

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



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STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

INTRODUCTION

This report represents the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for Epsom and Ewell Borough Council.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the need for a Statement of Community Involvement as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF), which is explained in Section 2. This aims to widen public involvement in both the development plan process and in planning applications. It is a key element of Government's thrust to modernise planning.

This document sets out how Epsom and Ewell Borough Council will be involving the community and stakeholders in:

- The preparation and revision of Local Development Documents (which make up the Local Development Framework); and
- Planning applications

THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council intends to involve stakeholders and the local community in the Local Development Framework process and the consideration of planning applications.

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is the key expression of the right to participate in the local plan making and development control processes. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Local Planning Authority to 'comply with' the contents of their Statement of Community Involvement in the preparation of Local Development Documents.

This is a flexible document, which will be kept under review and revised where necessary following the same procedures that were undertaken for its creation. Revisions are likely to take place when significant changes have occurred to the types of groups that the Council wishes to engage, or when different techniques for engagement are to be employed.

SECTION 1

1.1 PRINCIPLES OF THE EPSOM & EWELL STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The first step in meeting the needs of the community is to seek to identify and understand those needs. Through community involvement, the Borough will broaden its information base, improving its understanding of community needs and aspirations and thereby improve decision making. This is the overall purpose of the Borough's Statement of Community Involvement.

The Statement of Community Involvement addresses the following issues:

- What is being consulted on;
- Who is being consulted;
- How they will be consulted;
- When consultation will be undertaken;
- Who is responsible for undertaking the consultation; and
- How the outcomes of the consultation will be used to inform decision-making and drive improvements to the process.

The goals are:

- To provide active, early, and continuous public involvement;
- To provide reasonable public access to information;
- To provide the public an opportunity to comment prior to planning decisions;
- To ensure that Council actions serve the collective public interest; and
- To solicit and consider public input on plans, proposals, alternatives, impacts, mitigation, and final decisions.

In order to achieve this, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will adopt the following principles for community involvement:

Transparency: The Council will identify clear objectives and indicate at the outset any limiting factors on the extent and nature of community involvement.

- Responsiveness:** The Council will recognise the diversity of views and work towards an understanding of issues and concerns. Ensure that the level of involvement reflects the importance of the issue and provide feedback.
- Equity:** The Council will recognise that stakeholders have different needs and provide equity of access to the process. Understand that specific groups/individuals may need to be targeted to ensure less vocal members of the community are consulted.
- Efficiency:** The Council will manage participation in a cost-effective manner, using existing networks, structures and means of communication where possible. Meet the time frames agreed.
- Continuous Improvement:** The Council will seek to achieve the best possible process and outcome, and learn from this for the benefit of further consultation exercises.

The process will involve the following key activities:

- Identification of the key stakeholders in the preparation of the Local Development Framework. Particular regard will be paid to identifying the 'hard to reach' target groups.
- Identification of a range of effective consultation, community involvement and participation techniques that can be used to engage stakeholders, and the different stages at which they will be used.
- Develop a clear, transparent, and open methodology by which the outcomes of community involvement can be fed back into the Local Development Framework process.
- Develop a clear set of procedures for engaging and involving the community and stakeholders in development control decisions.
- Develop a monitoring framework to ensure that the Statement of Community Involvement is kept up to date and relevant.
- Assessment of resources required and available for managing community involvement.
- Develop mechanisms for integrating consultation on the Local Development Framework with that of the Community Strategy.

1.2 COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS

Carrying out a community profile with local residents can be a very useful first step towards defining the needs of a particular population, as well as the resources and skills that exist within the community. A 'Characterisation of the Area' document has been produced as part of the Local Development Framework process, with particular regard to the Sustainability Appraisal. This document is available on the website (www.epsom-ewell.gov.uk) and copies are held at the Town Hall, for reference. Key features of the study are reproduced here for convenience.

The Borough is located in the north east of Surrey. It is based on the market town of Epsom, the ancient village of Ewell and the 1930s centre at Stoneleigh. With a population of 67,700 (mid-year 2003 estimations), and a geographical area of 3,411 hectares, it is the smallest district but most densely populated Borough in Surrey. 42% of the Borough's area is Green Belt.

The Borough ranks within the top 15% of wealthiest authorities in the country, although two wards (Ruxley and Court) fall in the ten most deprived wards in Surrey.

The area has practically full employment with a similar number of workers commuting into and out of the Borough each day. Unemployment in the Borough remains low by UK standards. There are around 31,500 jobs in the Borough, mainly in service industries, white-collar occupations. 61% of employed people between the ages of 16 and 74 commute out of the Borough for work.

