borough Community Plan*

### **Stafford Borough Community Plan 2003-2006**

- 6.1 **The Stafford Borough Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)**, known as the Stafford Partnership, was formed in September 2001 and includes over 300

key organisations from the public, private, voluntary, community and environmental sectors in Stafford Borough.

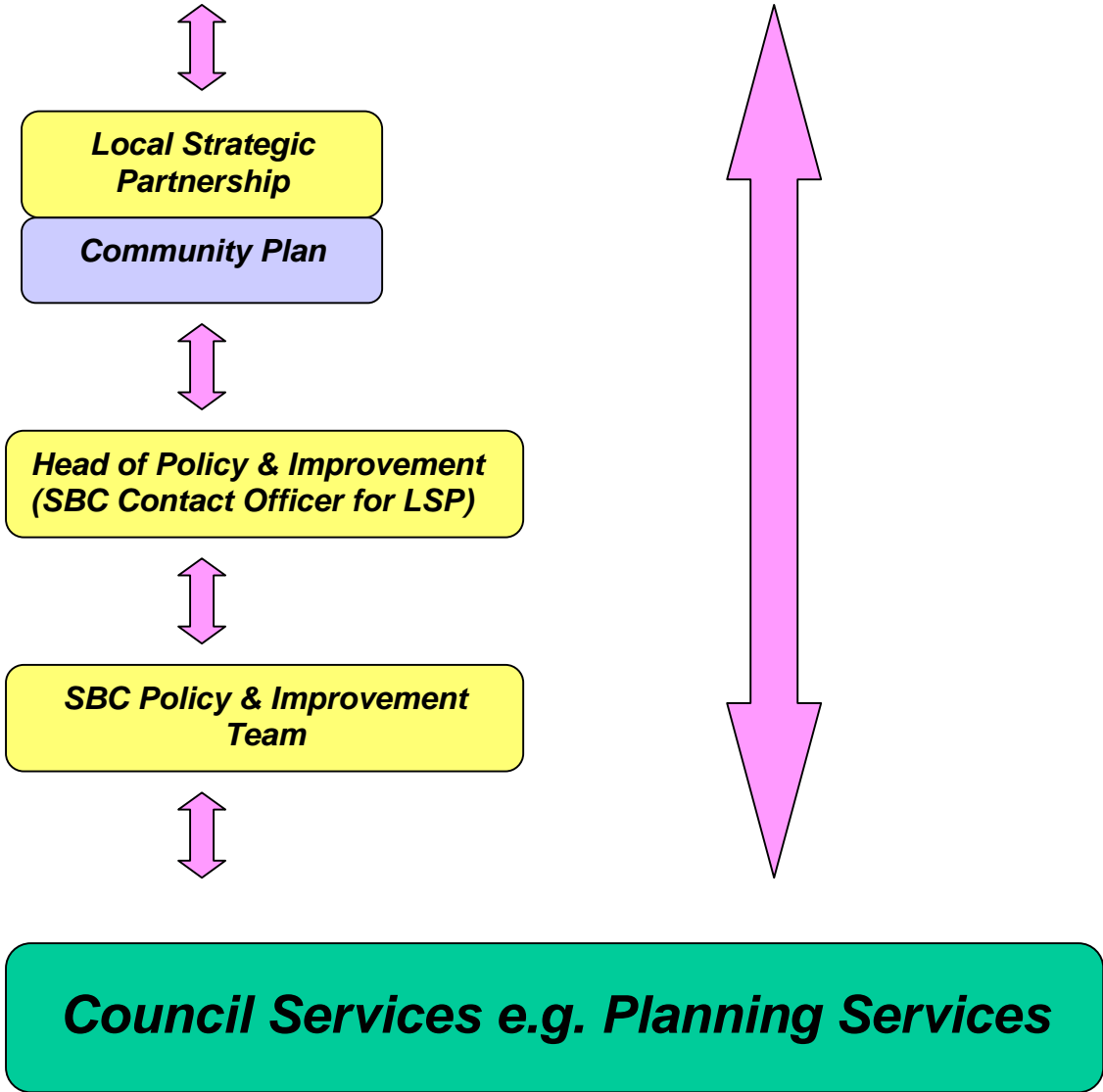
- 6.2 Within Stafford Borough many bodies and organisations, including the LSP, provide a range of services and activities needed to maintain and improve quality of life. There is a requirement under the Local Government Act 2000 to prepare a Community Plan for Stafford Borough *to promote the economic, social and environmental wellbeing and contribute towards the achievement of sustainable development.*
- 6.3 This LSP Partnership has identified present and future needs of the community and agrees appropriate action needed in order to meet these needs. The Stafford Borough Community Plan 2003-2006 is the resulting framework that outlines various aims and objectives for the development of the community, identifies a number of projects to be undertaken during the life of the plan until 2006, and sets out how the Partners will work with other organisations to improve quality of life. It is available from the Council Offices, and is on the Council's website [www.staffordbc.gov.uk](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk) or call (01785 619000) to request your own copy.

The vision of the Community Plan is:  
*'to create a Borough in which people and organisations can face the 21st Century with confidence, a place that is prosperous with a community that cares'.*

## 7.0 Links between the Community and Council services

- 7.1 The following relationship diagram illustrates the relationship between the Community and Stafford Borough Council Services. The Forward Planning team will seek to identify opportunities with other Services for joined-up approaches to community involvement, and ensure a degree of flexibility within the timing of consultation to co-ordinate with others.
- 7.2 Established consultation mechanisms used by Stafford Borough Council for engaging with the Community are set out in Appendix 5. A Resource Audit (see Appendix 4) outlines a 'fit for purpose' approach.
- 7.3 In order to maximise the most efficient use of resources, these existing mechanisms will be used where possible in joint collaboration with other Council Services, rather than setting up new consultation procedures.

**Individuals and Community Groups**



### ... when preparing LDF policies?

- 8.1 **The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has identified 14 types of community group categories** under which a database of contacts is maintained.

| <b>LSP COMMUNITY GROUP CATEGORIES</b>                           |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| • Strategic Partnerships  | • Private Businesses                  |
| • Elected Representatives and Borough Council Officers          | • Housing Associations                |
| • Public/Private Agencies (General)                             | • Churches and other Religious Groups |
| • Press and Media   | • Environmental Groups                |
| • Community Safety Partnership (incl. tenant / resident groups) | • Schools                             |
| • Public Transport and Utilities                                | • Parish Councils                     |
| • Business and Council Sector                                   | • Hard to Reach Groups                |

- 8.2 In order to strengthen and reinforce the links between the LSP and the plan-making mechanisms of consultation, it is prudent to take the same categories on board for the Local Development Framework. Consultation and community involvement will therefore take place with the Local Strategic Partnership at the appropriate stage when planning documents are being prepared.

- 8.3 With equal weight, the planning service also engages with various other key stakeholders and other sectors of the community, as contained in the LDF Consultee databases, including the following groups;

- Residents / businesses with an interest in the plan-making process
- Landowners
- Planning consultants, agents and developers
- Statutory organisations as listed in planning guidance Planning Policy Statement 12
- Specific and general consultee bodies

- 8.4 **If you would like to join this LDF consultee database, (we will not pass your details to any third party), please call us on (01785) 619538.** Results of public consultation will be on our website and available at the Civic Centre Planning Reception. Any problems in getting this information, then call us on this same number.

## ...when planning applications are being considered?

- 8.5 Once validated by the planning service, planning applications will become public documents. Any member of the public can write to Planning Services and have their say on the proposals. Representations will be specifically invited from appropriate external bodies and organisations in the Standard Consultee List (see Appendix). Comments and representations will be invited on these proposals for a minimum of 21 days.

### 9.0 *Role of Council members in the engagement process*

9.1 Councillors maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics, in accordance with the Borough code of practice. As stated on pages 4 – 5 of the Stafford Borough Council Constitution, all Councillors are elected for, and should act for the good of the Borough as a whole and will, amongst other duties;

1. collectively be the ultimate policy-makers and carry out a number of strategic and corporate management functions;
2. represent their communities and bring their views into the Council's decision-making process, i.e. become the advocate of and for their communities;
3. contribute to the good governance of the area and actively encourage community participation and citizen involvement in decision-making;
4. deal with individual casework and act as an advocate for constituents in attempting to resolve particular concerns or grievances and effectively represent the interests of their Ward; and
5. balance different interests identified within the ward or electoral division and represent the ward or electoral division as a whole.

### 10.0 *Understanding Stafford Borough's community*

#### **Local Population**

10.1 About 126,000 people live in Stafford Borough, in an area of approximately 230 square miles. A map of the Borough is on the inside front cover of this document. This Statement of Community Involvement has to address the needs and requirements of this local population in order to successfully engage with the community in a meaningful way. A baseline of information on Stafford Borough's community was collected by Census data (2001).

- 10.2 There are about 50,025 households in Stafford Borough. About 19% of these households do not own a car, and about 5% are lone parent households with dependant children (Census 2001).
- 10.3 Stafford Borough has a 97.4% white majority population. The next largest ethnic population are Asian or British Asian (Census 2001).
- 10.4 Most residents in Stafford Borough are of Christian faith (79.9%) according to Census 2001. The second largest religion recognised by the 2001 Census in Stafford Borough is Muslim. Sikh, Hindu, Buddhist and Jewish religions are also recognised by the Census 2001. For more information visit [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk).

### **Minority Groups**

- 10.5 Minority groups are often hard to reach through public consultation. **Specific resources may be required to ensure that everyone has opportunity to engage in the planning process**, and are not precluded from taking part in the process should they wish to do so.
- 10.6 This approach will promote equality of opportunity and contribute towards good relations between people of different racial groups. Stafford Borough Council will prepare a Race Equality Impact Assessment for each Strategy and Plan, including the Local Development Framework. The section on 'Equality and Opportunity in Participation' provides the standards used in monitoring fairness and equality within this Statement of Community Involvement.

