



**Statement of  
Community Involvement**

**September 2021 January 2022**

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**01483 755855**

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### **Introduction - What is the Statement of Community Involvement?**

- 1.1 Woking Borough Council has produced this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to set out how we can involve our community effectively in Planning decisions. There are two main strands to planning in the Borough, the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs) and the processing of planning applications.
- 1.2 The Council is required by Government to produce a Statement of Community Involvement setting out how it will involve the community when it prepares or changes LDDs and also how the community will be involved in the decision-making process for planning applications.
- 1.3 When producing LDDs the Council will meet a certain level of public involvement, as set out in the Regulations, and this document will provide guidance to enable that to be achieved.

### **How was the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) developed?**

- 1.4 This is the fourth SCI produced by the Council. Public consultation ~~will be~~ was conducted from 27 September 2021 and 8 November 2021, and the comments received will inform the have informed this final version. It is necessary to update the SCI for it to be in line with new government guidance and regulations, but also to ensure it is up-to-date and remains a useful and effective tool for residents and the development industry.
- 1.5 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is the main legislation from Central Government which provides the policy and legal basis to the planning system in England and Wales. The Council's original Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was prepared in the context of the 2004 Act and was adopted in February 2007. The second SCI (published in 2011) was updated following further changes to the planning process through legislation in the Planning Act 2008. The third SCI, published in 2015, was a further update to reflect recent changes to the planning system introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and associated revised Regulations: The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012. This fourth iteration of the SCI has been prepared to ensure it complies with updated guidance and regulations. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets the Government's planning policies for England, with planning practice guidance providing guidance on how the Government expects policies to be applied.
- 1.6 The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. The Act was brought in by the coalition government, with the main aim of devolving greater powers to councils and neighbourhoods and giving local communities control over housing and planning decisions.
- 1.7 The Act gave power to the Secretary of State to revoke whole or part of regional strategies. On 28 February 2013, the Secretary of State gave orders to partially revoke The South East Plan. This came into effect on 25 March 2013. This means that the Council is no longer required to comply with the regional policies set out in the South East Plan, with the exception of policy NRM6: Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, which was saved and still applies to our borough.
- 1.8 The Localism Act also introduced a new right for communities to prepare a neighbourhood development plan if they choose to do so. Since then significant progress has been made across the Borough, with three Neighbourhood Plans adopted (Hook Heath in 2015, and Pyrford and West Byfleet both in 2017) and three other Neighbourhood Areas designated, with neighbourhood planning activity progressing within them. These are Byfleet village, Hoe Valley, and Brookwood and Bridley.

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- 1.9 Further information on Neighbourhood Plans can be found in Section 4 and on our website: <http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/policy/ldf/neighplg>

### Planning affects all of us

- 1.10 The planning system in England is plan-led. This means that plans are prepared to guide future development and give firm guidance on what can be built where.
- 1.11 Planning shapes the environment around us, where we live, work, shop and play. Planning decisions determine where new homes, offices, shops and leisure facilities will be located and what happens to our countryside, open spaces and historic environment. That is why the Council is keen to ensure that the community is involved in key decisions on planning matters.

### Our Community

- 1.12 Our community includes all of the individuals, groups and organisations that live, work or operate businesses within the Borough. We recognise that the different groups that make up our community have different needs and expectations. They also have different desires, capabilities and capacities to get involved.
- 1.13 The Council has looked at the different types of community groups in the Borough who should be included in planning processes and the possible techniques for engaging them. Based on the Council's principles of consulting the community, the Council will:
- actively seek informed views from appropriate groups using a range of techniques
  - involve people as far as possible and appropriate in Council decision making, through inviting them to participate in identifying issues, consulting to address the issues and publishing decisions
  - seek to join up consultation with other processes, focussing on peoples' experiences and concerns, and balance that with any particular governmental processes.
- 1.14 The SCI explains how and when public participation will occur. It is therefore the Council's service agreement with the community and stakeholders in relation to planning matters.

#### **The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires that:**

- Plans should be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees (paragraph 16.c);
- In decision making, early engagement with the local community is encouraged (paragraph 40).

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- 1.15 The 2020-21 Covid19 pandemic led to periods of change to legislation and guidance on social contact, which limited people's movement and access to public buildings. Therefore, some forms of consultation needed to adapt to be more flexible. This SCI is amended to enable plan-making to continue, to reflect the Written Ministerial Statement published by the Government on 13 May 2020 and updated Planning Practice Guidance on Statements of Community Involvement. Amendments have been made to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the Regulations). This meant that for the period between the Ministerial Statement's publication and the end of 2020, Councils were not required to make planning documents available at their principal offices. The amendments to the Regulations also removed the requirement for the Council to provide hard copies of documents, but it still had to make documents available on its website.
- 1.16 The Council will endeavour to exceed the minimum requirements set in the Regulations, and will seek to ensure that engagement and consultation is as wide-ranging and inclusive as possible, as detailed in paragraph 2.14. The updates made to this SCI ensure that it could be used during the 2020/21 pandemic, and also make it fit for purpose should there be pandemic or similar restrictions in future. The Council will continue to promote effective community engagement in ways that are practicable and responsive to change beyond our control.

### **Who will be consulted on Planning issues?**

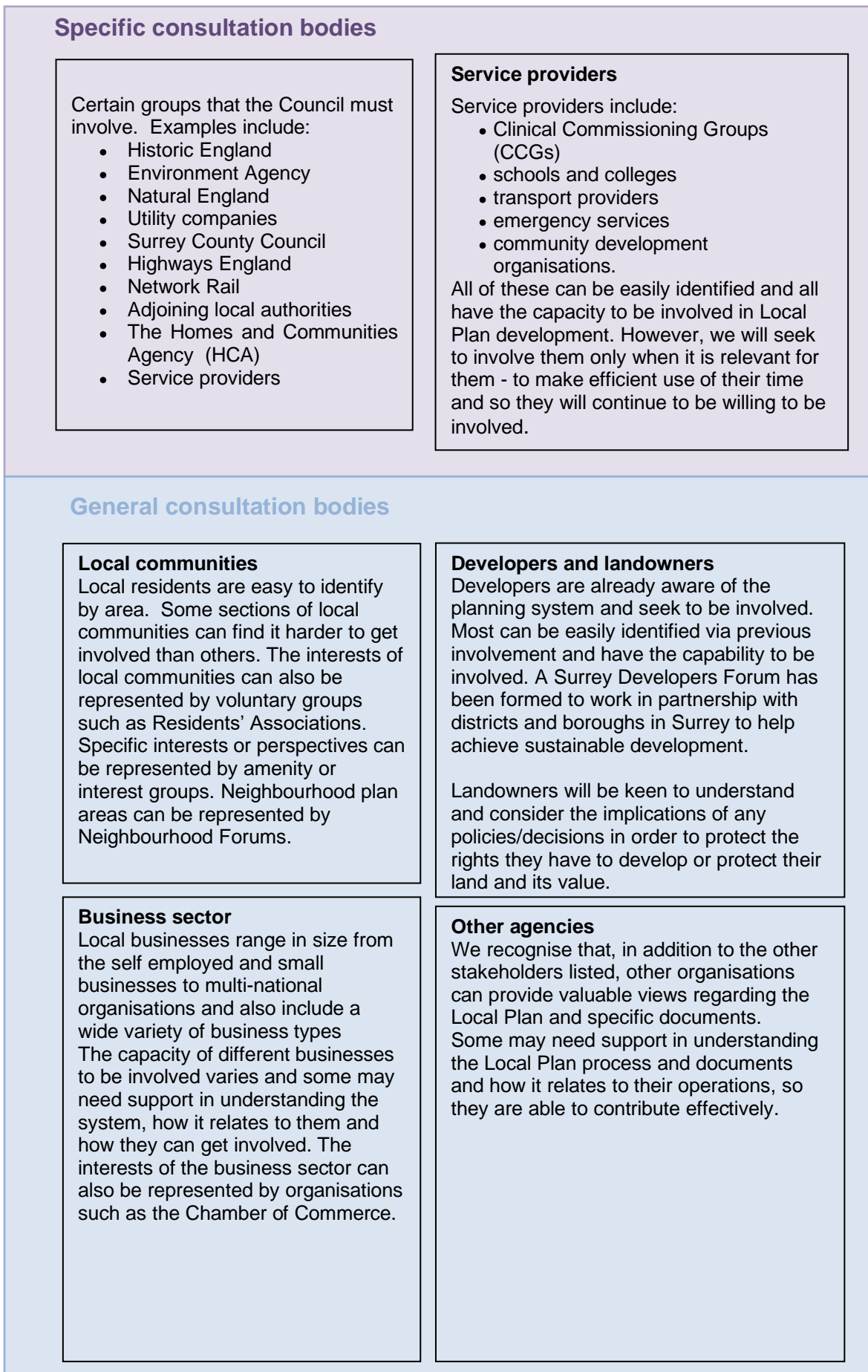
- 1.17 Stakeholders and community groups who should be involved in planning processes include statutory organisations that the Council must involve, local interest groups, service providers and operators, local businesses and residents.
- 1.18 The Regulations<sup>1</sup> provide some guidance on the types of groups that need to be included in consultation processes on Local Plans (Development Plan Documents, or DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). They set out specific and general consultation bodies.
- Specific bodies are statutory consultation groups who are often knowledgeable in certain subjects (for example the Environment Agency on flooding matters).
  - General bodies include voluntary groups, interest groups, those with business interests and hard-to-reach groups.
- 1.19 Figure 1 on page 8 summaries the specific and general consultation bodies. Appendix 1 contains full details of these bodies but lists the types of groups to be involved, rather than names of people or organisations, which may change over time.
- 1.20 Stakeholders and the community are encouraged to access information online, however the Council accepts that not everyone has access to the necessary technology or the internet. Also, different types of engagement will require different means and methods to be used. Therefore, a range of options are set out in this SCI to enable engagement and participation that is as wide-reaching as possible, noting the considerations set out at paragraph 1.15.
- 1.21 The Council holds an electronic database of over 6,000 organisations and individuals who would like to be kept informed about Local Plan progress. The database is continually updated. Any resident, business or interested party can add their details by contacting the Planning Policy team via email ([planning.policy@woking.gov.uk](mailto:planning.policy@woking.gov.uk)) or telephone **01483 743871**. There are also statutory organisations who the Council must consult on planning applications. These can be found in Appendix 1.