There is evidence of shortening working lives with increasing numbers of people over 50 classifying themselves as having retired. The number of people aged over 75 years who live in the Borough is increasing while more young adults leave the Borough than move into it. The population is older than the average for the UK and this is reflected in the number of services provided for the elderly.

At 8.7% (from the 2001 Census), the Borough, along with one other District, has the highest percentage of black and minority ethnic population in Surrey.

There are around 28,000 households in the Borough. Roughly 85% of these are owner occupied, 9% are publicly rented (nearly all by Housing Associations) and 6% are privately rented.

On the whole, by comparison with other parts of the country, the resident population is affluent and well qualified.

Key implications for the Statement of Community Involvement are: -

- The Council's Annual Residents' Survey conducted in June 2004, showed that 79% of households in the Borough have access to the Internet.
- The large number of older people will require more traditional methods of approach in consultation.
- The large number of retired people means that there is greater opportunity for consultation during working hours with this age group.
- The high literacy level implies that written communication can be considered to be a reasonable media for consultation in the area. However, consideration will be given to the 8.7% of the local population from ethnic minority groups, who may not have English as a first language.

Identifying Communities within the Borough

For a thorough consultation, the spread of communities within the Borough need to be identified. Consultation will include geographical communities, as well as communities of interest. These consist of:

- Older People
- Young People
- Residents' Associations
- Business Communities
- Minority Groups (diverse communities)
- Religious Groups
- Councillors
- Disabled Groups
- Housing Associations
- Land Owners
- Other Public Sector Partner Organisations including:
 - Central Government
 - Local Statutory Agencies (Police, Health Authority)
- Hard to reach groups (Government guidance states that 'hard to reach' groups represent sections of the public that are traditionally more difficult to canvas than the rest of the population).
 - Gypsies and Travellers
 - Travelling Showpeople
 - People in hospitals
 - Asylum seekers and refugees
 - Homeless persons
 - Students
 - Tourists and commuters

1.3 METHODS OF COMMUNITY / STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

There is a range of established consultation methods that can be used for the purposes of community involvement. Depending on the level of consultation required and the resources available, the Council can tailor the methodology from the 'menu' of consultation options. By selecting an appropriate combination of methods, the Council can ensure that all sectors of the community and stakeholders are reached.

This section considers the range of consultation methods available. Strengths and weaknesses and the relative costs of the identified methods are also considered. **It must be stressed that the methods identified are not exclusive.** The Council will be receptive to adopting new and innovative approaches in the light of experience gained through the LDF and its other consultation activities. Also, the Council will be receptive to specific initiatives emerging from the communities particularly where these relate to their preferred methods of involvement.

1.3.1 CONSULTATION METHODS

For a more detailed explanation of the following methods and considerations that must be made, please refer to Appendix 2.

Media Coverage: This can be achieved through a regular programme of press releases and a flow of information on the local press, TV, radio etc. This method can reach cross sections of people on a local basis.

Public Meetings: These are meetings arranged, in a public place, for members of the public to receive information and express their views on relevant issues. This method can be useful in engaging with large groups of people at one time and also for providing quick feedback.

Formal Written Consultation/ Community Surveys/ Leaflets: Often this is the most cost-effective method of providing information to a large number of consultees. Issues to be consulted on may be combined into a cohesive 'package' to avoid confusion and consultation over-load.

Exhibitions/ Open Days/ Stalls/ Roadshows: Open days with exhibitions in popular venues throughout the Borough can be a good way of attracting interest and enabling the public to make comments. A staff member would attend, who can answer questions posed by the public. It would also provide an opportunity for the public to make comments.

Focus Group: These are semi-structured meetings/ interviews/ workshops with a small group of individual participants using networks of existing and well-established groups in the Borough. Used to obtain the views of representative groups of people on a topic to assist in planning for a target group or wider community.

Steering / Advisory Group: Groups would include internal and external stakeholders. The focus would be on progressing the document by considering issues and providing options or guidance for resolving various issues.

Internet (Website): The Internet can be used to provide detailed information to all parties on a regular basis and is likely to become increasingly used in the future. Documents to be consulted upon and information on consultation procedures will be provided through the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council website. It may be possible to provide an opportunity for the public to submit comments via e-mail or online forms/questionnaires.

Private Workshops: An invitation-only event for people who are most involved with the document that is under consultation. The aim is to identify issues and possible solutions.

Questionnaire: These can be used to ask residents and other stakeholders to give their preferences and comments on what they see as broad priorities for the Borough or to seek their views on a specific Development Plan Document.