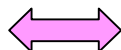
### **Transient Populations**

- 10.7 Stafford Borough also has a transient community that live or work here for some of the time, made up mostly of students, commuters RAF service personnel, gypsies and travellers. Transient populations are very often a hard to reach group, as it is difficult to establish links with people who may have no fixed long-term permanent address in the Borough.
- 10.8 Students may reside near Staffordshire University during the academic year, and may or may not leave the Borough at other times. Commuters include people who travel from their homes either into or out of the Borough to work. Some RAF service personnel may be based in the Borough for relatively long periods and wish to participate more in the development of the Borough than their colleagues.
- 10.9 Stafford Borough's gypsy and traveller population - both permanent and transient, are represented by, amongst others, The Gypsy Council for Education, Culture, Welfare & Civil Rights. Liaison with this group, and similar, could assist in engaging with this often hard to reach part of the population.

**... when preparing LDF policies and considering applications**

- 11.1 We recognise that barriers exist potentially preventing people from having their say, for example, inconvenient access to public meetings, etc. (the transport, place or timing of meeting may be unsuitable), or maybe a lack of suitable childcare arrangements. There are lots of reasons preventing some residents from actively participating in the planning process.
- 11.2 By recognising these attendance barriers and hard to reach groups, some targeted solutions may encourage more of the community to take a more active role in having their say and contributing towards making planning decisions.
- 11.3 Stafford Borough Council has taken a proactive approach in enabling residents and other interested parties to submit their planning representations or comments on-line. It is hoped that many local people will benefit from this service, who may not otherwise be able to attend meetings or otherwise engage in the planning process.
- 11.4 Borough Councillors would be pleased to hear from you if you are still having difficulty in having your say on planning decisions.
- 11.5 There are also recognised links between Stafford Borough Council Officers and the wider community. Where an established consultation mechanism exists within Stafford Borough Council, the Forward Planning team will use this as appropriate. Examples of these mechanisms include communication between;

Stafford Borough Council's  
Tenant Participation Officer



Recognised  
Tenants Associations

Head of Policy and Improvement  
(SBC)



Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)  
community group  
representatives

- 11.6 Identified *hard-to-reach* groups will be specifically encouraged to get involved in the development plan-making stages as identified overleaf. Specific types of consultation methods have been chosen with these groups in mind, in addition to making every effort to arrange more convenient timings and venue locations for local events, to help people attend and engage if they wish to.

## Engaging Hard to Reach Groups

| Hard to Reach Groups   | Specific Methods For Proactive Engagement   | Which Stages of Plan-making?   |
|--|---|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Ethnic and Religious Minority Groups</b></p> | <p>Contact with existing community groups via Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) links. This will be carried out at those plan-making stages in the adjacent box.</p> <p><b><u>In addition to this...</u></b></p> <p>Stakeholder one-to-one meetings may be arranged with minority groups if required, at the <b><i>Consideration of Reps stage</i></b> when preparing;</p> <p>Core Strategy,</p> <p>Development Plan Documents, &amp;</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Documents</p> | <p><b><u>Development Plan Documents (including Area Action Plans)</u></b></p> <p>Evidence gathering</p> <p>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report</p> <p>Issues and Alternative Options and associated Sustainability Appraisal</p> <p>Preferred Options and associated Sustainability Appraisal*</p> <p>Submission DPD and associated Sustainability Appraisal*</p> <p><b><u>Supplementary Planning Documents</u></b></p> <p>Evidence gathering</p> <p>Draft SPD</p>   |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Young People</b></p>                         | <p>Planning and Citizenship in Schools - Lesson Plans available from the Borough Council for Teachers to use in Borough Schools.</p> <p>(UK Youth Parliament Representative) Member of the Youth Parliament for South Staffordshire</p>   | <p><b>1. Lesson Plans</b> are an ongoing resource dependant upon resources and school timetables.</p> <p><b>2. Letters</b> sent to Youth MP at these stages;</p> <p><b><i>Gathering evidence stage</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Core Strategy</i></b> – except preferred options and examination stages</p> <p><b><i>Development Plan Documents</i></b> - all stages except Broad Options and consideration of Reps stages</p> <p><b><i>Area Action Plans</i></b> – all stages from submission stage</p> <p><b><i>Supplementary planning documents</i></b> – all stages except consideration of reps</p> |

## Engaging Hard to Reach Groups

| Hard to Reach Groups  | Specific Methods For Proactive Engagement  | Which Stages of Plan-making?   |
|---|--|--|
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Transient populations</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">e.g.<br/>new residents,<br/>students,<br/>commuters,<br/>RAF community,<br/>Gypsies / travellers</p> | <p>Articles in Stafford Borough Council publications where publication dates allow joined-up approach. This will be carried out at those plan-making stages in the adjacent box.</p> <p><b><u>In addition to this...</u></b></p> <p>Invitation to join the LDF General Consultee mailing list in SBC publications – stages as opposite</p> <p>Website (see stages in consultations methods table on page 17)</p> <p>Posters and publications on Staffordshire FE College and Staffordshire University's noticeboards as per posters method (see stages in consultations methods table on page 17)</p> <p>Information sent to RAF Stafford's Community Liaison Officer as per interested parties letters (see stages as per consultations methods table on page 17)</p> | <p><b><u>Development Plan Documents including Area Action Plans</u></b></p> <p>Evidence gathering</p> <p>Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report</p> <p>Issues and Alternative Options and associated Sustainability Appraisal</p> <p>* Preferred Options and associated Sustainability Appraisal</p> <p>* Submission DPD and associated Sustainability Appraisal</p> <p><b><u>Supplementary Planning Documents</u></b></p> <p>Evidence gathering</p> <p>* Draft SPD</p> |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>People with disabilities</b></p>  | <p>Local Strategic Partnership links to Stafford District Access Group</p>   | <p>Same planning stages as per <b><i>Ethnic and Religious minority group</i></b> consultation set out above in previous box</p>  |
| <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Lone parents</b></p>  | <p>Make every effort to arrange more convenient timings and venue locations for local events, to help people attend and engage if they wish to. Advert in SBC publications to ask if meetings are convenient –to be published around the time meetings are held.</p>   | <p><i>At every stage where meetings are held</i> (see consultations methods table on page 17)</p>  |

## 12.0 Equality and opportunity (in LDF participation & planning representations)

12.1 Stafford Borough Council is committed to providing equal opportunity to all, and to opposing and preventing discrimination. The following Statement was adopted by Stafford Borough Council in July 2003.

### **Statement of Commitment to Equality;**

This Authority is committed;

1. In service delivery and the development and use of employment procedures and practices not to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion, or other non-objective reason such as economic status,
2. To promote equality of opportunity,
3. To promote good race relations,
4. Recognising and challenging institutional racism and any other forms of discrimination'.

12.2 This Statement of Community Involvement is fully compliant with the following key Council policies and management plans relevant to the preparation of fair plans and policies (further detail in the Appendix):

- Stafford Borough Council's Equality Policy (July 2003),
- Stafford Borough Council's Race Equality Scheme (July 2003),
- Racial Equality Impact Assessment (July 2003), - a matrix for 'assessing functions relevant to the General Duty'

12.3 The SCI Statements of Compliance cover the basic requirements for addressing equality in community engagement. These must be met in full, with evidence submitted where relevant. Proformas of these Statements are contained in Appendix 2.

### ***...In Influencing Planning Policy***

- 13.1 The consultation methods tables on page 16 tell you *who* is being involved at each stage of preparing Local Development Documents (LDDs'), and *how* they are being involved.
- 13.2 At each stage where consultation takes place views will be sought on the policy document (or Local Development Document (LDD)), AND for a separate Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of those policies.
- 13.3 During the early stages of preparing an LDD a Scoping Report (precursor to a full Sustainability Appraisal) will be published for consultation as part of a pre-production process of preparing LDDs'. Pre-production includes; a Gathering Evidence stage; a Scoping Report stage; and an Issues and Options Paper stage.
- 13.4 The Council is required to undertake Sustainability Appraisal at each stage of the actual preparation of Local Development Documents. Sustainability Appraisals (SA) will consider the environmental, economic and social implications of the policies and proposals being considered by the Council.
- 13.5 The more specific the site or area, or more detailed the proposed policies, the greater the number of ways people can get involved. This reflects the more direct implications for the local community in that area.
- 13.6 All new documents are published on the Council's website and consultation responses may be made on-line or by downloading a form and returning the completed form to our freepost address. Responses received at each consultation stage are published on the website. All previous LDF publications are available on the website as are relevant Agendas and Minutes.
- 13.7 The draft Statement of Community Involvement Schedule of Representations were put on the Planning Services website. These Representations were considered in full and, where appropriate, influenced the submission Statement of Community Involvement.

### ***...In Influencing Development Control Decisions (How are Planning Applications publicised?)***

#### **Pre-Application Consultation**

- 13.8 For Major Applications and applications seen to be of particular local significance due to scale or controversy, developers are encouraged and advised to undertake pre-application discussions and early community involvement. By "front loading" the process, (involving the community and other

consultees at a very early stage, even before the planning proposal is submitted to the Council) the community is able to participate in identifying issues and debating options from the onset, thus having the potential to make a real difference and to experience a sense of ownership of local policy decisions.

13.9 The Borough Council cannot refuse to accept valid applications because an applicant has not carried out consultation or because it disagrees with the ways in which an applicant has consulted the community. However, failure by the applicant to consult could lead to objections being made which could be material to the determination of the application. The aim of the process is to encourage discussion before formal applications are made to avoid unnecessary objections at a later stage.

13.10 Applicants who undertake pre-application community involvement are encouraged to discuss with officers of the Council the most appropriate techniques. If requested to do so by an applicant officers will advise and may adopt a 'watching brief'. The extent to which pre-application consultation undertaken by the applicant can be taken as contributing to the decision making process would depend on a number of factors, including the:

- extent and scope of pre-application discussions with the authority and the wider community;
- extent to which the developer has undertaken consultation in accordance with an agreed approach with the Council;
- transparency and inclusiveness of the process;
- extent to which the process and outcomes of the consultation can be 'validated' by the authority;

13.11 The submission of a supporting statement with the application; showing the degree to which potential problems and possible public objections identified at the initial pre-application stage have been addressed would assist in consideration of the application.

## **Planning Application Consultation**

13.12 The consultation methods table (page 17) explains *how* planning applications will be publicised. These consultation methods are explained in summary here.