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<sup>1</sup> Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012

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- 1.22 It is important to include those that are seldom heard in the planning process. Hard to reach groups in Woking Borough will be encouraged to participate in Local Development Document production to ensure a full representation of opinions is received. The techniques that will be used to try to engage with various groups are detailed in Appendix 2.
- 1.23 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduces a Duty to Cooperate, which requires specific bodies to cooperate with the Council in preparing its Local Development Documents. The Council has a legal duty to work with these bodies to address strategic issues of cross boundary importance.

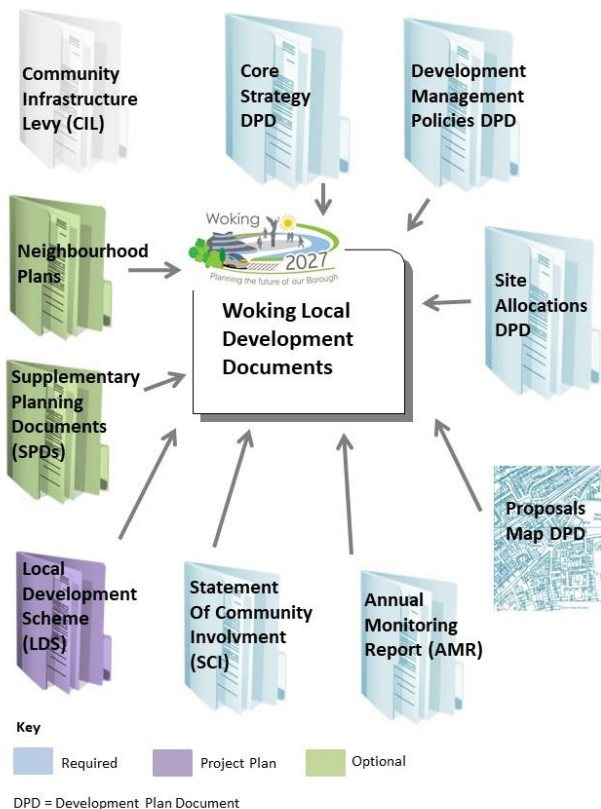
**Figure 1:** Who are the Specific and General consultation bodies?



### What are Local Development Documents?

- 2.1 Local Development Documents (LDDs) are Planning Policy documents that comprise Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). They provide the necessary framework for determining how the Borough will grow and develop. Development Plan Documents (DPDs) include policies that set the strategy for development, identify suitable sites for development and policies which will be used to determine planning applications. The Council has adopted its main strategic policies in the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) in October 2012. In accordance with the NPPF, the Core Strategy was reviewed in October 2018. The document sets out a vision for local development and set out how that vision can be achieved by 2027. It includes primary policies for dealing with different issues such as housing and environmental protection.
- 2.2 The Council has two DPDs that enable the delivery of the Core Strategy. The first is the Development Management Policies DPD, adopted in October 2016, which contains detailed development management policies to help determine day to day planning applications. The Site Allocations DPD identifies various sites for development for a number of uses to meet the requirements of the Core Strategy. A number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have also been or are in the process of being prepared. Figure 2 shows Woking's various LDDs which have been adopted or are being prepared.
- 2.3 More information on the progress of the Local Plan can be found at <http://www.woking2027.info/>

Figure 2 Woking’s Local Development Documents



- **Core Strategy DPD**– this sets out the broad quantity and distribution of development for the Borough, supported by strategic policies and designations ([Adopted October 2012](#) and reviewed in October 2018)
- **Development Management Policies DPD** - this sets out detailed policies for the management of development in the Borough to help determine planning applications (adopted October 2016).
- **Site Allocations DPD** – this allocates specific sites for various types of development and infrastructure, to deliver the requirements of the Core Strategy.
- **Proposals Map** – this illustrates the geographical extent of policies and proposals. ([Adopted Oct 2012](#) and reviewed in 2016 and 2018, and updates will be ongoing).
- Monitoring Reports are [annual reports](#) that assess the progress on the delivery of the various Local Development Documents LDDs
- Statement of Community Involvement

- Parking Standards SPD (Adopted 2018)
- Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight SPD ( [Adopted 2008](#), updated version 2019 and consultation draft 2021).
- Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area Avoidance SPD (2010-2015 and updated consultation draft 2021)
- Climate Change SPD ([Adopted 2013](#))
- Affordable Housing Delivery SPD (Adopted 2014)
- Design SPD (Adopted 2015)
- Hot Food Takeaway SPD (Adopted 2014)

- The Local Development Scheme ([LDS](#)) is a project plan for preparing Development Plan Documents. It sets out a timetable for when documents will be produced and when consultation on them will take place

- Community Infrastructure Levy ([CIL](#), adopted by the Council October 2014 to take effect from April 2015)  
This is a standardised charge that applies to new developments in order to raise funds to deliver infrastructure to support sustainable growth in the Borough. For more info see: <http://www.woking2027.info/infrastructure>.

### **Community involvement in the preparation of Local Development Documents LDDs**

2.5 This section looks at how Woking's community can become involved in the production of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

#### **Policy requirements**

2.6 In creating these documents, the Council must take into account the requirements set out in legislation and in national policy. The community will be involved throughout the different stages of production for each document. At an early stage of preparation of a LDD, the Council will engage with individuals, community groups and stakeholders on the issues that they would like to see addressed. The Council will then develop ideas for addressing issues and concerns raised through the preparation of DPDs and SPDs. Where it is necessary to do so, the Council will involve the community when drafts of LDDs have been prepared.

2.7 Minimum levels of consultation on DPDs and SPDs are determined by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012. Key references in the Regulations are:

- Regulation 2– defines the 'specific' and 'general' consultation bodies.
- Regulation 12 and 13– public participation in the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents.
- Regulation 18– public participation in the preparation of a Local Plan or Development Plan Document.
- Regulation 19– publication of a Local Plan or Development Plan Document.
- Regulation 20– representations relating to a Development Plan Document.

2.8 The Council will always endeavour to exceed the minimum requirements of these regulations and ensure that 'hard to reach' groups are adequately involved.

### Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 2.9 There are different requirements for DPD and SPD production. DPDs contain core policies so require additional consultation. Figure 3 sets out the key stages of DPD preparation and outlines the process the Council will follow to involve the community.
- 2.10 The extent of consultation undertaken for DPDs should be proportionate to the scale of issues involved in the plan.
- 2.11 Councillors are involved at every stage in producing a DPD to ensure that the documents are addressing the needs of the local community without ignoring its statutory duties. There is an LDF Working Group (LDF WG)<sup>2</sup>, this group comprises of councillors representing the political make-up of the Council, with a special interest in Local Development Documents. A document will first go to the group, where they will scrutinise it and make recommendations to the Council's Executive Committee, who in turn make a recommendation to Full Council. Documents are agreed by LDF WG and then approved by either the Executive Committee or full Council, before formal consultation on them begins.

The Government advise the Proposed Submission version of a DPD should be the final version but accept that amendments may need to be made. The Council may propose a schedule of modifications as a result of representations received during the Regulation 19 consultation and new evidence coming forward, for the Secretary of State to consider as part of the Examination of the DPD.

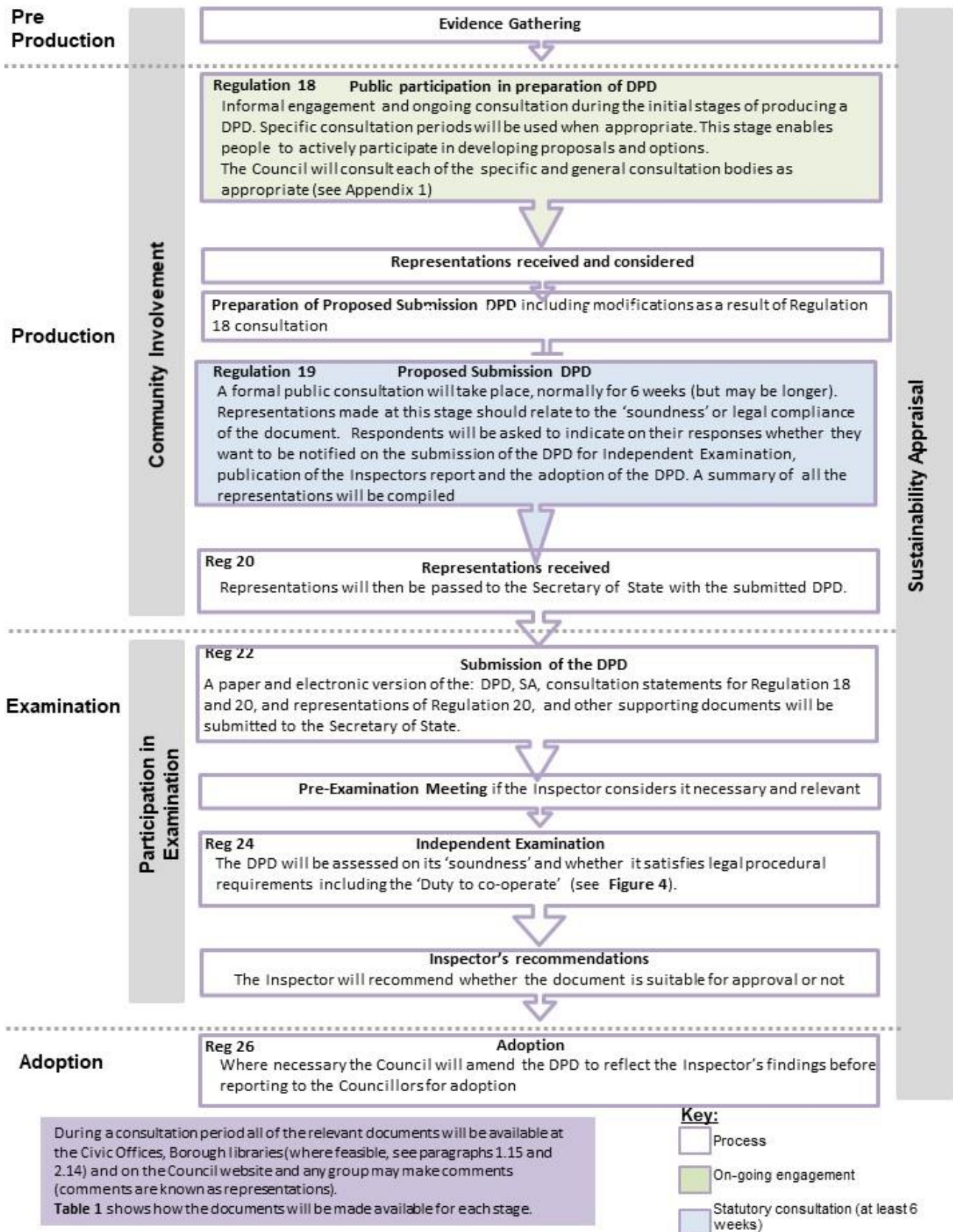
- 2.13 All DPDs are subject to Independent Examination by and inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. Everyone who supported or objected to any part of the DPD during its consultations will be given the opportunity to be heard at the Examination. It is only after the recommendation of the Inspector has been taken into account that the DPD will be adopted.