One-to-one Meetings with Selected Stakeholders: These meetings should take place with those stakeholders most affected by the document under consultation. The aim should be to obtain in-depth comments regarding the document and resolution of potential issues.

Letters to Statutory Bodies: These bodies have been prescribed under the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulation 2004 and Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, Annex E.

Documents Available for Inspection at Council Offices during set Consultation Period: Documents should be provided to the public libraries and Town Hall reception for public viewing.

Hotline / Contact Number / Contact Email: A contact number should be included in documents for contact. This would be a direct number to a planning officer with the primary aim of answering questions/ informing/ enlightening the public. A contact e-mail address should also be provided.

Official Launch: A launch may be used to raise awareness of a significant document being released.

1.3.2 STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF CONSULTATION METHODS

This section provides a methodology for choosing the best method or a combination of methods in designing an effective consultation plan. The method will vary according to the project, policy, plan or issue that requires input. In Table 1 each method is scored between reasonable (√) and very good (√√√√).

Table 1: Consultation methods assessed against various criteria

CONSULTATION METHOD	Giving info	Getting info	Representative views	Quantitative views	Qualitative views	Special groups view
Public exhibition/ display/stalls	√√√√	√	√	√	√	√
Workshops (interactive)	√√√√	√√√	√√	√√	√√	√
Questionnaire	√ *	√√√	√√√√	√√√√	√	√
Hotline	√√	√	√	√	√	√
Public meetings	√√	√√	√	√√	√√	√
One-to-one meetings with selected stakeholders	√√√	√√√	√	√	√√√√	√√√
Focus Group	√√√	√√√	√√	√	√√√	√
Letter to statutory bodies (listed in Regulations)	√√√	√	√√√	√	√√√	√√√
Documents available for inspection at LPA offices	√	√	√	√	√	√
Area forums	√√√	√√√	√√	√√	√√√	√
Steering/ Advisory group	√√√	√√√	√√√	√√	√√√	√√√√
Media (local press, TV, radio, etc)	√√√√	√	√	√	√√	√
Internet (website etc)	√√√	√√	√	√√	√	√

*The merit of the questionnaire will depend on the quality and amount of information supplied alongside

1.3.3 RESOURCE AND COST INDICATION

The scale of consultation will reflect resources available for the consultation process in terms of staff and cost. The resources available will be set through the Council's budgeting processes. This requires a consultation plan to be established early in the process to ensure that sufficient resources will be made available for an appropriate consultation programme to be undertaken. Table 2 looks at the resource implications of the consultation methods in terms of material cost and staff time. The resource implication is ranged between Low and High. Table 2 makes no allowance for the cost of handling and analysing responses. These costs are likely to be a function of the success of the consultation exercise or the nature of the issues addressed by the document.

Table 2: Resource implications for consultation methods

CONSULTATION METHOD	MATERIAL COST	STAFF TIME
Public exhibition/ display/ stalls	Moderate-High	Moderate
Workshops (interactive)	High	High
Formal writing consultation/ Community surveys	Moderate	Low
Hotline	Moderate	Moderate
Public meetings/ area meetings	Moderate-High	Moderate
One-to-one meetings with selected stakeholders	Low	High
Focus Group	Low	High
Letter to statutory bodies (listed in Regulations)	Low	Low
Documents available for inspection at LPA offices	Low	Low
Area forums	Low	Low-Moderate
Steering/ Advisory group	Low	Low-Moderate
Media (local press, TV, radio, etc)	Low	Low-Moderate

1.3.4 MONITORING AND REVIEW

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council will seek to improve its community engagement methods by regularly and critically reviewing their effectiveness in the planning process. This will include evaluating the method of consultation undertaken with an appropriate analysis of the results (e.g. measuring the number of persons attending, the number of responses received and seeking views of participants in the whole process). The Council will seek to learn lessons for future consultation exercises. The review will be done in collaboration with the Council's Service Improvement Unit. The Council will incorporate the results of this process in the Annual Monitoring Report. Where a significant change is required in the procedures or programme included in the SCI, for example to meet new circumstances or challenges, or to address deficiencies in the existing system, the Authority will identify this in the Annual Monitoring Report. Where appropriate, it will review the SCI and resubmit it to the Secretary of State, subject to the necessary adjustments to the Local Development Scheme.

SECTION 2

2.1 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

2.1.1 THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF)

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is a portfolio, which will contain a series of Local Development Documents:

- *A Statement of Community Involvement*
- *Development Plan Documents (DPDs)*
- *Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) (if appropriate)*
- A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report
- Local Development Scheme (LDS)

For a further explanation of these terms, please refer to Appendix 1.