### **Media**

13.13 A Public Notice will be displayed in a local newspaper for major planning applications, for those that are contrary to policy, for development to or affecting a Listed Building or in a Conservation Area. Stafford Borough Council currently uses the Staffordshire Newsletter (published on a Thursday) for this purpose.

## Site Notices and Neighbour letters

- 13.14 Neighbours will normally be notified of development which may affect them within 10 working days of validation. Site Notices, if required, will normally be displayed within 7 working days of validation. Householder /small business / commercial extensions and advertisements do not require a site notice to be displayed.
- 13.15 All consultations (including neighbour letters) will normally be sent out within 10 working days of validation. Representations may be made by letter, by representation form, by email or directly from the Planning Public Access website; [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning).

## Internet / Website

- 13.16 **Stafford Borough Council have an interactive website – you can now tell us your comments on-line!** The details of all planning applications are published on the Stafford Borough Council planning web page during their consultation period, through the on-line Planning Public Access web site link. Some applications are marked as ‘Special Interest’ – and may include ‘Fast Track’ (FT) or major applications. Comments may be submitted ‘on-line’ via the site before the consultation end date.

## Community Interest Consultees

- 13.17 Community groups can sign up for inclusion on a database recognising their interest in major planning applications per ward(s). These groups are consulted in the same way as other consultees, should it be considered that the proposal is relevant to them, either to their specialist interest or the specific local area.

## Parish Councils

- 13.18 Parish Councils will be invited to assist in making information on planning applications available for viewing by the general public. It is hoped that more local residents will become engaged in the planning process as opportunities are increased. Local people, especially residents who commute out to work and whom may be unavailable during the day, and less mobile members of the community, will be able to access information and view planning applications within their own locality at a time suitable to them, should the Parish Council enable that facility.

## ***Where can I see Planning Application Information?***

- 13.19 Information on current planning applications that have yet to be determined is available from the Planning Service on the Stafford Borough Council website [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning). The ‘public access’ site link on this page lets you view current planning applications.

- 13.20 A weekly list of new planning applications is displayed via this Public Access website and can also be viewed at Stafford and Stone libraries.
- 13.21 Current planning applications can also be viewed at the Planning and Engineering Reception at the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor of the Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford.
- 13.22 **Stafford Borough Council engages a pro-active approach by advocating the need for ‘front-loading’ planning applications.** This means involving the community and other consultees at a very early stage, even before the planning proposal is submitted to the Council. Front-loading aims to build a degree of support or consensus for the proposal, or at least address controversial aspects of the scheme before the planning application is finalised and submitted, and gives people more time to consider the proposed development and put their views forward.
- 13.23 **Local people can have the most effect in influencing development proposals before planning applications are received by the Council,** and will feel more engaged in the process. Evidence of any pre-application public consultation for major planning applications should include a Statement of Community Involvement Statement of Compliance.

### ***How do I comment on Planning Applications?***

- 13.16 To make representations (comments) on a planning application, simply write a letter to the Planning and Engineering Service at the following address quoting the site address, and planning reference number if you know it, to; Stafford Borough Council, Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford ST16 3AQ. To find out who your local Councillor is call (01785) 619000.
- 13.17 You can also email us at [planning@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@staffordbc.gov.uk). When viewing planning applications on the website through the ‘public access’ site link from [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning) you can also submit your views online.
- 13.18 There is a time limit for putting forward any comments on planning applications. For most planning applications the consultation period is **3 weeks**.
- 13.19 In principle, any consideration relating to the use and development of land is capable of being a planning consideration, depending on the circumstances. If your concerns are fairly and reasonably related to the planning application concerned, then we would like to hear from you, in writing (by mail or email).
- 13.20 The most fundamental considerations taken into account when planning applications are being determined by the Development Control Planning Officers are;
- Numbers and size of new development

- Layout
- Siting
- Design
- External appearance
- Proposed access
- Landscaping
- Impact on the neighbourhood
- Availability of infrastructure

13.21 If you have any further queries, please contact us on the following email address [planning@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:planning@staffordbc.gov.uk) or call direct on (01785) 619337. Alternatively, you can contact the Planning Aid Service who can give free advice on all planning matters. See contact details below.

13.22 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 aims to balance these conflicting issues.

## 14.0 *Continuous community involvement*

### **West Midlands Planning Aid Service**

14.1 **West Midlands Planning Aid Service provides free and independent advice on town planning issues to community groups and individuals who cannot afford professional fees.**

14.2 It is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute. It is a charitable organisation independent of central and local government. It has paid staff as well as a strong volunteer network. Planning Aid can help communities and prepare them for their involvement with local authorities and the development plan process.

14.3 Stafford Borough Council supports Planning Aid. Their involvement is especially important where community groups and individuals would welcome advice on how to be most effective in their planning participation and communication.

14.4 For further information and advice contact the charity direct;

**West Midlands Planning Aid Service;**

Address: Unit 319,  
The Custard Factory  
Gibb Street  
Birmingham  
B9 4AA

Tel: (0121) 766 7260 **OR**  
(0121) 766 8044

Email: [wmc1@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:wmc1@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)  
[wmcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:wmcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

## **Citizenship Lessons in Stafford Borough Schools**

- 14.5 This award-winning project was undertaken in partnership between Stafford Borough Council, Staffordshire County Council Quality Learning Services, and local schools. Staffordshire Partnership supported and funded the project.
- 14.6 A module of freestanding lessons was prepared to meet the National Curriculum requirements of Key Stage 3 for the subject of Citizenship. These lessons focus on the role of town planning and examples of decision-making at the local authority level. The lessons have been prepared in order to encourage teachers across Stafford Borough to be able to teach young people about the role and work of the local planning authority and the opportunities open to them to take an active part in local decision-making and reinforcing civic pride in the built environment.
- 14.7 The lessons provide engagement with young people in the Borough and feedback on planning, development and environmental issues as part of wider community consultation on Local Development Documents.
- 14.8 These lessons support ongoing community links with local schools and are available to download free from Stafford Borough Council's website. Where appropriate, according to resources, the LDF stages and schools' timetables, engagement between schools and Stafford Borough Council will be offered to schools within the Borough.

# SBC Consultation Methods



## PLANNING APPLICATIONS (FAST TRACK ARE EITHER MAJOR OR NOT)

|                       |   |   |  |  |  |  |   |   |  |   |  |  |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|
| Planning Applications | ■ | ■ |  |  |  |  | ■ | ■ |  | ■ |  |  |
|-----------------------|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|---|--|--|

## LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

|                                   |   |   |  |  |  |  |   |   |  |  |   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|
| LDD Gathering Evidence Techniques | ■ | ■ |  |  |  |  | ■ | ■ |  |  | ■ | ■ |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|--|---|---|--|--|---|---|

## CORE STRATEGY and POLICY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS \*

|  |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scoping Report, Issues and Options Paper                 | ■ |   | ■ |   |   |  |  | ■ |   |   | ■ |   |   |
| Preferred Options Report                                 | ■ | ■ | ■ |   |   |  |  | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Consideration of Representations                         |   |   |   | ■ |   |  |  | ■ |   | ■ |   |   |   |
| Submission to Secretary of State and Public Consultation | ■ | ■ | ■ |   |   |  |  | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Consideration of Representations                         |   |   |   | ■ |   |  |  | ■ |   | ■ |   |   |   |
| Examination  |   |   | ■ |   |   |  |  | ■ |   |   |   |   | ■ |
| Inspector's Binding Report                               | ■ | ■ |   |   |   |  |  | ■ | ■ |   | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Adoption and Publication                                 | ■ | ■ | ■ |   |   |  |  | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Review of Core Strategy Consultation                     | ■ | ■ | ■ |   | ■ |  |  | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |

## AREA ACTION PLANS AND SITE SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS \*

|  |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Scoping Report, Issues and Options Paper                 | ■ |   | ■ |   | ■ |   |   | ■ |   |   | ■ |   |   |
| Preferred Options Report                                 | ■ | ■ | ■ |   | ■ | ■ |   | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Consideration of Representations                         |   |   |   | ■ |   |   |   | ■ |   | ■ |   |   |   |
| Submission to Secretary of State and Public Consultation | ■ | ■ | ■ |   |   |   |   | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Consideration of Representations                         |   |   |   | ■ |   |   |   | ■ |   | ■ |   |   |   |
| Examination Period                                       |   |   | ■ |   |   |   |   | ■ |   |   |   |   | ■ |
| Inspector's Binding Report                               | ■ | ■ |   |   |   |   |   | ■ | ■ |   | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Adoption and Publication                                 | ■ | ■ | ■ |   |   |   |   | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Review of Core Strategy Consultation                     |   |   | ■ | ■ | ■ |   | ■ |   | ■ | ■ |   | ■ | ■ |

## SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

|  |   |   |   |   |   |  |  |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pre-production and Preparation - Evidence Gathering        | ■ |   |   |   |   |  |  | ■ | ■ |   |   | ■ | ■ |
| Public Consultation  | ■ | ■ | ■ |   | ■ |  |  | ■ | ■ | ■ |   | ■ | ■ |
| Consideration of Representations                           |   |   |   | ■ |   |  |  | ■ |   | ■ |   |   |   |
| Adoption   | ■ | ■ | ■ |   |   |  |  | ■ | ■ |   | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Review of Consultation for Supplementary Planning Guidance | ■ | ■ |   |   |   |  |  | ■ | ■ |   |   | ■ | ■ |

\* (INCLUDING SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL)

## 16.0 Further Information

- 16.1 More detailed information can be accessed via the Borough Council web site [www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning](http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/planning). See back page for alternative formats.
- 16.2 A file of Local Development Framework information should be available to view at Stafford and Stone libraries.
- 16.3 If you wish to discuss the LDF or anything raised in this publication please contact the Forward Planning Team on (01785) 619541.