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<sup>2</sup> Local Development Documents were formerly known collectively as the Local Development Framework (LDF)

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**Figure 3** Key stages of Development Plan Document preparation



The Regulations referred to above are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012.

**Figure 4:** The tests of soundness and Duty to Cooperate**Tests of soundness****Positively prepared**

A development plan document should be based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, and should be informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet requirements from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development

**Justified**

A development plan document needs to be founded on a **robust and credible evidence base** that ensures it is an appropriate strategy, taking account of reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence. Some points to consider may include:

- evidence of participation of the local community and others having a stake in the area
- research/fact finding – the choices made in the plan are justified by the evidence. What is the source of the evidence? How up to date and convincing is it?

**Effective**

The development plan document needs to be deliverable over the plan period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with and evidenced by the statement of common ground The DPD should also be:

- flexible
- able to be monitored.

**Consistent with national policy**

The development plan document should be consistent with national policy. It should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework.

**Duty to Cooperate.**

The Localism Act introduced the 'duty to cooperate'. This requires local authorities such as borough councils and, county councils or other public bodies to '*engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis*' with each other on planning matters of strategic or cross boundary significance including the preparation of Development Plan Documents and Local Development Plan Documents. This is a legal test on which DPDs will be measured at Examinations.

The Government states that these bodies should work together on strategic matters including sustainable development, housing and transport, that have significant wider impacts. Those subject to the requirement will need to have regard to activities of other bodies prescribed in the regulations and consider whether to prepare joint Local Development Documents.

To demonstrate effective and ongoing joint working, one or more statements of common ground should be prepared, documenting how cross-boundary matters have been addressed and progress in cooperation. If an independent examiner considers that the duty has not been complied with in the preparation of a Development Plan Document DPD, they may reject the DPD.

Please refer to the primary legislation<sup>3</sup> and regulations<sup>4</sup> for more information.

<sup>3</sup> The Localism Act 2011

<sup>4</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012

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**Table 1:** How each of the documents will be made available (as set out in Regulation 22)

Documents	Civic Offices/ Libraries (see para 2.14)	Website	Local press	Specific bodies	General bodies	Persons wishing to be notified*
DPD	✓	✓		✓		
Sustainability appraisal Report	✓	✓		✓		
Proposals Map	✓	✓		✓		
Consultation (Reg 18)	✓	✓		✓		
Consultation (Reg 19 and 20)	✓	✓		✓		
Representations	✓	✓		✓		
Supporting Documents	✓	✓		✓		
Statement of matters		✓		✓	✓	✓
Press notice		✓	✓			

\*'Persons wishing to be notified' refers to those persons who expressed a desire at the proposed submission stage to be contacted when the DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State.

2.14 Normally, all methods and venues for deposit of consultation documents shown in Table 1 will be used. However, during times such as the 2020-21 Covid 19 pandemic, Government restrictions and guidance meant that the Civic Offices and libraries closed to the public for three extended periods of time, and then opened with operational restrictions, meaning that their ability to hold consultation documents for public inspection was limited. Other events beyond the Council's control may also result in restrictions to people's movement and/or access to public buildings. During such times, all documents will be available on the website, as usual, and other consultation methods will continue to be employed to ensure that engagement is as wide-ranging and inclusive as possible. In addition to the website, to lessen dependence on the internet and electronic devices in case access is an issue for some, particular adjustments and allowances will be explored. This may include fuller distribution of documents in hard copy by post, and by CD or USB stick, where reasonable requests are made. Greater contact and communication may be made with local groups, such as Residents Associations and Neighbourhood Forums, to help raise awareness of consultation. Alternative means may also be used to enable the public to ask questions and discuss the consultation, including telephone calls and virtual meetings. It may be that an extended consultation period is set, compared to that normally used for consultation on LDDs.

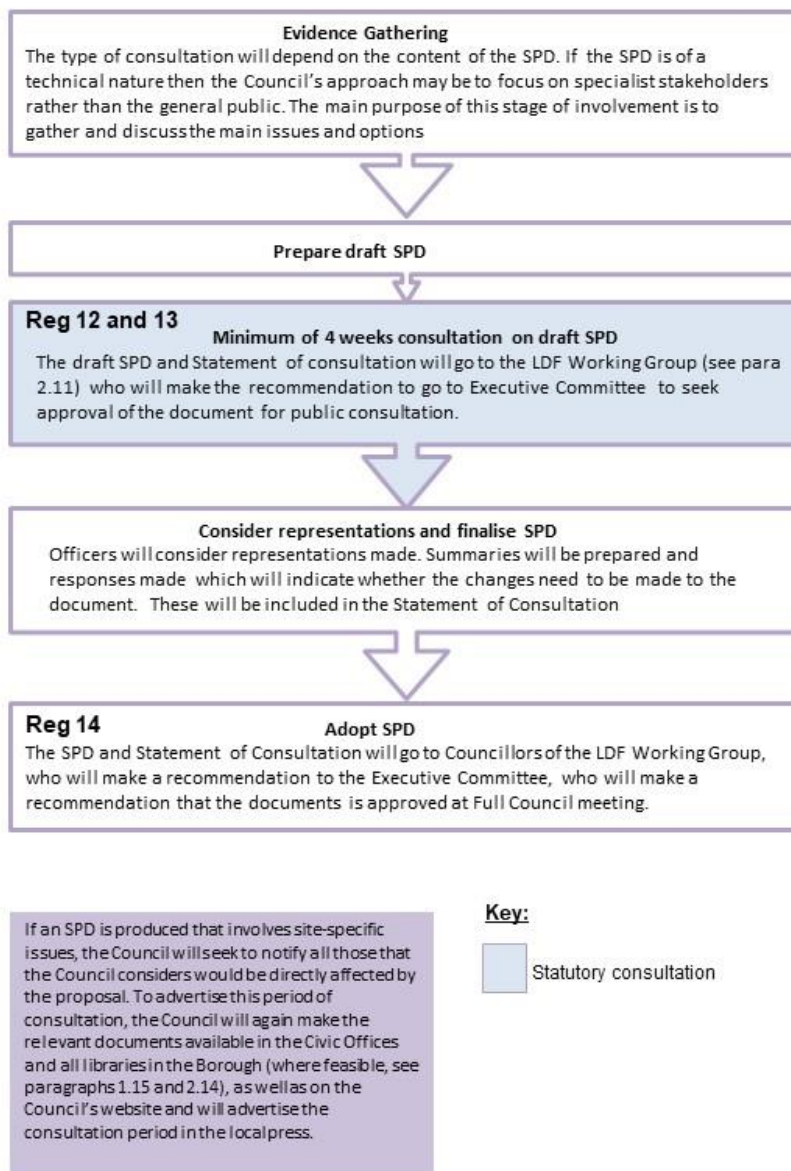
[2.15](#) [The Council is keen to reach out to all sections of the community and will use social media appropriately to engage with as wide a cross section of the community as possible. The specific social media platform that will be used will be determined by what is being consulted on and the target section of the community to be engaged.](#)

2.16 It should be noted that the specific consultation bodies will receive the supporting documents that the Council believes are relevant to them.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)**

2.17 SPDs are produced to support and provide additional information and guidance on policies and proposals contained in DPDs, including how policies apply to day to day planning decisions. The Council will undertake informal, targeted and formal consultation during the preparation of an SPD. The procedure for SPDs is slightly more straight forward than for DPDs because it does not require a formal examination. The process is set out below:

**Figure 5:** Key stages of Supplementary Planning Document preparation



The Regulations referred to above are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning)(England) Regulations 2012.



### Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.18 The Council is required to assess the social, environmental and economic implications of policies and proposals of DPDs and SPDs where it is relevant to do so. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) / Sustainability Appraisal (SA) will help to test the soundness of LDDs by ensuring they reflect sustainable development objectives, as well as being consistent with each other in terms of their objectives and policies. The aim is to ensure that decisions help contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The sustainability appraisal will take place alongside the preparation of the DPDs (and SPDs if required) and there will be opportunities for consultation at key stages in the preparation of the appraisal.
- 2.19 A Sustainability Appraisal will not always be required to be undertaken for SPDs. The Council has an adopted Core Strategy, which has been subject to a full [Sustainability Appraisal](#). As SPDs must be in conformity with adopted DPDs, they will not require full sustainability appraisals as long as the higher-tier policy, which they hang from, has been subject to full sustainability appraisal.
- 2.20 In undertaking sustainability appraisals, the Council will:
- consult key stakeholders on the scope of the sustainability appraisal
  - consult key stakeholders and the public as part of public participation in preparation of the DPD and make initial sustainability appraisal work available
  - undertake public consultation on the sustainability appraisal report along with the Proposed Submission DPD (or SPD).
- 2.21 Key stakeholders are the Environment Agency, Natural England, Historic England, Highways Agency, Surrey County Council and any other relevant bodies with a sustainability remit on the Council's consultation database. These include the key social, economic and environmental groups e.g. Local Action 21, Surrey Wildlife Trust and Woking Chamber of Commerce.