This Statement of Community Involvement should be read in conjunction with the Local Development Scheme, which provides information on the agreed programme for preparing the various Local Development Documents.

The community will be involved in the production of a Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Reports.

The LDF and the Community Strategy

Government legislation and guidance highlights the need to establish close links between the LDF preparation and the Community Strategy. Both are centred upon achieving sustainable development. The LDF will spatially express the parts of the Community Strategy that relate to the use and development of land and will help to achieve its objectives.

Development Plan Documents

According to Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS 12), there are four stages in the production of the Development Plan Document:

- 1) *Pre-production (Issues and Options)*
- 2) *Production (Preferred Options and Submission)*
- 3) *Examination*
- 4) *Adoption*

All Development Plan Documents must be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement, consultation and independent examination throughout their preparation. Statutory consultation stages are identified in the Regulations at Production and Examination stages. The earliest stage where the community will be able to contribute to the development of the document is the Pre-production stage is indicated in bold in chart 1.

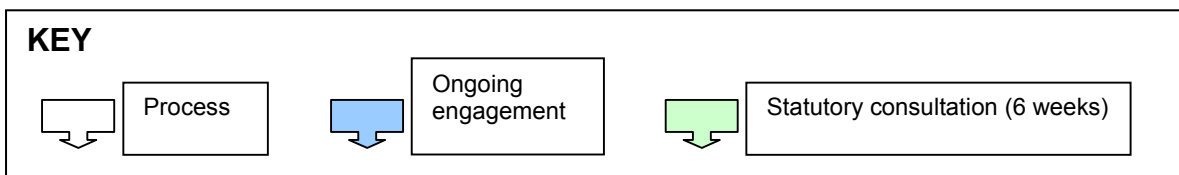
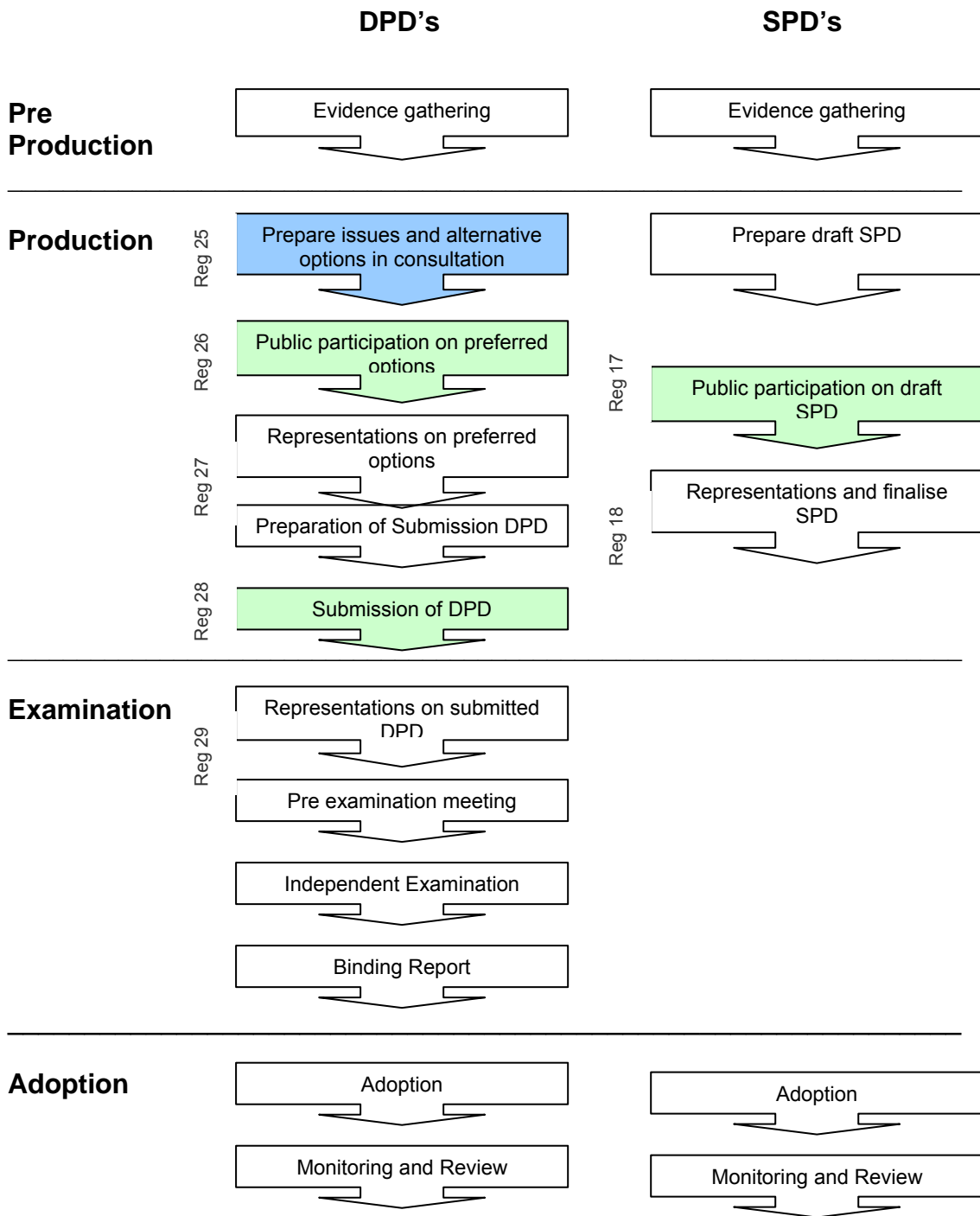
Supplementary Planning Documents