\*\*\*\*\*

### **USEFUL EXTERNAL WEBSITES**

#### **Central Government Planning Information**

Planning guidance and advice includes –

- The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act,
- Planning Regulations,
- Planning Policy Statements
- Planning Guidance

This information and more can be viewed on the website site of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at;  
[www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/index.htm](http://www.planning.odpm.gov.uk/index.htm)

#### **Regional Government**

In the West Midlands we fall under the Government Office for the West Midlands, or GOWM. Regional planning guidance and advice includes Regional Planning Guidance published 15 June 2004. This information and more can be viewed on the website site of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at; [www.go-wm.gov.uk](http://www.go-wm.gov.uk)

#### **Adopted Structure Plan**

The **Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Structure Plan 1996-2011** can be viewed at [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/structureplan/index.htm](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/structureplan/index.htm)

## General Planning Information

The **Planning Portal** is a Government site providing information and advice on the planning system in a user-friendly form. The Portal can be accessed at [www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

## West Midlands Planning Aid Service

West Midlands Planning Aid Service provides free and independent advice on town planning issues.

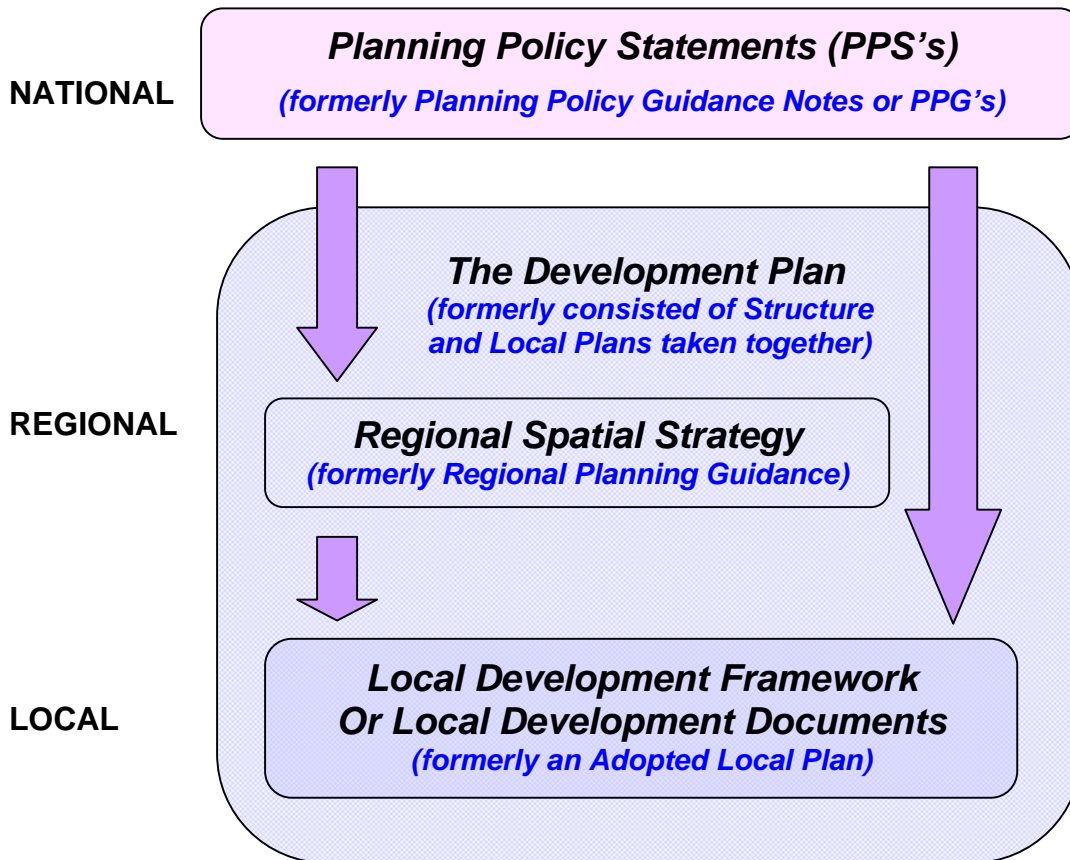
[www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

## Royal Town Planning Institute

What is Planning? This site will give more information.

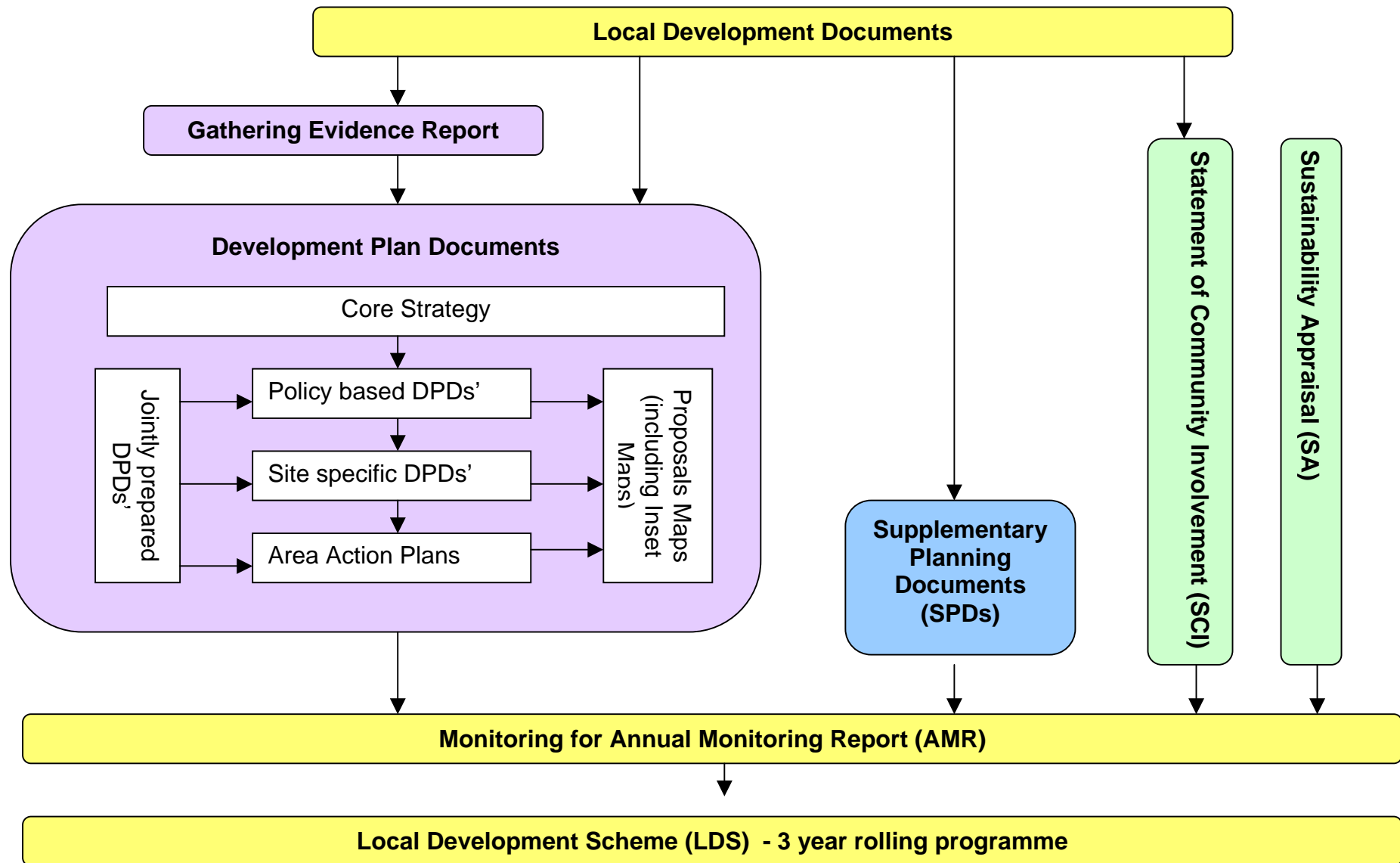
[www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice)

## National Planning Hierarchy



|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>Local Development Framework</b>  | Collective term for a number of individual policy documents or Local Development Documents (LDDs).  |
| <b>Local Development Documents (LDDs')</b>  | <p>Policy documents. There are different types of Local Development Documents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Plan Documents</li> <li>• Supplementary Planning Documents</li> <li>• Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)</li> <li>• Strategic Environmental Assessment</li> </ul>                             |
| <b>Development Plan Documents (DPDs')</b>   | <p>Planning policies that are statutorily tested through an independent Examination process (development policies). There are five types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Core Strategy</li> <li>• Policy based DPDs'</li> <li>• Site specific DPDs'</li> <li>• Jointly prepared DPDs'</li> <li>• Area Action Plans</li> </ul> |
| <b>Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs')</b>   | Guidance note on how development should take place. These may cover specific areas or themes, for example shopfronts, or residential extensions.  |
| <b>Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)</b>   | Policies for engaging the community, including a framework as to when people can have their say according to stages of plan preparation, and how. Consultation for planning applications is also set out.   |
| <b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA) including Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</b> | Sustainability audit of plans and policies. A 'Scoping Report' is a precursor to a Sustainability Appraisal.  |
| <b>Local Development Scheme (LDS)</b>   | This sets out which DPDs' and SPDs' the Local Planning Authority proposes to prepare over a 3-year period and the timetable for their production. It sets out the policies Stafford Borough Council wishes to save from the current Development Plan and the timetable for the preparation of the SCI.                                      |

# Local Development Framework



Stafford Borough – Local Development Framework  
 Statement of Community Involvement  
 Submission Document Issue Date: April 2005

## Assisted Hearing

Portable hearing loops for customers with hearing difficulties are available at all public receptions at the Civic Centre, Stafford. Hearing loops have been installed in the Civic Centre Committee Rooms.

## Would you like an alternative format?

Any part of the **Local Development Framework** can be reproduced on request in large print, on CD or as spoken word on tape.

Other languages available include;

### ARABIC

ولو كنت بحاجة إلى مزيد من المعلومات بخصوص هذا المنشور فيرجى الاتصال بمجلس بلدة ستافورد [Stafford Borough Council] على الرقم 01785 619 000 .