### Which consultation techniques and when will they be used?

- 2.22 The Council has adopted the approach of early consultation with groups prior to the Regulation stages of consultation. This will enable the Council to understand community and stakeholder issues to help to produce robust policies.
- 2.23 There are certain times when early consultation will be particularly beneficial. For example, when producing research work to inform LDDs it may be appropriate for the Council to seek the views of certain bodies to target particular issues or in relation to infrastructure requirements (i.e. water and sewerage provision), and early liaison and discussions with developers will help to identify their site-specific proposals.
- 2.24 Informal community engagement will ensure that awareness of Local Plan issues is maintained. The community will be regularly informed about progress on policy development. The Council website is regularly updated.

### Techniques

- 2.25 A combination of informative and interactive consultation techniques will be applied to LDD production. This will depend on the type of document being produced, the target audience and the different stages of LDD production. Consultation techniques will have regard to any wider restrictions and government guidance that may limit social contact, people's movement and/or access to public buildings, as outlined in paragraphs 1.15 and 2.14. Different methods

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of consultation will be used at the Council's discretion having taken soundings from the various community groups. Appendix 2 lists the engagement techniques which can be used during DPD and SPD production.

- 2.26 The Council will aim to consult with as many people as possible, particularly hard-to-reach groups. Various methods will be used including specific formal or informal meetings with groups, which may be held in person or virtually; visiting places where those hard to reach groups tend to go and holding workshops at various times of the day and at various places to target as many people as possible.
- 2.27 The first stage of LDD production is largely interactive, qualitative and open-ended to ensure issues and solutions are considered. As the stages progress, engagement is more focused, and the Council will inform the community of proposed solutions and seek their views.

### **Responding to consultations**

- 2.28 The Council is willing to receive responses via email, electronic forms (eforms), and written responses through the post.
- 2.29 All representations are expected to clearly state what is being commented on, and the desired changes. The Council will not send individual acknowledgement of representations at the time of their receipt, but will publish its response to the representations received in due course (see paragraphs 2.32 and 2.33 below).
- 2.30 All representations are normally recorded in a consultation database. Emails may either be printed and filed or electronic copies stored. The consultation database will be managed and data stored in a way that complies with data protection principles set out in the Data Protection Act (2018, as amended) and data stored on it will be used fairly, lawfully and transparently; for specific purposes; and will be kept up to date. Individuals have the right to request their information is updated or erased, and can be informed about how their data is being used on request. Further detail can be found at [www.gov.uk/data-protection](http://www.gov.uk/data-protection).
- 2.31 As the preparation of LDDs is a public process, representations cannot be treated as confidential. Therefore, people are encouraged not to send confidential comments as the Council publishes all representations received, and responds to comments in a transparent manner. However, the Council is obliged to omit publishing certain personal details with regard to the Data Protection Act.
- 2.32 The Council will not publish any representation that is deemed inappropriate or offensive.

### **Feedback from the Council**

#### **Reporting on responses received**

- 2.33 Following each period of consultation on any Local Development Document (LDD), the Council will prepare a 'Responses Report' which will set out the comments received, the Council's consideration of the comments, and whether any change to the document is required as a result of the comment.
- 2.34 After each round of consultation, the Council will present the results by summarising and collating similar responses, e.g. those supporting the document, those wanting changes to the document and suggested changes. Representations will be summarised fairly and reasonably and the Council will provide adequate reasons for recommendations. A Responses Report will be made available for public viewing at the Council Offices and on the

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website and may be made available in hard copy on request. It is envisaged that the responses will be reported to councillors at the LDF Working Group and will be background to the decisions of the Executive Committee and Full Council meetings.

**Please note:**

- The Council is unable to accept any anonymous or confidential responses. All responses will be made publicly available.
- The Council will not accept any responses which are considered to be offensive.
- Comments on LDDs received after the consultation period deadline cannot be taken into account.

## Getting involved with planning applications

- 3.1 The Council's Development Management Section is responsible for processing all types of planning applications within the Borough, where required. Both publicity and consultation are a key part of the process. This section sets out how the community and stakeholders can be involved in various stages of the planning application process.

### The pre-application stage

- 3.2 The Government highlights the potential of early engagement to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning system. As part of this, pre-application discussion enables better coordination and improves outcomes in the planning process, by enabling early consideration of fundamental issues, such as design, infrastructure and affordable housing. The Council encourages all parties to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. While pre-application discussions are normally confidential between the prospective applicant and the Council, public engagement with the local community at this stage is strongly encouraged. Engagement with statutory and non-statutory consultees, where relevant, may also be beneficial prior to submitting a planning application.
- 3.3 The Council offers a formal pre-application service for a fee, in line with other Surrey Planning Authorities. The fee charged depends on the scale of the proposed development. The Council strongly recommends obtaining pre-application advice to help achieve a more efficient service and a speedier decision making process. It will help to establish whether the principle of development is acceptable prior to the submission of a formal planning application and will help to identify key issues at the early stages, giving applicants an opportunity to address them.
- 3.4 For more information on how to request pre-application advice or information on the fees charged, please visit: <https://www.woking.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control/planning/our-service> The type of pre-application advice and engagement in terms of meetings and public consultation will be responsive to Government legislation and guidance, such as that resulting from the Covid 19 pandemic, or other future events that may limit social contact, people's movement and/or access to public buildings. Such situations may mean that face to face meetings or events can not take place. Written advice will be provided and other means of discussion and consultation may still take place.
- 3.5 The Council also strongly encourages **pre-application consultation with the community** on major applications that will have a significant impact on local areas. However, this is dependent on the applicant and the Council can not require developers to involve the local community. Planning applications cannot be refused if a developer refuses to involve the local community. However the Localism Act 2011 introduced a requirement for developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain types of developments<sup>5</sup>. The requirement will give local people a chance to comment when there is still genuine scope to make changes to proposals.
- 3.6 Pre-application consultation carried out by applicants **should** provide all groups, including statutory and non-statutory interest groups with an opportunity to participate in the evolution of proposals.

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<sup>5</sup> Section 122 The Localism Act 2011

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- 3.7 Applicants are especially encouraged to liaise early with infrastructure providers for new developments, and this is most beneficial at the pre-application stage.
- 3.8 The level and methods used by applicants to consult during pre-application consultation will vary based on the nature, size and type of development. Pre-application consultation should be proportionate to the size of development, and its potential impacts. Suggested methods of consultation may include letters or leaflets distributed to neighbouring properties, posters, a drop in session or exhibition event to discuss proposals or a public meeting. Various electronic means may also be used, including websites showing information about a proposal, and email communication. [The Council will discuss at an early stage in the pre-application process how best to engage and involve stakeholders.](#)
- 3.9 The cost and time involved in pre-application consultations are the responsibility of the applicant. However the applicant is likely to benefit from early community involvement as it may reduce delays. For example, the applicant will have the opportunity to incorporate the suggestions of the community into proposals, or explain why comments were not taken into account.
- 3.10 Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide the Council with reasonable access to all information relating to community involvement undertaken to ensure that procedures followed are in accordance with the SCI. When applicants have undertaken community consultation the Council would prefer that a full statement of community involvement is submitted with the planning application.
- 3.11 Council officers and councillors will expect to be invited to attend pre-application consultation events; however it is essential that impartiality is maintained. Council officers will be supportive of pre-application consultation but not influential at pre-application consultation events. Where councillors are interested in pre-application processes they will not give an opinion at community involvement events as this may prejudice them from taking part at the planning committee.

### **The application stage**

- 3.12 National legislation and guidance set out how the Council should publicise planning applications once they have been submitted. [The Council is required to undertake a formal period of public consultation, prior to deciding a planning application, as prescribed in the Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\)\(England\) Order 2015 \(as amended\). This would involve placing a notice in the local press and/or displaying a site notice and/or serving notice on adjoining owners and occupiers of the site.](#) Statutory requirements ~~exist~~ vary for different types of application, ~~as set out in the Planning Regulations~~ and the type of notification will be dependent on the nature of the application. [How the Council will notify adjoining owners and occupiers is set out in Figure 6 below. There are separate arrangements for applications for permission in principle, applications for listed buildings and applications for prior approval.](#)

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**Figure 6.** Neighbour notification on different types of planning applications

<u>Type of application</u>	<u>Neighbour notified</u>	<u>Extent of neighbour notification</u>
<u>Householder application</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adjoining occupiers/owners</u>
<u>Applications for planning permission for 'minor' and 'major' development including change of use</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adjoining occupiers/owners</u>
<u>Applications for tall buildings outside the town centre*</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adjoining occupiers/owners with wider consultation at case officer's discretion</u>
<u>Applications for tall buildings within the town centre*</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Properties within 100m of the site. Wider consultation at officer's discretion</u>
<u>Certificate of Lawfulness for a Proposed Development/Use</u>	<u>No</u>	
<u>Certificate of Lawfulness for an Existing Development/Use</u>	<u>Assessed on a case-by-case basis</u>	<u>At the case officer's discretion</u>
<u>Applications for details pursuant to conditions</u>	<u>No</u>	
<u>Applications for non-material amendments</u>	<u>No</u>	
<u>Applications for prior approval except below</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Adjoining occupiers/owners</u>
<u>Applications for prior approval under part 6 (agricultural buildings) and 11 (demolition) of the GPDO</u>	<u>No</u>	

Note: \* A tall building is defined as one being 18m or more in height taken above ground level or 7 or more storeys above ground level. Where a building is dissected by the 100m radius, all the properties in the whole building will be notified.