The flowchart also shows stages for the production of Supplementary Planning Documents. These may be prepared in parallel with the related Development Plan Document or following its adoption. The process for their production is similar to the Development Plan Document, but simplified. They are intended to have a similar level of public involvement as Development Plan Documents, although Supplementary Planning Documents are not subject to independent examination.

Sustainability Appraisal

A 'Sustainability Appraisal' (also satisfying the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment) will accompany each Development Plan Document and Supplementary Planning Document as it becomes available for consultation. Sustainability Appraisals will be produced following the Scoping Report methodology. They will appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the options and policies, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development and further informing the decision making process.

Chart 1: Flowchart to illustrate the stages and consultation points in the preparation of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents



2.1.2 EARLY COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

In the initial stages of development (evidence gathering), the Council will seek to involve key groups, which will have an interest in the ensuing Local Development Documents. This list will be determined by internal discussion with directorate and corporate levels and will be in line with regulations with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) England) Regulations 2004. The Epsom and Ewell Local Strategic Partnership will assist in identifying the appropriate stakeholders.

The Borough Council will aim to exceed the minimum legal requirements for public participation in the LDF.

A database will be created which will contain contact details for all stakeholders who are to be consulted. This list will regularly reviewed and updated accordingly.

2.1.3 CONSULTATION ON ISSUES & OPTIONS AND PREFERRED OPTIONS

There are statutory requirements for consultation at these stages outlined in the Regulations. These include:

- Publication on the website
- Advertisement on a local newspaper
- Available copies in the Town Hall, local libraries and sent to the statutory consultees.

During the 6-week consultation period, the Council will accept representation on the document. Typical response rates on consultation documents are less than 5%. However, this is not to be interpreted as failure as experience shows that a far greater proportion are made aware of the issues and are given opportunities to comment.

Comments and Feedback

The Council will keep a database recording all comments made. At the end of the defined consultation period a report will be produced on the feedback, which will show how these comments have been taken on board, and incorporated into the revised document. The reports will be made available on the Council's website or in hard copy at the Town Hall. For further information on recording and reporting back, refer to Appendices 3 & 4.

2.1.4 FORMAL CONSULTATION AND EXAMINATION

After submitting the document to the Secretary of State, a 6-week consultation period commences when interested parties may make representations on the

submitted document. This is a statutory process. Comments are sent to the Council, but are forwarded in full to the Secretary of State who undertakes an independent examination of the submitted document.

At the time of submission, the Council will again:

- Publish the document on their website.
- Place advertisement in a local newspaper.
- Make copies available in the Town Hall, local libraries and to the statutory consultees.

2.1.5 COMMUNITY GROUPS TO BE CONSULTED IN THE LDF AND METHODS

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council aims to exceed the minimum legal requirements for involving the community in the preparation and revision of local development documents. For ease of reference, the different individuals / organisations that will be consulted have been grouped together to ensure that all sectors of the community are covered.