### HINDI

यदि आपको इस प्रकाशन के बारे में अधिक जानकारी की आवश्यकता हो तो कृपया स्टैफोर्ड बरो परिषद [Stafford Borough Council] से 01785 619 000 पर संपर्क करें।

### PUNJABI

ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਟੈਫੋਰਡ ਬਰੋ ਪਰਿਸ਼ਦ [Stafford Borough Council] ਨੂੰ 01785 619 000 ਉੱਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ।

### URDU

اگر آپ کو اس اشاعت کے بارے میں مزید معلومات کی ضرورت ہو تو براہ کرم اسٹیفورڈ بروکونسل [Stafford Borough Council] سے 01785 619 000 پر رابطہ کریں۔

Please contact us on (01785) 619538 or 616541 if you would like any other format so that we are able to consider your needs.

# Appendices

# Appendix 1

## A1. Tests of Soundness and summary of relevant legal framework

### A1.1 Tests of Soundness

The test criteria are set out in paragraph 3.10, Chapter 3 of Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks 2004. In assessing whether the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is sound, the inspector will determine whether it has met the following tests;

- i. local planning authority has complied with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in Regulations (The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004);
- ii. local planning authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the community strategy;
- iii. statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;
- iv. statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
- v. methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents;
- vi. resources are available to manage community involvement effectively;
- vii. statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
- viii. authority has mechanisms for reviewing the statement of community involvement; and
- ix. statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.

## A1.2 Summary of relevant legal framework

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) acknowledges the following legal instruments and national planning guidance, listed chronologically, and where relevant is considered to be compliant with the requirements of each one.

- **Aarhus Convention**

The UK has signed up to this Convention, which is based on the principle that sustainable development can only be achieved through the involvement of all stakeholders. Rights are granted to the public, with corresponding obligations on access to information on environmental matters; the opportunity to participate in decision-making on key environmental matters; and access to justice in these matters.

- **The Compact on Relations between Government and the Voluntary and Community Sector in England 1998**

The Government has set a target of increasing voluntary and community sector activity, including increased community involvement in decision-making by 5% in 2006.

The National Compact between Government and the voluntary and community sector (VCS), a voluntary agreement introduced in 1998, is about improving the relationship for mutual advantage. Local Compacts are also encouraged. The Compact and supporting Codes / Guidance provide a framework for defining and developing relationships between these sectors.

- **Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995**

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, service providers have to consider making reasonable adjustments to the way they deliver their services so that people with disabilities can use these services.

Implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act is being sought to address access and inclusion throughout the entire planning system. 'Planning and Access for disabled people: A good practice guide', stresses the commitment to addressing the needs of disabled people through a cooperative approach and early involvement in the planning process.

- **European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment**

This Directive requires local authorities to give the public an early and effective opportunity to comment on the environmental effects of proposed plans.

- **Freedom of Information Act 2000**  
The public have a general right of access to information from almost all public authorities. Local authorities have to publish details of the information they hold and make it available to the public unless covered by an Exception. The Act also requires public authorities to have regard to the public interest in allowing access to information and in publishing reasons for decisions.
  
- **Human Rights Act (HRA) 1998**  
This Act incorporates into domestic law the rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights, including the Right to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal in the determination of civil rights and obligations. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act is compatible with this Act.
  
- **Local Government Act 2000**  
This Act places a duty on principal local authorities to prepare Community Strategies, for promoting and improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of their areas, and contributing to sustainable development.
  
- **ODPM: Planning Guidance**  
Includes a suite of new guidance and procedure notes;
  - Community Involvement in Planning,
  - LDFs: Guide to Procedure and Code of Practice (consultation draft)
  - Creating LDFs Process of preparing LDFs (consultation draft)
  - Draft PPS1 – General Policy Principles
  - Draft PPS12 – Local Development Framework
  
- **Race Relations (Amendments) Act 2000**  
Local Authorities must comply with the duty in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and publish a Race Equality Scheme. The aim is to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. Local Authorities must also carry out a race equality impact assessment of each strategy and plan, including Development Plans.
  
- **Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004**  
Statutory Instrument within the Town & Country Planning system that sets out minimum requirements for evidence of public participation.

## Appendix 2

### *Proformas for Statement of Compliance with Statement of Community Involvement*

#### **PROFORMA 1 – to be completed by Stafford Borough Council.** **Consultation for each draft LDD as set out in Statement of Community Involvement**

Referring to the appropriate Local Development Document (LDD) stage and associated consultation methods write a Supporting Statement detailing all consultation undertaken and explain how you have met all of the following criteria to comply with this Statement of Community Involvement.

For each criteria, where reference is made to supporting data, you will need to submit that data as evidence. For example, if a Newspaper Article was published, that particular page of the publication will need to be submitted to accompany this Statement of Compliance as evidence.

#### **Statement of Community Involvement Vision**

Explain how the LDD, at this stage, meets the Stafford Borough SCI Vision.

#### **Equal Opportunities**

- a) Explain how the LDD, at this stage, meets the requirements of the Stafford Borough Equality Policy.
- b) Explain how the LDD, at this stage, demonstrates an understanding as to how local people can be involved in a timely and accessible manner.
- c) Explain how the LDD, at this stage, demonstrates efforts made to engage hard to reach groups, especially those identified in the Statement of Community Involvement.

#### **Range of Participation**

- a) Provide evidence of outreach to a range of community groups, with a view to establishing a broad basis for engagement and consultation.

Refer to the following details in your Supporting Statement where applicable;

1. Dates and times between which publicity and consultation were carried out,
2. Reference to persons or organisations / bodies whom carried out the consultation, and
3. The approach and method in which the consultation was carried out. For example, venue of public meeting selected for accessibility, regard to timing of religious holidays, etc...

**PROFORMA 2 – to be completed by the Planning Applicant:**  
**Pre-Submission Consultation for each Major Planning Application**

**YOU ARE ENCOURAGED TO SUBMIT THIS FORM FOR INFORMATION**

Referring to the appropriate stage in making a planning application and associated consultation methods write a Supporting Statement to explain how you have met all of the following criteria to comply with this Statement of Community Involvement.

For each criteria, where reference is made to supporting data, you will need to submit that data as evidence. For example, if a Newspaper Article was published, that particular page of the publication will need to be submitted to accompany this Statement of Compliance as evidence.

**Equal Opportunities**

- a) Explain how this pre-application public consultation meets the requirements of the Stafford Borough Equality Policy.
- b) Explain how this pre-application public consultation demonstrates an understanding as to how local people can be involved in a timely and accessible manner.
- c) Explain how this pre-application public consultation demonstrates efforts made to engage hard to reach groups, especially those identified in the Statement of Community Involvement.

**Range of Participation**

- d) Provide evidence of outreach to a range of community groups, with a view to establishing a broad basis for engagement and consultation. This should include all key community groups.

**Consistency and Certainty**

- e) Pre-application proposals that are subject to public consultation will need to be *materially similar* to the subsequent planning application or evidence of publicising those changes / amendments will be required to avoid confusing the public. Evidence of this must be provided.
- f) Information for use in any community engagement in relation to any prospective significant planning proposal must not give opportunity to unnecessarily raise false expectations within the community. The information relating to the proposal will need to be clear, factual and accurate and aim to inform the local community without leading to misrepresentation. Evidence of this must be provided.

Refer to the following details in your Supporting Statement where applicable;

1. Dates and times between which publicity and consultation were carried out,
2. Reference to persons or organisations / bodies whom carried out the consultation, and
3. The approach and method in which the consultation was carried out. For example, venue of public meeting selected for accessibility, regard to timing of religious holidays, etc.



## Appendix 3

### Stafford Borough Council Equality Policies

The following information is an extract of Stafford Borough Council's adopted Equality Policy October 2004. Planning Service delivery is subject to this. For full details contact 01785 619000 or visit the Council's website <http://www.staffordbc.gov.uk/>.

#### Equality Policy October 2004

##### 1 Introduction

Stafford Borough Council seeks to be equal opportunity service provider and employer and is committed to providing equal opportunity to all and to opposing and preventing discrimination. This policy provides the overall framework and statement of principles within which this Authority will work to meet its statutory and community equality obligations. The Policy sets out corporate and operational responsibilities and the accompanying Equality Action Plan identifies specific actions to be taken. It should also be read in conjunction with the Authority's Race Equality Scheme which forms *APPENDIX 2* to this document.

The Policy will be communicated to all existing and potential employees and be available for our customers. We will vigorously pursue any alleged breach of policy. The Council recognises its statutory obligations under the following legislation:-

- Equal Pay Act 1970 and Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983 and 1996
- Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
- Sex Discrimination Acts 1975 and 1986 and Sex Discrimination (Amendment) Regulations 1996
- Race Relations Act 1976 and Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Disability Rights Commission Act 1999
- Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
- Employment Relations Act 1999
- Sex Discrimination (Indirect Discrimination and Burden of Proof) Regulations 2001
- Other relevant Regulations and Directives

##### 2 Statement of Commitment to Equality

This Authority is committed;

- (a) in service delivery and the development and use of employment procedures and practices not to discriminate on the grounds of race, colour, ethnic or national origins, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or other non-objective reason such as economic status

- (b) to promote equality of opportunity
- (c) to promote good race relations
- (d) recognising and challenging institutionalism racism and any other forms of discrimination.

### **3 Types of Discrimination**

#### **(a) Direct Discrimination**

This relates to the treatment of someone less favourably on the grounds of their race, colour, ethnic or national origins, age, disability, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or other non-objective reason. This form of discrimination is easily detected.

#### **(b) Indirect Discrimination**

This relates to the application of a condition which adversely affects a larger proportion of one group (based on race, colour, ethnic origin, disability, sex, marital status, or other non-objective reason) than others and which cannot be justified in the provision of a service or by employment requirements. This form of discrimination is less obvious.

In addition to discrimination which is deemed to be unlawful, the Authority will also endeavour to eliminate all forms of discrimination on the grounds of age, religious belief, economic status, sexual orientation and other non-objective reasons.

### **4 Equal Opportunities in Service Delivery**

To ensure equality in service provision the following framework will be adopted:-

- (a) Dealing with the public - the Council will ensure through training and raising awareness that all staff are familiar with the principles, practices and policies in regard to equal opportunities and promote good practice in respect of customer care.
- (b) Access to Council buildings - the Council will work to ensure that all its buildings from which a public service is delivered will be reasonably accessible to people with disabilities.
- (c) Service Delivery - the Council will seek to ensure equality of access and will strive to meet people's specific needs.
- (d) Take up of services - the Council will wherever practicable, monitor the use of its services to ensure that no individual or groups are excluded because of disability, economic status, sex, race, cultural background or age.