'Minor' development are those defined as being applications were

- The number of dwellings is between 1-9
- The floor space is less than 1,000sq.m or the site area is less than 1ha

'Major' development are those defined as being applications were

- The number of dwellings is 10 or more
- The floor space is over 1,000sq.m
- The site area is greater than 1ha.
- The site area is greater than 0.5ha and the number of dwellings is not known

Wider notification may be undertaken at the discretion of the case officer

3.13 Figure 76 provides advice and information on how the public can make their views on planning applications known. The Council uses the following methods to notify the public about planning applications:

- details of all applications are sent to local papers who **may** decide to list them. There are some applications where it is mandatory they are published in the

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newspaper e.g. Major Applications, applications in Conservation Areas and EIA developments

- neighbours are notified by letter and are given 21 days to comment on the application
- site notices are supplied for those applications subject to a statutory advert
- weekly lists of applications received are available on the Council's website;
- planning applications can be viewed at the Council Offices or on the Council's website at <http://www.woking.gov.uk/planning/publicaccess> . People have the option to submit their comments via the website.

- 3.14 The Council is required to consult statutory bodies on particular planning applications, for example, infrastructure providers, environmental interest, leisure and historical interest groups. These statutory and non-statutory groups are listed in Appendix 4. The Council has to consult Surrey County Council on applications that may affect the implementation of its development plan policies, including minerals and waste. These types of application can be found in Appendix 6.
- 3.15 By increasing basic publicity methods non-statutory organisations, which represent specialist interest groups have greater opportunity to comment on applications.
- 3.16 Design and Access Statement (DAS) are required for major development applications and applications within designated areas (such as Conservation Areas) where they meet certain thresholds<sup>6</sup>. The Council can not validate a planning application without a Design and Access Statement where one is required.
- 3.17 The Design and Access Statement or similar statement of consultation should clearly show the groups and people the applicant has been, or will be, discussing the scheme with. A good statement will be able to show that the applicant has spoken to local communities and sought professional advice at the earliest possible stage of the scheme's development.
- 3.18 For further guidance please see the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment's CABA (now the Design Council) guidance [\*Design and access statements: how to write, read and use them\*](#). The legal requirements for a Design and Access Statement can be found in the The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- 3.19 Agendas for Planning Committee are available five working days before a meeting and can be viewed on the website. Members of the public may be able to speak at Planning Committee meetings in accordance with public speaking protocol.

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<sup>6</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) (Amendment) Order 2013

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**Figure 76.** Public consultation on planning applications

<b>How do I make my views known?</b>
<p>Any comments you wish to make must be in writing otherwise they cannot be considered. Please note that the Council can only take into account issues which are relevant to planning and can only refuse applications where there are sound and clear cut planning reasons to do so. The extent of local opposition or support for a proposal is not in itself a ground for refusing or granting planning permission unless it is based on valid planning reasons which can be substantiated. Further guidance about relevant issues is provided below.</p> <p>If you make your opinions known they cannot be kept confidential. They will be put on a public file and published on the internet where they can be seen by anyone, including the applicant. This is a legal requirement. We do however, redact signatures and personal details.</p> <p>The Council reserves the right to remove and discard any offensive submissions.</p> <p>Details of applications, including plans, are available for viewing and printing <a href="#">online</a>, or can be viewed on a public terminal at the Civic Offices, where feasible. Advice and information on a particular application may also be obtained over the telephone.</p>
<b>What if my comments are received late?</b>
<p>Failure to meet the deadline could mean your comments are not considered. However, the Council will endeavor to take into account all comments received before an application is decided. Comments received late will be addressed within the Officer report where possible, or will be reported orally to Committee where appropriate.</p> <p>Should a late letter raise a new planning issue which requires further consideration a decision may be deferred to allow time for the issue to be fully investigated.</p>
<b>What happens if the application is changed (amended) before it is decided by the Council?</b>
<p>Often the Council negotiates changes (known as amendments) to schemes following an initial assessment of a proposal and/or following an assessment of comments or objections made. There is no statutory obligation to consult on amendments, but where changes are significant it is the Council's policy to re-notify the neighbours. A period of 14 days is usually allowed for comment to be made. Neighbours will not be re-notified of relatively minor changes unless they are likely to have an impact which is considered to be worse than the original submitted plans.</p>
<b>What happens to my comments?</b>
<p>They are passed to the Case Officer for consideration. Where appropriate, amendments may be sought to address issues raised. Unfortunately, due to the volume of comments made on applications the Council is not able to reply to these submissions or formally acknowledge them. Comments will be published on the internet within a reasonable timeframe, as will the outcome of decisions taken. A list of decisions can be obtained on the website.</p> <p>All matters raised in letters are taken into account and are summarised in an officer's report . The Planning Committee meets approximately every month. The applicant has a right to appeal to the Secretary of State against refusal of planning permission. In such cases correspondence received from objectors will be passed to the Inspector dealing with the matter. Objectors will be notified of the appeal and may be invited to comment again direct to the Inspector.</p>
<b>Should I involve my ward Councillor?</b>
<p>Your ward Councillor is your local elected representative on the Council. Not all Ward Councillors sit on the Council's Planning Committee but they may request the right to address the Committee or ask another Member of the Committee to speak on their behalf. A Ward Councillor is also able to ask for delegated applications to be referred to the Committee for determination as long a a valid planning reason is provided.</p>
<b>Can I address the committee directly?</b>
<p>The criteria for public speaking can be found in the Council's constitution, available at <a href="http://www.woking.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-council">www.woking.gov.uk/council-and-democracy/about-council</a>.</p>



### **The decision stage**

- 3.20 The majority of applications are dealt within eight weeks (or 13 weeks for major applications). The results of any such consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by the Council. The Officer's Report will provide a summary of comments received. The decision can be found on the website using the relevant reference number or address. The public should access this information online, however it is accepted that not everyone has access to the necessary technology or the internet. In this regard, the Council can be contacted on 01483 755855 where alternative options can be provided. Decision lists covering specific dates can also be accessed on the website.

### **The post decision stage**

- 3.21 If a planning application is refused, the applicant is unhappy with a planning condition or if the Council does not determine it within the statutory time period, the applicant has the right to appeal against the decision or failure to make a decision. Only the applicant has the right to appeal.
- 3.22 [The Planning Inspectorate](#) deal with appeals and make the final decision. Appeals are placed on the weekly list on the Council's website. Everyone who was notified and gave their views on the original application will be advised that an appeal has been received and told how they can make their views on the appeal known directly to the Planning Inspectorate. Written objections are sent to the Planning Inspectorate and depending on the type of appeal further comments may be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate. All views are heard during the appeal. The Planning Inspectorate will inform the Council and objectors of the outcome.

## Neighbourhood Planning

- 4.1 The Localism Act gives citizens, communities and local government the power and responsibility to work together to create a fairer society by devolving greater powers to Councils and neighbourhoods. [The plain English guide to the Localism Act](#) has been prepared to try and help people understand it.
- 4.2 The Localism Act allows for communities to draw up a 'neighbourhood development plan' and/or 'neighbourhood development order', providing communities with the power to develop a shared vision, have a greater say in the decisions that affect them and play a bigger role in determining the shape of the places where they live, work and do business. Neighbourhood Plans can help to direct and deliver sustainable development.
- 4.3 Local planning authorities (like Woking Borough Council) are required to provide technical guidance and support to neighbourhoods to draw up their plans. Some funding is available for communities wishing to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. Neighbourhood Plans will have to conform with the strategic policies of the Core Strategy and can not plan for less development than has been set out in the Core Strategy, nor undermine its strategic policies. Neighbourhood Plan cannot be used to prevent development in a neighbourhood. They can plan for more but not less development.
- 4.4 Neighbourhood Plans represent a change that allows local people more of a say on where new houses, businesses and shops should go and what they should look like. They represent a chance to guide the location and appearance of development that comes forward within a neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Plans could be very simple, or go into considerable detail, and their content should be determined by the community, noting that they need to be in conformity with strategic planning policy.
- 4.5 Some of the policies within Neighbourhood Plans could be expressed in a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO). Once approved by the Council and designated, NDOs would remove the need to seek planning permission if the application is in conformity with the order.
- 4.6 Government guidance recognises that a successful Neighbourhood Plan should represent the views of the community, and should therefore be delivered by the community. The onus is placed upon communities to lead on Neighbourhood Plan delivery. The Council will provide advice and assistance to communities who want to prepare Neighbourhood Plans, including about the stages that need to be followed (see below and Figure 78).
- 4.7 Neighbourhood planning allows people to come together through a Neighbourhood Forum or Parish Council<sup>7</sup>. It is important to ensure that any Neighbourhood Forum delivering a plan is representative of the community it wishes to plan for. It is therefore essential to ensure that as many residents and groups as possible from a neighbourhood are aware that a plan is proposed, and are actively involved in the process. This will be particularly important as plans are required to go through a referendum before they can be adopted.
- 4.8 Before Neighbourhood Planning can start, local communities through their proposed forums will have to apply to the Council to designate a Neighbourhood Area and a Neighbourhood Forum. The Council has a duty to determine the applications after consulting local residents.

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<sup>7</sup> There are no Parish Councils in Woking Borough

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- 4.9 Provided a Neighbourhood Plan is in line with national planning policy, the strategic vision for the wider area set by the local authority, and other legal requirements it will pass examination by an independent examiner and, local people will be able to vote on it in a referendum. If the plan is approved by a majority, then the local authority will bring it into force. The stages of preparing a Neighbourhood Plan are shown in Figure 8.

### **Community right to build**

- 4.10 As part of neighbourhood planning, the Localism Act gives groups of local people the ability to bring forward small developments. These might include new homes, businesses and shops. The benefits of the development, for example, profits made from letting the homes, will stay within the community.