Table 3: Different groups of stakeholders

Type of Group	Category
Specific Consultees* (e.g. Regional development agency, NGO's, utilities providers, neighbouring planning authorities)	A
Government departments	B
National / regional agencies and organisations**	C
Utility Providers (any not covered by category A)	D
Local Groups and Bodies (e.g. Residents Associations, schools / colleges, political parties, local organisations)	E
Local Strategic Partnership*** (e.g. Ashley Shopping Centre, Business Partnership)	F
General Public / Other interested parties	G

*Please refer to Annex E of PPS12

**General consultation bodies as identified in Annex E of PPS12

***Useful for targeting 'hard to reach' groups

Table 4 below sets out the consultation methods that can be used in the process of production of Development Plan Documents (the Core Strategy & others) and Supplementary Planning Documents. There are a number of required methods and some that are optional. Although resources may constrain some methods of consultation, these 'optional' methods may be used if it is felt that their type of input is needed to ensure a satisfactory consultation. The level of community involvement for Supplementary Planning Documents is broadly the same as for Development Plan Documents.

Table 4: Consultation methods to be used during the productions of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents

METHOD OF CONSULTATION	CORE STRATEGY	AREA ACTION PLANS / SITE ALLOCATION / GENERAL DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES	SPD
Media coverage (local press, TV, radio)	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	OPTIONAL
Public Meetings	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	OPTIONAL
Formal written consultation/ community surveys/leaflets	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	OPTIONAL
Exhibitions/open day/ referendums	OPTIONAL	REQUIRED	OPTIONAL
Focus group	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL
Steering/ advisory group	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL
Internet (website)	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
Private Workshops	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL
Questionnaires	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
One-to-One meeting with stakeholders	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL
Letter to statutory bodies	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
Document, available for inspection at LPA offices during set consultation period	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
Hotline/Contact number/ Contact e-mail	REQUIRED	REQUIRED	REQUIRED
Official launch	REQUIRED	OPTIONAL	OPTIONAL

Should consultation periods coincide for different Local Development Documents, the Council will endeavour to combine the consultation process to maximise resource efficiency.

2.1.6 HARD TO REACH GROUPS

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has a longstanding commitment to consultation with its community using a broad range of consultation techniques, and has an excellent record of engaging members of its Citizens' Panel (now called FEEDBACK). It has had a Consultation Strategy since 2000, which is regularly reviewed and updated. All consultation activities are coordinated through the Council's Service Improvement Unit, which also has produced a very practical "Consultation Handbook" to assist anyone engaged in consultation exercises in achieving maximum benefit from the process. The Unit will work with us in planning and implementing the campaign in order to reach the people we need to consult at each stage of the LDF. The Council has experience of using a wide range of innovative techniques which will be used to engage hard to reach groups. These have included interviews, workshops, focus groups, public meetings and face-to-face interviews.

Hard to reach groups are not necessarily difficult to engage, but are more of a challenge for a variety of reasons, such as the need to provide them with suitable access to information and/or consultation forums. The Council has links with many of these groups by way of the established "Local Strategic Partnership" and its Community Development Officer, and is currently developing further links with the Borough's schools, to improve participation from these groups. Familiarity of surroundings and an informal approach can help people feel more comfortable and allow them to participate more freely. We envisage focus groups, private workshops and one-to-one meetings with such groups, arranged at convenient times and in appropriate locations for them to easily access, being organised as part of our campaign.

The Council's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) was set up in 2001 and comprises organisations from business, education and training, health, police, religious, ethnic minority, youth, environmental and voluntary sectors. Other existing networks have been developed by the Council's Community Development Officer, who works with residents, voluntary groups, and businesses to support activities in the community. These include groups within the Race and Community Relations Network and the Ethnic Minorities Working Party, as well as residents' groups within the 2 most deprived wards within the Borough, and those moving into the large hospital cluster housing development. This network of connections will be utilised to assist consultation with harder to reach groups within the community.

With regard the specific issue of literacy, all planning publications can be provided in large print, Braille, on audiotape or diskette, as well as in other languages, as requested. This will be specifically stated in each document. In terms of consultation methods, telephone surveys and face-to-face interviews can be arranged to facilitate participation with people with literacy difficulties. As with other consultation processes, these will be supported by the Council's Service Improvement Manager working within the broad context provided by the Council's Consultation Strategy.

2.2 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The local community is also to be involved in the decision making process for planning applications within the Borough. There are statutory minimum requirements for the level of consultation that must take place, although for larger applications it is especially desirable to exceed this.

2.2.1 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

The statutory requirements for applications for planning permission are laid out in Article 8 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended).

The statutory publicity requirements for applications for Listed Building and Conservation Area consent are laid out in Regulation 5 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 whilst the arrangements for applications affecting the setting of a Listed Building or Conservation Area are laid out in Sections 67 and 73 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

Publicity arrangements for applications accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment are prescribed by the Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Regulations 1999.