- (e) Information about services - the Council will endeavour to provide information on its services, policies and practices in a variety of formats so as to not to exclude or discriminate against any group or individual.
- (f) Charges for services - the Council will when charges are made for services recognise the potential for exclusion of those on low incomes and will provide concessionary pricing structures.
- (g) Community consultation - the Council will consult with organisations and individuals who are able to represent the community in order to assist in the design of policies and services together with the evaluation thereof.
- (h) Social inclusion - the Council will examine on a regular basis how its services contribute towards equality in respect of social inclusion.
- (i) Inspection and regulation - the Council will undertake its inspection and regulation duties in such a way that excludes prejudice, stereotyping and unequal treatment in accordance with the Government's Enforcement Concordat.

The practical application of the above framework will vary between service areas. Heads of Service are responsible for ensuring that they have undertaken an assessment of equality needs for their areas of service and that where appropriate they have identified and planned actions to achieve necessary improvements. (Details contained within the Equality Action Plan). Reference should be made to the Equality Action Plan which forms part of this policy, and also to the individual Unit Service Plans of the Authority for specific examples of equality action to be undertaken. These identified actions will include targets where appropriate for each service area to ensure that progress can be monitored.

## **THE EQUALITY ACTION PLAN**

| <b>The Equality Standard Level 1: Commitment to a comprehensive equality policy</b>   |   |
|---|---|
| To achieve Level 1 of the Standard an authority must have adopted a comprehensive equality policy that commits it to achieving equality in race, gender and disability through: |   |
| C1  | improving equality practice at both corporate and departmental level                          |
| C2  | earmarking specific resources for improving equality practice                                 |
| C3  | equality action planning and equality target setting within all departments and service areas |
| C4  | systematic consultation   |
| C5  | a fair employment and equal pay policy  |
| C6  | an impact and needs/requirements assessment   |
| C7  | progress monitoring   |
| C8  | audit and scrutiny  |

## Appendix 4

- 4.1 To ensure that the Statement of Community Involvement can be delivered effectively and provide certainty that the public consultation methods outlined here are capable of being implemented, a Resource Audit has been undertaken. This Audit (overleaf) sets out which resources are required for each consultation methods per development plan-making stage.
- 4.2 Resources include;
- **Staff resources** - in timescale to undertake specific tasks, or number of personnel available, skills, training and availability of personnel, and
  - **In-house facilities and capabilities** - e.g. Information and Communication technology (ICT).
- 4.3 Resources are limited, and managing public consultation within the new planning system, which has introduced new requirements for public involvement within the development-plan-making process, will be more resource intensive. It is important to recognise and balance the scope within which effective public engagement can be undertaken, whilst minimising delays to the process.
- 4.4 Stafford Borough Council has been directing the Planning Delivery Grant towards staff resources to improve the performance of Planning and Engineering Services. The Forward Planning team currently have only 3 Forward Planning Officers allocated to progressing the Local Development Framework. There is also a vacant post in the team to fill. There are no current plans to extend the resources within the Forward Planning team.
- 4.5 In order to meet the public involvement targets specified in the Resource Audit and consultation methods matrix (pages 16-17 in the Statement of Community Involvement) the Forward Planning team will employ an emphasis on joined-up approaches with other Services within the Council to maximise consultation opportunities and coverage, whilst minimising resource implications.
- 4.6 Where relevant and appropriate per LDF stage, opportunities will be sought to publish information for the public within Stafford Borough Council publications and join up with other Services carrying out public consultation exercises. Such an approach will also limit 'consultation fatigue' as far as possible.

## Appendix 4 (contd)

### Resource Audit of Consultation Techniques

| Reference | Consultation Method                | Purpose and Type of Consultation Method  | Resource Implications  | SBC Service affected                                | Summary  |
|-----------|------------------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| A         | Letters - including questionnaires | Sent to statutory consultees and interested parties, with or without other information such as questionnaires                | Officer time. Within existing Forward Planning resources   | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| B         | Leaflets                           | High coverage to raise awareness of LDF. Not an effective means of developing dialogue or creating community involvement     | Officer time. Liaise with external public libraries. Within existing Forward Planning resources                        | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| C         | Articles in newsletters            | Articles targeted at residents in Stafford Borough. High coverage to raise awareness of LDF. Publication deadlines relevant. | Officer time. Within existing Forward Planning resources<br>Reinforces joined-up approach & minimises resource demands | All relevant Services                               | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| D         | Posters                            | Wide coverage with a manageable demand for resources. Can be displayed in Council Buildings, and public libraries            | Officer time. Within existing Forward Planning resources   | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| E         | Public Notices                     | High coverage to raise awareness of LDF stage. Not an effective means of creating dialogue with the community                | Officer time. Press liaison. Within existing Forward Planning resources  | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |

| Reference | Consultation Method                          | Purpose and Type of Consultation Method   | Resource Implications   | Stafford Borough Council Services affected          | Summary  |
|-----------|--|---|---|---|--|
| F         | Press Releases                               | High coverage to raise awareness of LDF stage. Not an effective means of creating dialogue with the community   | Officer time. Press liaison. Within existing Forward Planning resources                         | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| G         | Talking Newspaper                            | High coverage of specific hard to reach user group to raise awareness of LDF.   | Officer time. Liaise with external public libraries. Within existing Forward Planning resources | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| H         | Citizenship and Planning for Schools Project | Education and 2 way participation and involvement. Important & effective means of reaching a large specific section of Stafford Borough community           | Officer time. Liaise with external schools. Within existing Forward Planning resources          | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable for ongoing availability via website               |
| I         | Community Involvement Packs                  | Education and 2 way participation and involvement. Important & effective means of reaching a Stafford Borough community                                     | Officer time. Highly resource intensive. Insufficient resources within Forward Planning         | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | <i>Not appropriate with existing resources</i>                     |
| J         | Discussion groups / forums with stakeholders | 2 way participation, education and involvement. Important & effective means of reaching a Stafford Borough community, stakeholders and statutory Consultees | Officer time. Highly resource intensive. Insufficient resources within Forward Planning         | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | <i>Not appropriate with existing resources</i>                     |

| Reference | Consultation Method    | Purpose and Type of Consultation Method  | Resource Implications  | Stafford Borough Council Services affected                                | Summary  |
|-----------|------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| K         | Public meetings        | High coverage to raise awareness of LDF stage. Not necessarily representative. Needs to be well managed to maintain proactive exchange   | Officer time. Press liaison. Within existing Forward Planning resources.       | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning)                       | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| L         | LSP Partnership        | High coverage to raise awareness of LDF stage. Regular Forward Planning Officer attendance at LSP meetings and presentations at appropriate development plan-making stages                                   | Officer time. Reinforces SBC joined-up approach and minimises resource demands | Policy & Improvement, Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| M         | Citizen's Jury / Panel | Cross-section of community. High coverage to raise awareness of LDF stage. Needs to be well managed to maintain proactive exchange   | Resource intensive. Insufficient resources within Policy & Improvement         | Policy & Improvement  | <i>Not appropriate with existing resources</i>                     |
| N         | Focus Groups           | Engaging with the public in their local environment. Very effective in achieving detailed engagement with specific proposal or policy in mind. E.g. County Youth Forum, District Youth Forum, Business Forum | Officer time. Within existing Forward Planning resources.                      | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning)                       | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |

| Reference | Consultation Method               | Purpose and Type of Consultation Method  | Resource Implications   | Stafford Borough Council Services affected          | Summary  |
|-----------|-----------------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| O         | Attend Special Events             | Raise profile of LDF within the community. Outreach to raise levels of participation. E.g. Stafford County Show  | Resource intensive. Insufficient resources within Forward Planning                | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | <i>Not appropriate with existing resources</i>                     |
| P         | Borough Councillors               | Raise profile of LDF within the community. Outreach to raise levels of participation They are able to act as information sources and enablers to feedback views. | Councillor time Reinforces SBC joined-up approach and minimises resource demands  | All Borough Councillors and Parish Councils         | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| Q         | Exhibition (including ideas wall) | Coverage extends only to those residents attending. Raise profile of LDF within the community  | Officer time. Requires extensive resources to prepare material and 'man' displays | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |
| R         | Stafford Borough Council Website  | Extensive coverage including outside the Borough. 24hr resource. Limited to those with access to the internet and knowledge to use IT.                           | Officer time. Within existing Council resources.                                  | Planning and Engineering Service (Forward Planning) | Method suitable at appropriate stages subject to current resources |

## Appendix 5

### Existing Stafford Borough Council community consultation mechanisms

| Established Community SBC Consultation Mechanisms |  |   |  |                        |  |
|---|--|---|--|------------------------|--|
| Method  | Key Target Audience  | Method Details  | Frequency  | Service                | Publications                                   |
| <b>The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)</b>      | Consists of over 360 key local voluntary, community and environmental sectors organisations and individuals across Stafford Borough. | The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was formed in 2001. The current Community Plan 2003-2006 was published in September 2003.                                 | Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Executive (24 members) meets quarterly | Policy & Improvement   | Partnership Plus                               |
| <b>Area Forums</b>                                | Community in localised area  | Regular updates and opportunities for community involvement in the LDF process will occur at Area Forums, throughout the Borough.                               | Ad hoc   | Ad hoc                 | Ad hoc   |
| <b>Publications and Newsletters</b>               | Each publication is targeted at either a specific section of the community or deals with a specific topic area.                      | Regular updates and news via a plethora of Stafford Borough Council publications issued by different Services within the Council at a range of issue intervals. | Various (see overleaf)   | Various (see overleaf) | Various (see overleaf)                         |
| <b>Specific Service Consultation</b>              | General and specifically targeted community consultation for each Service  | A Consultation Calendar within the Consultation Strategy. Forthcoming consultation periods per Service to identify opportunities for joined-up approach         | Rolling programme of community consultation                              | Policy & Improvement   | Stafford Borough Council Consultation Strategy |
| <b>Information Base</b>                           | Stafford Borough Council local community and other interested parties  | Up-to-date information is available at receptions and on the Borough Council's website  | Ongoing  | All                    | Various (see overleaf)                         |