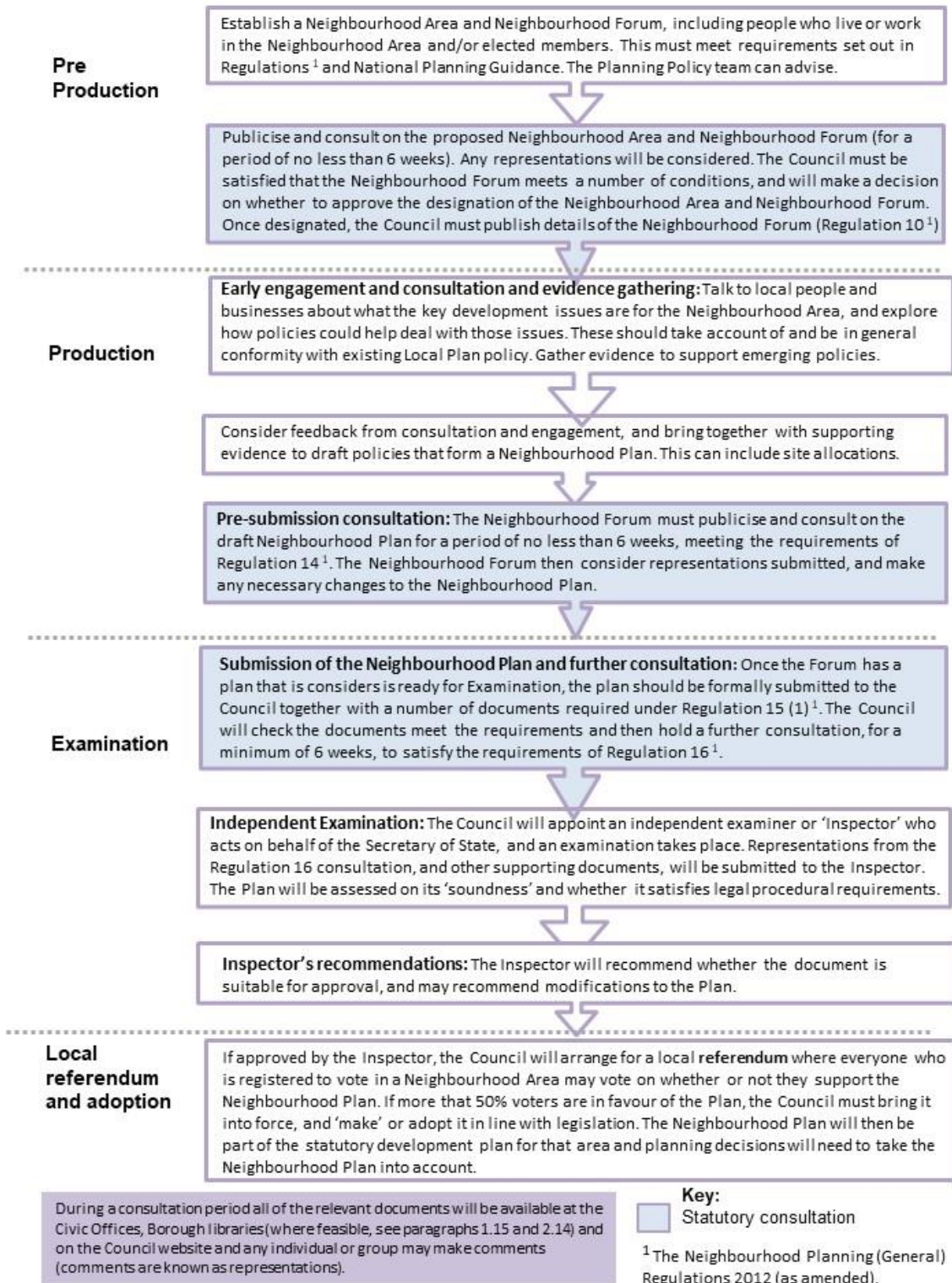
### **Requirement to consult communities before submitting certain planning applications**

- 4.11 To further strengthen the role of local communities in planning, the Localism Act introduced a new requirement for developers to consult local communities before submitting planning applications for certain types of developments, as detailed in paragraph 3.5. This gives local people a chance to comment when there is still genuine scope to make changes to specific proposals. In addition, it highlights the Council's encouragement of pre-application consultation with the community on major applications where development will have a significant impact on local areas.

### **Reform the way local plans are made**

- 4.12 The Localism Act also limits the discretion of planning inspectors to insert their own wording into Local Plans. It ensures that rather than focusing on reporting plans' progress to central Government, authorities focus on reporting progress to local communities. The Government say that they hope that this will give local planning authorities greater freedom in drawing up Local Plans without undue interference from government. However, plans still have to be examined by an independent Inspector and found to be sound before they can be adopted.

**Figure 78:** Stages in establishing a Neighbourhood Forum and Neighbourhood Area, and preparing a Neighbourhood Plan



Further information about Neighbourhood Planning can be found at:  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2> and  
<https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/about/neighbourhood-planning/>

### Monitoring and Resources

#### Monitoring of the SCI

- 5.1 Monitoring of the SCI is vital to ensuring that the Council has conformed to what it has set out. Annual reviews will confirm whether a high level of public involvement has been maintained in the production of LDDs, and ensure that no less has been carried out than the stated level of engagement in the SCI. In the event that more engagement is carried out than stated this will be acknowledged in the annually prepared Monitoring Report.

#### Resources

- 5.2 The Government recommends assessing resources for managing community involvement. The officers of the Council's Planning Policy team working on the SCI are the Planning Policy Manager and a Planning Policy Officer. Other members of the Council's Planning Service and Officer's across other Council departments may be able to assist with stages of public engagement, particularly in ensuring engagement is as wide as possible.
- 5.3 Consultants will be used where there is a lack of expertise or capacity in house for specific projects. The Council's Residents' Panel will assist with focus group work where required. Woking Residents' Panel has been re-established and comprises 1,000 residents who are representative of the borough (age 18 and over), from all backgrounds, ages and ethnicities. They will be contacted via email or post, and asked to provide their views on issues and projects that affect local people and on local services that the Council provides. More information about the Residents' panel can be found at [www.woking.gov.uk/residentspanel](http://www.woking.gov.uk/residentspanel).
- 5.4 The LDF Working Group consisting of councillors will review evidence and results of consultation at each stage and make recommendations to the Council's Executive.
- 5.5 In line with regulations, marketing of LDDs is necessary. The Council's Marketing and Communications team will be involved in the production and design of documents.

#### Risk assessment

- 5.6 In preparing the SCI, it is considered that the main areas of risk relate to the following.
- **Staff turnover.** The Planning Policy Team is now fully staffed.
  - **Legal Challenge.** The Council will minimise the risk of legal challenge by ensuring that the SCI is up-to-date, and has well-audited stakeholder and community engagement systems.

## Appendices

### Consultation groups involved in Local Development Documents production

The following groups and bodies will be consulted where relevant. Please note, this list is not exhaustive and relates to successor bodies where re-organisations and/or renaming occurs.

#### Specific consultation bodies as defined in the Regulations 2012<sup>8</sup> :

- (i) the Coal Authority
- (ii) the Environment Agency
- (iii) the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage)
- (iv) the Marine Management Organisation (if relevant)
- (v) Natural England
- (vi) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- (vii) The Highways Agency.
- (viii) a relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority (Surrey County Council, Surrey Heath Borough Council, Guildford Borough Council, Elmbridge Borough Council, Runnymede Borough Council and parish councils adjoining Woking Borough).
- (ix) any person:
  - (i) to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003, and
  - (ii) who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local planning authority
- (x) if it exercises functions in any part of the local planning authority's area:
  - (i) a Primary Care Trust PCT<sup>9</sup> ([NW Surrey Heartlands](#) Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Surrey Hampshire Borders NHS Trust)
  - (ii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989
  - (iii) a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986
  - (iv) a sewerage undertaker (Thames Water Property Services, Affinity Water)
  - (ee) a water undertaker (Thames Water Property Services, Affinity Water)
- (xi) The Homes and Communities Agency.

**Note:**

**Relevant telecommunications companies:** Mobile Operators Association

**Relevant electricity and gas companies:** Southern Gas Networks, National Grid Co Plc

**Relevant sewerage and water undertakers:** Thames Water Property Services, Affinity Water.

<sup>8</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\)\(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

<sup>9</sup> PCTs have been renamed Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

**General consultation bodies as defined in the Regulations 2012<sup>10</sup>:**

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

**Government departments**

- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- ~~Ministry for~~ [Department for Levelling Up](#), Housing and Communities ~~and Local Government~~
- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport
- Department for Education
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Transport
- Department of Health and Social Care (through relevant Regional Public Health Group)
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Ministry of Defence

The following consultation groups have been collated on a database of over 6,000 bodies and individuals to incorporate the above:

- Agents
- Business interest
- County councillors
- Developers
- Disabled groups
- Elderly people
- Ethnic groups
- Environment and nature conservation groups
- Health providers, including Clinical Commissioning Groups
- Housing associations
- Infrastructure providers
- Landowners
- Leisure groups
- Local councillors
- Local residents
- Local residents associations
- Minority groups
- Member of Parliament
- Religious groups
- Sports bodies
- Surrey planning officers
- Transport groups
- Young people

<sup>10</sup> [The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\)\(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