2.2.2 PRE-APPLICATION DISCUSSIONS

Applicants are encouraged to enter into pre-application discussions with the Council to confirm whether the principle of the proposed development is acceptable. In addition, pre-application discussions will be used to clarify the format, type and level of detail required in order for the Council to be in a position to determine the application. In appropriate cases applicants will be invited to agree a formal Project Plan wherein agreed timescales for key stages of the application and pre-application processes will be specified.

Applicants are encouraged to undertake early community consultation on their development proposal and to submit the results of this consultation, as part of their planning application, in the form of a Consultation Statement.

Consultation Statements should specify:

- What is being consulted on;
- Who is being consulted;
- How they will be consulted;
- When consultation will be undertaken;

- Who is responsible for undertaking the consultation; and
- How the outcomes of the consultation have been used to 'shape' the planning application.

The aim of the process is to encourage discussion in the community before formal applications are made to avoid unnecessary or late objections during the formal application stages.

2.2.3 CONSULTATION ON SUBMITTED APPLICATIONS

Epsom & Ewell Borough Council's principles of community involvement set out previously will equally apply to the Council's approach to consultations on planning applications. On the basis of the current approach to consultations on planning applications, the Council will generally seek to exceed the minimum statutory requirements. Table 5 compares the minimum statutory requirements with the Council's detailed proposals.

Table 5: Statutory minimum requirements & proposed arrangements

STATUTORY MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS	PROPOSED ARRANGEMENTS
<p>Major Development (where site provides 10 or more dwellings or is over 0.5 hectares (ha); other development where floorspace is over 1000sq.m. or site area over 1 ha; minerals workings; or waste development) Planning applications for major development should be publicised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • local newspaper advertisement; and • site display in at least one place on or near the application site for not less than 21 days, or • serving the notice on any adjoining owner or occupier 	<p>In addition to the minimum requirements the Head of Development Control will consider extending the area over which additional letters of notification will be sent having regard to the planning history of the site, the likely impact of the development and known areas community interest.</p>
<p>Other Planning Applications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 21 days consultation; • Site notices to be displayed in at least one place for at least 21 days; or • Notice to be served on any adjoining owner or occupier (neighbourhood notification). 	<p>As above.</p>
<p>Development Affecting a Listed Building or the Character and Appearance of a Conservation Area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Advert; and • Site Notice 	<p>In addition to the minimum requirements, letters will be sent to adjoining and nearby residents in accordance with the normal standards for Major and Other applications set out above.</p>
<p>Departures from the LDF and Applications affecting Rights of Way Planning applications for development which would depart from the Plan or would affect a right of way to which the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 applies should be publicised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site display in at least one place on or near the application site for not less than 21 days and • by local newspaper advertisement 	<p>In addition to the minimum requirements, letters will be sent to adjoining and nearby residents in accordance with the normal standards for Major and Other applications set out above.</p>
<p>Applications Accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment Planning applications which are accompanied by an EIA should be publicised by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • site display in at least one place on or near the application site for not less than 21 days; and • local advertisement. <p>The applicant making an EIA application should provide the LPA with 3 additional copies of the Environmental Statement for the Secretary of State. If the applicant provides a copy of the Statement to any other body he must also (a) provide a copy of the planning application plus maps (b) inform the body that representations can be made to the LPA, and (c) inform the LPA of which other bodies have been provided with the Statement.</p> <p>The LPA should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Send 3 copies of the Statement to the Secretary of State plus a copy of the application within 14 days of receiving the Environmental Statement. • Forward copies of the Environmental Statement to any other consultation bodies that have not received one direct from the applicant and inform them that they may make representations 	<p>In addition to the minimum requirements, letters will be sent to adjoining and nearby residents in accordance with the normal standards for Major and Other applications set out above.</p>
<p>Telecommunication Masts (Full and prior approval applications)</p>	<p>Local Press advert Notice to all owner/occupiers within 150m radius</p>

2.2.4 MAJOR APPLICATIONS

In addition, it is recognised that there are occasionally applications that are of more than local interest or which raise significant policy issues that will merit special arrangements to ensure full and effective community involvement. In these instances the Council will give consideration to using the full range of involvement techniques identified previously in this report. **It is impossible to provide a definitive list of application types and circumstances where this might apply as the consultation requirements for each application need to be considered on the merits of that particular application.** However, Table 6 below provides some guidance in this regard.