Stafford Borough – Local Development Framework  
Statement of Community Involvement  
Submission Document Issue Date: April 2005

## Stafford Borough Council Publications

| <b>Stafford Borough Council Publications</b> |   |                              |   |  |
|--|---|------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Publication</b>                           | <b>Status</b>   | <b>Publication frequency</b> | <b>Source</b>                                     | <b>Target Audience</b>                                     |
| <b>Partnership Plus</b>                      | Publication of Local Strategic Partnership  | Quarterly                    | Policy & Improvement Team                         | Sent to all LSP members                                    |
| <b>Sundial</b>                               | LA21 Sustainability issues magazine. The newsletter is also translated into Braille | Tri-annually                 | Local Agenda 21 Team                              | Local Community  |
| <b>Neighbours</b>                            | Council Tenancy Newsletter  | Quarterly                    | Tenant Participation Officer<br>Property Services | Council Property Tenants                                   |
| <b>Newsline</b>                              | Stafford Borough Council Newsletter   | Monthly                      | Chief Executive's Office                          | Local Community  |
| <b>Executive Summary</b>                     | Update of key Stafford Borough Council events and current issues                    | Monthly                      | Chief Executive's Office                          | Stafford Borough Council Employees Newsletter              |
| <b>Members Digest</b>                        | Update of key Stafford Borough Council events and current issues                    | Monthly                      | Committee Services                                | Stafford Borough Council Members Parish / Town Councillors |
| <b>Feeder's Digest</b>                       | Environmental Health issues for the catering sector                                 | Monthly                      | Environmental Health                              | Pubs & Restaurants serving food to the public              |
| <b>Leisure Guide</b>                         | Calendar with public service adverts  | Annual                       | Cultural and Leisure Services                     | Local Community  |

## *Standard consultee list for development control consultations*

Acorus (rural property consultants)  
ADAS (former Executive Agency of MAFF in 1992 and private company in 1997)  
The Regional Development Agency for the West Midlands  
Ancient Monuments Society  
Archaeology Services Wyas  
Staffordshire Badger Conservation Group  
The Council for British Archaeology  
Bat Conservation Trust  
Barlaston and Meaford Residents Association  
British Waterways  
Commission for Architecture in the Built Environment  
Cannock Chase District Council  
Friends of Cannock Chase  
The Coal Authority  
Council for the Protection of Rural England  
Defence Estates  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Department of Trade and Industry  
Department for Transport, Local Government and the Regions  
The Environment Agency  
East Staffordshire Borough Council  
English Heritage  
Nature Conservancy Council for England  
Stafford Friends of the Earth  
Forestry Commission  
British Gas Transco  
The Georgian Group  
The Garden History Society  
English Golf Union  
Government Office for the West Midlands  
National Grid Company  
The Haywood Society  
Hanchurch Conservation Area Residents association  
Mid Staffordshire Health Authority  
Environmental and Health Services  
Highway Agency - Area Development Manager  
Health and Safety Executive  
The Inland Waterways Association  
Lichfield District Council  
Midland Electricity Board  
Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council  
The Foundation NHS Trust  
National Land Information Service  
North Shropshire District Council

Ofsted – Child Minding or Day Care Provision  
Parish Councils  
Mainline Pipelines Ltd  
Staffordshire Police - Police Liaison Officer  
Network Rail  
Strategic Rail Authority  
Railway Inspectorate  
Ramblers Association  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds  
Stafford Borough Council - Housing Services  
Stafford Borough Council - Arboriculture Officer  
Stafford Borough Council - Conservation Officer  
Stafford Borough Council - Drainage Section  
Stafford Borough Council - Engineers  
Stafford Borough Council - Leisure Officer  
Stafford Borough Council - Parks and Open Spaces Officer  
Stafford Borough Council - Building Control Services  
Stafford Borough Council - Urban Design Officer  
Staffordshire County Council - Archaeological Officer  
Staffordshire County Council - Animal Health and Petroleum  
Staffordshire County Council - Cycle Routes  
Staffordshire County Council - Highways  
Staffordshire County Council - Principal Ecologist  
Staffordshire County Council - County Property Service  
Staffordshire County Council - County Planning Enforcement  
Staffordshire County Council - County Footpaths Officer  
Staffordshire County Council - Nursery Schools  
Staffordshire County Council - Property and Estates Division  
Staffordshire County Council - Strategic Planning Officer  
Sports Council  
Stafford Chamber of Trade  
Staffordshire Environmental Fund  
Staffordshire Gardens and Park Trust  
Stafford Historical and Civic Society  
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council  
Stoke on Trent City Council  
Stoke on Trent City Council - Engineering  
Stoke on Trent City Council - Highways  
The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings  
Sow and Penk Internal Drainage Board  
South Staffordshire District Council  
Stone Historic and Civic Society  
Severn Trent Water  
Shropshire Union Canal Society  
Staffordshire Wildlife Trust  
The Theatres Trust  
National Trust  
The Victorian Society  
District of the Wrekin Council

## Consultee list for Development Plan consultations

### Extract from Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12): SPECIFIC CONSULTATION BODIES

- E1. The following bodies are specific consultation bodies and must be consulted in accordance with the Act and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004.
- (a) The regional planning body if the local planning authority's area is in a region other than London;
  - (b) The Mayor of London if the authority is a London Borough;
  - (c) A relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority;
  - (d) The Countryside Agency;
  - (e) The Environment Agency;
  - (f) Highways Agency;
  - (g) The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England;
  - (h) English Nature;
  - (i) The Strategic Rail Authority;
  - (j) A Regional Development Agency whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority;
  - (k) Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106 (3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003;
  - (l) Any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local planning authority; and
  - (m) Any of the bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the local planning authority:
    - i. Strategic Health Authority;
    - ii. Person to whom a licence has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986;
    - iii. Sewage undertaker; and
    - iv. Water undertaker.

### GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

- E2. The appropriate Government Office for the Region should also be consulted and will often be the first point of contact for consultation with central Government Departments. In addition, local planning authorities are strongly advised to consult any Government Departments or agencies where those departments or agencies have large land holdings in the area covered by a local development document. This will ensure that local planning authorities are fully aware of the possible need for expansion of existing facilities or,

more importantly, the likelihood of large-scale land disposals taking place within the period of time covered by the local development document.

- (a) Home Office;
- (b) Department for Education and Skills (through Government Offices);
- (c) Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;
- (d) Department for Transport (through Government Offices);
- (e) Department of Health (through relevant Regional Public Health Group);
- (f) Department of Trade and Industry (through Government Offices);
- (g) Ministry of Defence;
- (h) Department of Work and Pensions;
- (i) Department of Constitutional Affairs;
- (j) Department for Culture, Media and Sport;
- (k) Office of Government Commerce (Property Advisers to the Civil Estate);  
and
- (l) The Countryside Agency.

### **GENERAL CONSULTATION BODIES**

- (a) Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area;
- (b) Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area;
- (c) Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area;
- (d) Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area; and
- (e) Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the authority's area.

### **OTHER CONSULTEES**

E3. Local planning authorities should also *consider the need to consult*, where appropriate the following agencies and organisations in the preparation of local development documents.

- (a) Age Concern;
- (b) Airport operators;
- (c) British Chemical Distributors and Traders Association;
- (d) British Geological Survey;
- (e) British Waterways, canal owners and navigation authorities;
- (f) Centre for Ecology and Hydrology;
- (g) Chambers of Commerce, Local CBI and local branches of Institute of Directors;
- (h) Church Commissioners;
- (i) Civil Aviation Authority;
- (j) Coal Authority;
- (k) Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment;
- (l) Commission for New Towns and English Partnerships;

- (m) Commission for Racial Equality;
- (n) Crown Estate Office;
- (o) Diocesan Board of Finance;
- (p) Disability Rights Commission;
- (q) Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee;
- (r) Electricity, Gas, and Telecommunications Undertakers, and the National Grid Company;
- (s) Environmental groups at national, regional and local level, including:
  - i. Council for the Protection of Rural England;
  - ii. Friends of the Earth;
  - iii. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and
  - iv. Wildlife Trusts;
- (t) Equal Opportunities Commission;
- (u) Fire and Rescue Services;
- (v) Forestry Commission;
- (w) Freight Transport Association;
- (x) Gypsy Council;
- (y) Health and Safety Executive;
- (z) Help the Aged;
- (aa) Housing Corporation;
- (bb) Learning and Skills Councils;
- (cc) Local Agenda 21 including:
  - i. Civic Societies;
  - ii. Community Groups;
  - iii. Local Transport Authorities;
  - iv. Local Transport Operators; and
  - v. Local Race Equality Councils and other local equality groups;
- (dd) National Playing Fields Association;
- (ee) Network Rail;
- (ff) Passenger Transport Authorities;
- (gg) Passenger Transport Executives;
- (hh) Police Architectural Liaison Officers/Crime Prevention Design Advisors;
- (ii) Port Operators;
- (jj) Post Office Property Holdings;
- (kk) Rail Companies and the Rail Freight Group;
- (ll) Regional Development Agencies;
- (mm) Regional Housing Boards;
- (nn) Regional Sports Boards;
- (oo) Road Haulage Association;
- (pp) Sport England;
- (qq) The House Builders Federation;
- (rr) Transport for London;
- (ss) Traveller Law Reform Coalition;
- (tt) Water Companies; and
- (uu) Women's National Commission.