### Engagement techniques that can be used during DPD and SPD consultation

Technique	Description
<b>General letters</b>	A traditional but effective method as everyone can be targeted in this way. The Council's General Survey of 2003 indicated that 69% preferred to be consulted on Council issues via letter. However a 2009 consultation which asked about preferred methods on consultation on future planning matters saw this drop to 33%. To ensure high standards in efficiency, the Council needs to keep its Local Plan consultation database of community members and stakeholders up-to-date. Letters will be used to accompany new material for consultation and ask for comments.
<b>Email</b>	Approximately 78% of those on the LDD consultation database have asked to be contacted via email rather than letter. Emails can be used as a cheap and effective way to communicate as long as the database is kept up-to-date. Emails can also contain hyperlinks to documents on the website. Where emails are provided to us, by preference emails will be used.
<b>Website</b>	<p>The use of the website to publish documents is one of the methods to be used as per the Regulations.</p> <p>Woking Borough Council's website <a href="http://www.woking.gov.uk/">http://www.woking.gov.uk/</a> regularly receives between 50,000 and 70,000 visitors per month so it is an effective tool for information provision. Interaction with the public through electronic methods is encouraged in line with the Council's ambitions to provide services electronically and all documentation relating to LDDs will be made available on the website.</p> <p>In 2020, 96% of households across the country had access to the internet (ONS), with the majority having a broadband connection, making this a key method for engagement. Internet access is available at all libraries in the Borough and there is access to the Council website at the Civic Offices.</p> <p>The Council website holds information on LDD preparation process and during key consultation periods had a link from the front page of the website. Browsers are encouraged to sign up to the Local Plan database or to respond to consultations using online forms.</p> <p>The Planning Policy team has set up an LDD website with the address <a href="http://www.woking2027.info">www.woking2027.info</a>. Each of the key documents has its own landing page. The team will ensure that it is possible to respond to major consultations using an electronic form.</p> <p>Both the main Council website <a href="http://www.woking.gov.uk/">http://www.woking.gov.uk/</a> and the Planning Policy one are updated regularly.</p> <p>Paper versions of documents will be produced for those without IT facilities.</p>
<b>Leaflets and postcards</b>	To ensure the whole community is kept informed during plan preparation the distribution of leaflets or postcards can be an effective way to raise awareness. Leaflets can be delivered to households alone or with other Council mail outs to save postage costs. They can also be left in key places around the Borough such as libraries, Pool in the Park, Woking Leisure Centre <a href="#">and in shopping centres and supermarkets, where appropriate.</a>
<b>Local Plan newsletter</b>	Where relevant, a Local Plan Newsletter will be sent out to update on progress on Local Development Documents. Decisions on this will be made on a case by case basis.
<b>Provision of information for public viewing</b>	Both Woking's libraries and the Civic Offices are beneficial places to provide copies of Local Development Documents (LDDs) for viewing. In addition, copies of key documents are sent to Woking Leisure Centre for public viewing during consultation periods. These locations will help to increase public awareness of current Local Plan issues. However, note potential restrictions detailed in paragraph 1.15.



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<b>Displays</b>	These can be in Woking Library, the Civic Offices and at other locations such as Woking Leisure Centre, Pool in the Park and in the town centre. They are beneficial for raising awareness of current LDD issues. Staffed displays can be set up at many locations including shopping centres, supermarkets, residents' associations meetings etc. which allow staff to interact with the community and encourage them to comment on and discuss issues that may affect them.
<b>Posters</b>	There are approximately 14 large poster boards (the Borough Boards) located around Woking Borough. These are owned by the Council and can be used to display posters advertising consultation. Demand for these is high so can only be used for major consultation events. <a href="#">Where appropriate, posters will also be displayed on community notice boards, in shopping centres and supermarkets.</a>
<b>Press releases and advertisements</b>	Formal advertisements such as statutory notices in local newspapers will be used when necessary during the DPD and SPD production process to inform the community of various key consultation dates and the publication of documents. Press releases and news articles will also help to publicise the Local Plan. Although advertising in local papers is costly, it is an effective way to target the Borough's population and the 2009 survey showed 59% of respondents preferred this method of being informed about future planning matters.
<b>The Woking Magazine</b>	A total of 48,000 copies of the Woking Magazine are printed and delivered free to households and many public information points across the Borough via Royal Mail three times a year. The Council also produces an online version of the magazine. The magazine regularly contains a Local Plan update which reports progress with key documents. The magazine can be used to distribute questionnaires. In the 2009 survey, 59% of respondents said they would like to be informed about future planning matters via the Woking Magazine.
<b>General questionnaires</b>	Questionnaires are a traditional method involving the collection of information in the form of written responses to a set of standard questions but can now be done online in addition to paper copies. General questionnaires can be sent to all households, while targeted questionnaires will be used when consulting on documents.
<b>Targeted questionnaires</b>	
<b>Woking's Residents' Panel</b>	The Council's Residents' Panel is representative of Woking's residents (age 18 and over) and provides a good sounding-board from which to gather information, e.g. via surveys.
<b>Interviews</b>	In targeting different groups it is beneficial to go to them. A questionnaire can be used as a guide for an interview.
<b>Meetings</b>	These can be hosted by the Council or staff can attend meetings hosted by others as guests/speakers. These can take place in person or virtually. Meetings can take place with selected stakeholders who may have specific interest/knowledge in a topic. Meetings allow for targeted engagement as a Council representative can go out to stakeholders. The Planning Policy team regularly attend residents' association meetings and developer forums are held.
<b>Focus groups</b>	These are small groups who are brought together to discuss a specific issue, and can either be held in person or virtually.
<b>Workshops</b>	This is a meeting at which small groups, perhaps aided by a facilitator, explores issues and develops ideas. For example, a topic workshop focuses on specific issues.
<b>Participatory design techniques</b>	These methods are visual and often use models and pictures to help stimulate peoples' imagination helping them put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area can be improved. People of all abilities and backgrounds often find it easy to engage. For example, models showing future development can be used to engage people, as a means to stimulate discussion.

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<b>Public meetings</b>	These are traditional methods for informing the public. They can allow any number of interested people to attend and learn about a topic. Meetings can be an interactive method of engagement when questions are asked, and can be held face to face or virtually.
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**An evaluation of consultation techniques**

Technique (R = Required; O = Optional)	Consultation benefits					Resource implication	
	Information giving	Allows interaction	Target all groups	Target hard to reach	Technique has been used in the past by the Planning Policy Team	Staff time	Financial cost
General letters (R)	x		x		x	Low	Low/Med
Email (R)	x				x	Low	Low
Website (R)	x	x			x	Low	Low
Leaflets and postcards (O)	x		x		x	Low-med	Medium
LDF newsletter (O)	x		x		x	Low-med	Medium
Information for public viewing (R)	x		x	x	x	Low	Low
Displays (O)	x		x		x	Low	Low-med
Posters (O)	x		x		x	Low	Low/Med
Press releases and advertisements (R)	x		x		x	Low	High
The Woking Magazine	x		x	x	x	Low	Low
General questionnaires (O)	x	x	x		x	Medium	Medium
Targeted questionnaires (O)	x	x	x			Medium	Medium
Woking's Residents' Panel (O)	x	x	x		x	Medium	Low-Med
Interviews (O)	x	x	x	x	x	Medium	Low
Meetings (O)	x	x		x	x	Medium	Low
Focus groups (O)	x	x	x	x	x	High	High
Workshops (O)	x	x		x	x	High	High
Participatory design techniques (O)	x	x	x			High	High
Public meetings (O)	x	x	x			High	Med-High

## Statutory and non statutory bodies consulted on certain planning applications<sup>11</sup>

Please note, this list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations or re-naming occurs.

- Basingstoke Canal Authority
- Basingstoke Canal Society
- British Waterways Board
- Canal and River Trust
- Civil Aviation Authority (CAA)
- Council for British Archaeology (Listed Buildings)
- Coal Authority
- Crown Estates Commissioners
- Design Council (formerly Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment)
- Designated Neighbourhood Forums
- EDF Energy
- English Golf Union
- Historic England
- Environment Agency
- ESSO Pipeline Government Oil Pipeline
- Fairoaks Airport
- Forestry Commission
- Health and Safety Executive
- Highways Authority (including Highways England)
- Listed Buildings – Joint Committee
- National Amenity Societies
  - Ancient Monuments Society
  - Council for British Archaeology
  - The Garden History Society
  - The Georgian Group
  - Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
  - The Twentieth Century Society
  - The Victorian Society
- Local Rail Network Operator
- Ministry of Defence
- National Grid ~~Co-PL~~
- [Fields in Trust \(formerly National Playing Fields Association\)](#)
- National Trust
- Natural England
- Neighbouring Authorities
- Police Architectural Liaison Officer
- Railtrack Properties (Network Rail)
- Ramblers' Association
- SCC Canal
- SCC Heritage Conservation
- SCC Highways
- SCC Education Authority
- SCC ~~SCG~~-Public Health
- SCC Rights of Way Officer
- [SCC Spatial Planning Team](#)
- Secretary of State for Transport
- South East England Tourist Board
- Sport England
- Surrey Playing Fields Association
- Surrey Wildlife Trust
- Thames Water Utilities
- Theatres Trust
- Transco – Gas pipeline
- Woking Sports Council
- WBC Arboriculturalist
- WBC Community Safety Officer
- WBC Contaminated Land Officer
- WBC Environmental Health Officer
- WBC Flood Risk and Drainage Engineer
- WBC Housing
- WBC Legal Services
- WBC Leisure Services
- WBC Planning Policy
- WBC Property Services
- WBC Waste Services Manager

<sup>11</sup> A list of statutory consultees on planning and heritage applications can be found on the National Planning Practice Guidance [website](#)

### **Weekly lists of planning applications**

The Council prepares a [weekly list](#) of new applications. Interested parties are encouraged to look on the Council website where this information is available.

## Consulting on strategic planning applications

### Applications subject to consultation with Surrey County Council

- a) Development which would, by reason of its scale nature or location be of major significance, which may require additional infrastructure, community services and facilities;
- b) Where land is safeguarded for minerals, waste or for development by the County Council.

The Council will consult with other relevant bodies including: Other local authorities, and the Local Enterprise Partnership (Enterprise M3) when it considers appropriate.

### National Planning Casework Unit

The National Planning Casework Unit was set up in March 2011 to process, on behalf of the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, planning casework previously handled by the Government Office Network. A letter was sent in February 2012 which provides an up to date list of the remit and responsibilities of the NPCU:

The following casework will be dealt with by NPCU.

- Referrals under the Town and Country Planning (Consultation) (England) Direction 2009
- Requests to call in planning applications for Secretary of State's decision (including call-in requests for Review of Old Minerals Permissions)
- Environmental Statements (screening, scoping and trans-boundary effects)
- Listed Building Consent – Local Planning Authority Applications
- Listed Building Consent – Private Applications (Circular 08/2009)
- Conservation Area Consents
- Article 4 Directions
- Statutory Allotments Disposals
- Revocation Orders
- Modification Orders
- Discontinuance Orders
- Completion Notices
- Green Belt (London and Home Counties) Act 1938
- Public Requests to Order Disposal of Land (PRODS)
- Prohibition and Suspension Orders (minerals permissions)
- Local Development Orders
- Referrals under Section 62(5) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Civil Aviation Authority objections (DfT/ODPM Circular 1/2003)
- Referrals under the Lee Valley Regional Park Act 1966
- Consent under Section 14 (1) and 14(2) of Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990
- Consent under Article 17(2) of the Schedule to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Provisional Confirmation (Greater London Parks and Open Spaces) Act 1967

The Unit also deals with:

- Compulsory Purchase Orders - three main types:

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- Planning – under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (Section 226, as amended by section 99 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)
- Housing – for local authorities applying under Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985
- Clearance – under Section 289 of the Housing Act 1985
- • Exchange Land Certificates – under Section 19 of the Acquisition of Land Act 1981
- • Less than Best Price Disposal – under Sections 123 and 223 of the Local Government Act 1972
- • Ground 10a Consent – under Schedule 2 of the Housing Act 1985

The unit will also be dealing with requests to call in planning applications for Secretary of State's decision (including call-in requests for Review of Old Minerals Permissions).

Woking Borough Council will consult the National Planning Casework Unit as appropriate.

For more information on the NPCU then please visit:  
<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/infoforlpas/npcu>

## Evaluation of possible consultation techniques for planning applications

	Technique	Consultation benefits					Resource implication	
		Information giving	Allows interaction	Target all groups	Target hard to reach	Degree of public ownership of proposals	Council officer staff time	Financial cost to Council
Pre-application	Letters	x					None	None
	Discussions with neighbours	x	x	x	x	Low	None	None
	Surgery or drop-in event	x	x			Low	None	None
	Exhibition	x		x			None	None
	Public meeting	x	x	x		Med	None	None
	Enquire by design		x	x	x	High	None	None
	'Planning for Real'		x	x	x	High	None	None
Application	Increase online advertisements	x		x			Low	Low
	Increase online publicity	x					Low	Low
	Neighbour notification	x					Low-med	Medium
Post-application	Personal notification of objector/ supporter	x					Low	Medium
	Notification on the website	x					Low	Low



**Adoption:** the formal approval or acceptance of documents by the Council.

**Annual Monitoring Report (AMR):** a report produced annually that monitors progress against the Local Development Scheme (project plan for Local Development Documents) and policy targets<sup>12</sup>.

**Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL):** standard charge decided by local authorities and levied on new development. For example, the CIL may be levied as a certain amount per square metre of development. The money would be used to pay for transport, schools and health centres, flood defences, play areas, parks and other green spaces. It would be a standard charge on all development rather than being calculated individually for each planning permission.

**Community:** usually refers to those living within a specific geographic area but can be any group with shared needs or interests across a wider geographical area.

**Community Strategy:** our long-term vision for improving the quality of people's lives, with the aim of improving the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Borough.

**Community Planning:** the strategies, techniques and capacity building required to encourage and enable communities to take a full and active role in both the statutory and non statutory planning processes.

**Consultation Statement/Statement of Consultation:** a report or statement issued by the [Council](#) explaining how they have complied with the statement of community involvement during consultation on local development documents.

**Core Strategy DPD:** sets out the long-term vision for area and the main strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision.

**Development Delivery DPD:** This will specify exactly where new development will take place in accordance with the policies set out in the Core Strategy and it will also contain development management policies.

**Development management policies:** the Council will produce a Development Plan Document (DPD) containing development management policies. They cover detailed matters relevant to many planning applications such as design, transport and the environment..

**Development Plan Document (DPD):** Local Plan documents containing the core planning policies and proposals. These are subject to independent examination. Woking Borough Council has prepared and adopted the Core Strategy DPD and Proposals Map DPD; and is intending to prepare the a Development Delivery DPD which will contain Development Management Policies and Site Allocations.

**Duty to Cooperate:** This is a requirement introduced by the Localism Act. It requires local authorities and other public bodies to work together on planning issues.

**Examination:** formal examination of Local Plan documents by an independent inspector appointed by the Secretary of State.

**Enquiry by design:** intensive action planning workshop process involving urban designers and local stakeholders.

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<sup>12</sup> Known as a Monitoring Report in the Localism Act

**Focus group:** small group of people who work through an issue in workshop sessions. Membership may be carefully selected or entirely random.

**Inspector:** representative from the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), which is an impartial government agency. Leads the examination of DPDs.

**Local Development Documents (LDD):** Comprises of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Statement of Community Involvement i.e. both statutory and non-statutory documents.

**Local Development Framework (LDF):** a folder of Local Development Documents that provides the framework for planning in the Borough and to guide planning decisions. The term LDF is no longer referred to in legislation.

**Local Development Framework Working Group (LDF WG)<sup>13</sup>:** a group of councillors representing the political make up of the Council, with a special interest in Local Development Documents. This group make recommendations to the Council's Executive Committee who in turn make a recommendations to Full Council meetings. Documents are approved by LDF WG and either the Executive Committee or Full Council before consultation on them begins.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS):** project plan for the production of Local Development Documents.

**Material consideration:** a material consideration is any planning matter which is relevant to a particular case.

**Minority groups:** An ethnic, racial, religious, or other group having a distinctive presence within a society or a group having little power or representation relative to other groups within a society.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):** This is a single document which contains national planning policies. Local authorities must take into account the contents of the NPPF when preparing their development plans and when decisions are made on individual planning applications and appeals. The NPPF replaced numerous Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance when it was first published on 27 March 2012.

**Neighbourhood Planning:** gives communities power to develop a shared vision for their area and shape development and growth, enabling them to influence where they want new homes, shops and offices, and develop policies that can guide planning decisions. Neighbourhood plan must align with strategic needs and priorities for the Borough, as contained in Local Development Documents.

**'Planning for Real':** method of community involvement which focuses on a three-dimensional cardboard model to enable easy visualisation.

**Planning Inspectorate (PINS)** The Planning Inspectorate holds independent examinations to determine whether or not DPDs are 'sound'. The Planning Inspectorate also handles planning and enforcement appeals.

**Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPG) and Planning Policy Statement (PPS):** Planning Policy Guidance Notes (PPGs) and their replacements Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) are prepared by Central Government (after public consultation) to explain statutory provisions and provide guidance to local authorities and others on

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<sup>13</sup> Local Development Documents were formerly known collectively as the Local Development Framework (LDF)

planning policy and the operation of the planning system. The majority of these have been replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF

**Proposals Map:** ordnance survey base map showing the location of proposals in all current development plan documents. Can be a development plan document itself or part of another. Following recent planning reforms, the proposals map is now known as a **Policies Map** in legislation

**Representations:** general comments or responses to a consultation which may support or object to proposals.

**Site specific allocations:** Allocation of sites for specific or mixed-use development.

**Sound/soundness:** describes where a DPD is considered to 'show good judgement' and also fulfils the expectations of legislation, as well as conforming to national planning policy.

**Spatial planning:** an approach to planning that uses land in the most effective way to promote 'sustainable development'.

**Stakeholder:** Person or organisation with an interest because they will be affected or may have some influence.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** sets out the Council's standards for involving the community in the preparation, alteration and review of Local Development Documents and the consideration of planning applications.

**Statement of Matters:** the regulations set out that the Council must produce a Statement of Matters which sets out the title of the document, subject matter of and area covered, period for representations, address where representations should be sent and list of places at which the document is available for inspection and the times at which it can be inspected.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD):** non-statutory documents that expand upon policies and proposals in Development Plan Documents.

**Surrey Strategic Partnership:** the countywide strategic partnership. It includes the following members: Surrey County Council, Surrey's eleven districts and boroughs, Surrey Police, [NW Surrey Heartlands](#) Clinical Commissioning Group, The Skills Funding Agency, the voluntary, community and faith sector and the business sector. These organisations work together to try to find solutions to local problems. They try to support each other and improve the way they work together, to make life better for people in Surrey.

**Surrey Strategic Partnership Plan:** the Sustainable Community Strategy for Surrey is known as Surrey's Partnership Plan: Standing up for Surrey. This plan sets out the Partnership's goals and plans for how they will work together to make Surrey a better place to live, work and do business.

**Sustainability Appraisal:** a process involving the identification, consideration and reporting of the likely impacts of planning proposals on social, environmental and economic interests. The findings of the sustainability appraisal are used to inform the production of Local Development Documents.

**Sustainable Development:** the core principle underpinning the planning system. This means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet theirs.

## GLOSSARY

**Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA):** is a system of incorporating environmental considerations into policies, plans and programmes. It is sometimes referred to as Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment. The specific term Strategic Environmental Assessment relates to European Union policy.

**Woking Borough Local Plan 1999:** existing planning policy document for Woking Borough. The Core Strategy 2011 has replaced some of these policies, although some remained saved until such time as they are replaced by policies in the Development Delivery DPD.

**Woking Partnership** - represents the residential, business, statutory and voluntary interests of the area. Members include the Clinical Commissioning Group, Surrey Police, Surrey County Council, Woking Chamber of Commerce, Woking Association of Voluntary Service, Community Learning Partnership, and the People of Faith Forum.

**Workshop:** Meeting at which a small group, perhaps aided by a facilitator, explores issues, develops ideas and makes decisions. Less formal than a public meeting.

### **Localism terms**

Terms such as Localism, Decentralisation, and Big Society have been used by the Coalition Government to explain their vision for the future. Outlined below is what these terms mean.

#### **Localism: is the Government's ethos...**

Doing everything at the lowest possible level and only involving central government if absolutely necessary.

#### **Decentralisation is what the Government has to do...**

Giving power to individuals, professionals, communities and local institutions.

#### **Big Society: is what the Government is trying to achieve...**

A society where people, neighbourhoods and communities have more power and responsibility and use it to create better services and outcomes.