## Definitions of Planning Applications

### Definition of Major Planning Applications

- 8.1 **Departure from the Development Plan**, as defined in **Circular 07/99, Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) (Departures) Directions 1999**;
- 8.2 **Is the application for any other development which constitutes a departure from the development plan and which, by reason of its scale or nature, or the location of the land, would significantly prejudice the implementation of the development plan's policies and proposals?**
- 8.3 In deciding this question, local planning authorities should consider each case on the facts. Although it is a matter for the local planning authority to determine that a proposed development may cause significant prejudice to the implementation of the development plan's policies and proposals, this decision must be made lawfully and is subject to review by the courts. Among the matters the local planning authority should take into account are the size of the proposed development, its impact on the area and the type of development. The following are examples of the types of **development proposal which might significantly prejudice the implementation of the development plan's policies and proposals**:
- (i) applications for development of major importance having more than local significance, e.g. major industrial developments and major retail, leisure, office or mixed commercial developments (other than those notified automatically to the Secretary of State);
  - (ii) applications which raise important or novel issues of development control, e.g. major infrastructure projects;
  - (iii) applications for major proposals involving the winning and working of minerals, or waste disposal, storage, treatment or processing facilities, e.g. clinical or special waste incinerators or waste-to-energy power plants;
  - (iv) applications significantly affecting national parks, areas of outstanding natural beauty, sites of special scientific interest and conservation areas, Grade I and II\* listed buildings, and scheduled monuments;
  - (v) applications involving development for which an environmental impact assessment is required;
  - (vi) applications involving inappropriate development in the Green Belt and Metropolitan Open Land in Greater London. Advice on what constitutes inappropriate development is set out in the revised PPG2 "Green Belts"

(1995) and RPG3 "Strategic Guidance for London Planning Authorities" (1996);

- (vii) applications involving development that would result in the loss of open space or playing fields both publicly and privately owned;
- (viii) applications which, through their cumulative impact with existing and / or proposed development, may have a significant impact on the implementation of the policies and proposals in the development plan.

8.4 **Schedule 1 Developments** as defined in **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England and Wales) Regulations 1999)** section (3B-949/408). In summary, may include:

8.5 Crude Oil refineries, Power Stations and installations, Iron & Steel smelting installations, metal production installations, asbestos use installations, integrated chemical installations, construction of lines for long-distance railway/ airport traffic, inland waterways, ports, waste disposal installations, groundwater abstractions, waste water treatment plants, commercial petrol or gas extraction, dams or similar, pipes for chemicals, gas, or oil, intensive poultry or pig farming, industrial pulp or paper plants, quarries or open-cast mining, or petrol, petro-chemical or chemical storage.

8.6 Development Proposals subject to the **Town and Country Planning (Shopping Development) (England and Wales) Direction, (Annex D of PPG6 and substituted by Circular 15/93)**. In essence, major retail proposals. Note guidance from this extract from PPG 6 1996:

8.7 *'Local planning authorities should consider not only the incremental effects of the new development on existing centres, but the likely cumulative effects of recently completed developments and of outstanding planning permissions in the catchment areas of these centres.*

8.8 *For this reason, the Secretary of State has directed local planning authorities to notify him of certain proposals for major retail development, before granting planning permission. This is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Shopping Direction) (England and Wales)(No.2) Direction 1993.*

8.9 *Local planning authorities are also required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) Direction 1992 to notify departure applications to the Secretary of State if:*

- *they consist of more than 10,000 square metres of gross retail floor space; or*
- *by reason of their scale, nature or location they would significantly prejudice the implementation of development plan policies and proposals.*

- 8.10 *These procedures provide the Secretary of State with the opportunity to call-in applications for his own decision, although applications will be called-in selectively and normally only where the proposals are of more than local importance'. (paragraphs 4.15 – 4.18, PPG6).*
- 8.11 **Schedule 2 Developments** as defined in the **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment)(England and Wales) Regulations 1999)** Development of a type listed in Schedule 2 to the Regulations which:
- meets one of the relevant criteria or exceeds one of the relevant thresholds listed in the second column of the table in Schedule 2; or
  - is located in a 'sensitive area', as defined in regulation 2(1);
  - is referred to in this Circular as '**Schedule 2 development**'.
- 8.12 **Town and Country (Residential Development on Greenfield Land) (England) Direction 2000.** In the Direction, "greenfield land" is defined by reference to the definition of previously-developed land set out in Annex C to PPG3.
- 8.13 *'Previously-developed land is that which is or was occupied by a permanent structure (excluding agricultural or forestry buildings), and associated fixed surface infrastructure. The definition covers the curtilage of the development. Previously-developed land may occur in both built-up and rural settings. The definition includes defence buildings and land used for mineral extraction and waste disposal where provision for restoration has not been made through development control procedures' (PPG3 Annex C).*
- 8.14 Development proposed on playing fields as set out in the **(Town & Country Planning (Playing Fields) (England) Direction 1998**. This direction shall apply to any planning application made on or after 23 December 1998 where:
- the development to which the application relates is development of a description mentioned in paragraph (z) of the Table ([see endnote 2](#)) in article 10 of the Order; and
  - the land (or any part of the land) which is the subject of the application: is land of a local authority; or is currently used by an educational institution as a playing field (as defined in article 10(2) (1) of the Order, or has at any time in the five years before the making of the application been used by an educational institution as a playing field (as so defined); and,
  - The Sports Council for England has been consulted pursuant to article 10(1), and has made representations objecting to the whole or part of the development on one or more of the following grounds:

- there is a deficiency in the provision of playing fields in the local authority area concerned; or
- the proposed development would result in such a deficiency; or
- where the proposed development involves a loss of a playing field and an alternative or replacement playing field is proposed to be provided, that alternative or replacement does not match (whether in quantity, quality or accessibility) that which is lost.

8.15 Stafford Borough Council operates a 'Fast-Track' planning application system, whereby some planning applications will be considered with the same public consultation techniques, but delays in the determination process kept to a minimum.

### **Definition of Fast-Track planning applications**

8.16 These are development proposals that fall under any of the categories below.

- 1) New buildings and extensions to buildings of 4500 sq m and above,
- 2) creating 30 jobs or more,
- 3) high tech companies (e.g. IT)
- 4) within local clusters, (e.g. IT, logistics)
- 5) within a high growth cluster,
- 6) Creating less than 30 jobs but otherwise significant employer, e.g. satellite office of large overseas company seeking to locate or relocate in Stafford Borough, including proposals with potential for promoting regeneration sites,
- 7) Other business development proposals considered important by virtue of their employment generation, whether direct or indirect.

### **Definition of Special Interest Applications**

8.17 Term used in the planning web page (on-line public access web site link) that includes both major planning applications and fast-track (FT) applications.

## Planning Applications and Public Participation

### ***Consultation per planning application type***

- 10.1 The following are suggested best practice methods of how public consultation should take place for Major Planning Applications. Stafford Borough Council advocates the 'front-loading' of public engagement, which may assist in a speedier timescale for a planning decision to be made.
- 10.2 Resource implications for public consultation on planning applications are shown below. Council Officer time is the main resource issue at both pre-application and planning application stages.
- 10.3 Fast track planning applications will be publicised as per whether they are normal planning applications or major planning applications. There is no difference in the methods of public consultation.

### **Major Planning Applications at pre-planning application stage:**

| <b>Consultation Techniques</b>   | <b>Responsibility and Resources</b>   |
|--|---|
| Letters to inform adjacent residents of the planning application site                  | Planning applicants / agents are encouraged to write and send out letters to nearby residents   |
| Public exhibition or public meeting to be held at a convenient and accessible location | Planning applicants / agents are encouraged to prepare and publicise proposals for public consultation, and make such proposal information available for inspection. Check publicity material for compliance with Statement of Community Involvement  |
| Discussions, or written comments on draft proposal                                     | <p>Planning applicants/agents are encouraged to prepare and submit draft proposals, and hold pre-application discussions</p> <p>Stafford Borough Council Officers should engage with planning applicants / agents regarding their submission of draft proposals (pre-application discussions)</p> |

## Major Planning Applications after planning validation:

| Consultation Techniques   | Responsibility and Resources   |
|---|--|
| Public Notice in local paper or press release   | Stafford Borough Council Officers need to prepare press statements   |
| Site Notice (where applicable) displayed for minimum 21 days on or near the site  | Stafford Borough Council Officers need to prepare site notices and visit site to put site notices up                                       |
| Development Control web pages on Stafford Borough Council website   | Stafford Borough Council Officers to maintain and update web page  |
| Notification letters to inform adjacent residents of the planning application site  | Stafford Borough Council Officers need to prepare and send out letters.<br>'Adjacent residents' to be determined per planning application. |
| Invite representations from Statutory and some Non-Statutory Consultees   | Stafford Borough Council Officers need to prepare and send out letters (refer to standard consultee list in Appendix 7)                    |
| Where the proposal is in their local area, Councillors and Parish Councils to publicise, disseminate and feedback information to Officers | Borough Councillors and Parish Councils<br>Time with the public as determined by duties  |

## Planning Applications at pre-planning application stage:

| Consultation Techniques   | Responsibility and Resources   |
|---|--|
| Letters to inform adjacent residents of the planning application site | Planning applicants / agents are encouraged to write and send out letters to nearby residents  |
| Public exhibition or meeting to be held                               | Planning applicants / agents are encouraged to prepare and publicise proposals for public consultation, and make proposal information available for inspection. Check publicity material for compliance with Statement of Community Involvement  |
| Discussions, or written comments on draft proposal                    | Planning applicants/agents are encouraged to prepare and submit draft proposals, and hold pre-application discussions<br><br>Stafford Borough Council Officers should engage with planning applicants / agents regarding their submission of draft proposals (pre-application discussions) |

## Planning Applications after planning validation:

| Consultation Techniques   | Responsibility and Resources   |
|---|--|
| Site Notice (where applicable) displayed for minimum 21 days on or near the site  | Stafford Borough Council Officers need to prepare site notices and visit site to put site notices up                                       |
| Development Control website   | Stafford Borough Council Officers to maintain and update web page  |
| Notification letters to inform adjacent residents of the planning application site  | Stafford Borough Council Officers need to prepare and send out letters.<br>'Adjacent residents' to be determined per planning application. |
| Invite representations from Statutory and some Non-Statutory Consultees   | Stafford Borough Council Officers need to prepare and send out letters (refer to standard consultee list in Appendix 7)                    |
| Where the proposal is in their local area, Councillors and Parish Councils to publicise, disseminate and feedback information to Officers | Borough Councillors and Parish Councils<br>Time with the public as determined by duties  |