Table 6: Methods of Community Involvement in Planning Applications

Consultation Method	Applications where there are issues of scale or controversy or are contrary to/out of line with LDF policy	Applications broadly in accordance with the LDF but raising controversial issues or detail	Applications of a scale or on a site for which authorities require wider community involvement. Also applications on sites that are 'sensitive' to development pressure
Exhibitions display/stalls/brochures	√	√	
Workshops (interactive), Design Day	√	√	
Formal writing consultation/Community surveys	√		
Hotline	√		
Public meetings/area meetings	√	√	√
One-to-one meetings with selected stakeholders	√		
Focus Group	√	√	√
Letter to statutory bodies (listed in regulations)	√	√	
Documents available for inspection at LPA offices	√	√	
Area forums	√	√	
Steering/ Advisory group	√	√	
Media (local press, TV, radio, etc)	√		
Website	√	√	√

Comments

Anyone may make comments on a proposal, regardless if they have been notified or not. Comments can be submitted up until a decision is made, which is at least 21 days after notification letters are sent out. However, comments should be submitted as early as possible. All comments received will be made available for inspection at the Town Hall.

Deciding Applications

Many decisions on planning applications are made by planning officers under 'delegated powers', from the Planning Committee. All the planning issues and comments received are taken into consideration. More controversial or larger schemes are referred to the **Planning Committee** for decision. Interested parties have the opportunity to speak at Planning Committees. Information on committee meeting dates and speaking arrangements can be found on the website.

The types of development that will automatically be referred to the Planning Committee are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Types of development to be referred to the Planning Committee

DTLR Code	Type of Development	Definition
01	Major Dwellings	Where 10 or more are to be constructed or the site area is more than 0.5 hectares
02	Major Offices / Research & Development / Light Industry	Where the floorspace will be more than 1000 sq metres or the site area is more than 1 hectare or more (floorspace is defined as the sum of floor area within the building)
03	Major Heavy Industrial / Storage / Warehousing	
04	Major Retail Distribution and Servicing	
05	All other major developments	

Local Councillors may also request that an application be brought before the Planning Committee.

Should an application be revised, the procedure as to how it will be dealt with will depend on the scale of the revision. This may result in a new application being submitted, or it may continue to be dealt with as previously (whether it be under delegated powers or otherwise), taking into consideration the revisions.

Statutory Consultation

The Council may also have to consult various statutory bodies such as Surrey County Council, Health and Safety Executive, Sport England and the Environment Agency. Who is consulted will depend on the type of development that is being proposed.

Consultations with Surrey County Council will be undertaken in accordance with paragraph 16, Schedule 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Attention will be given to planning guidance produced by Surrey County Council and Surrey Local Government Association, such as 'Infrastructure – A Good Practice Guide'. This will help ensure that where the need arises, necessary infrastructure contributions can be secured.

Early consultation with utility / infrastructure providers will make sure there is adequate time for an informed assessment to be made.

APPENDIX 1**GLOSSARY OF TERMS**

AAP	Area Action Plan	A type of Development Plan Document that will set out policies and proposals that specifically relate to a certain area, especially with regard regeneration.
DPD	Development Plan Document	Local planning authority core document based upon formal consultation procedures and requiring formal examination prior to adoption
LDF	Local Development Framework	The portfolio that contains Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Statement of Community Involvement
LDD	Local Development Document	Generic term for Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Statement of Community Involvement.
LDS	Local Development Scheme	A document which sets out what Local Development Documents the Council is intending to prepare, what they will cover, the timetable for their preparation, whether they will be prepared by the Council on its own or jointly with another authority or authorities. A project plan to be produced for submission to the Secretary of State for approval within six months of the commencement of the Act. The scheme is a three-year project plan.
LPA	Local Planning Authority	Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	The government department responsible for planning and local government
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement	Required formal commitment from Local Planning Authority setting out means and methods of community involvement in accordance with government regulations
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	LPA formally adopted document related to Development Plan Document content covering detailed issues, based upon formal consultation procedures but not requiring formal examination prior to adoption
SASR	Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report	Sets out the methodology for conducting Sustainability Appraisals
SA	Sustainability Appraisal	A Sustainability Appraisal will appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of the options and policies in Development Plan Document's, contributing to the achievement of sustainable development

FULL CONSULTATION PERIOD**Pre consultation period**

- Consider the resource required and available at an early stage. Identify the potential for more than the minimum consultation described by this document to be undertaken.
- Notify key stakeholders identified by different means, that draft documentation is available (See communicating results in chapter 6).
- Consider the group(s) that is being targeted and the type of information that will be of relevance to them.

During consultation period

- Collate all consultation results in preparation for developing the consultation report.

After consultation period

- Provide reports to those who have requested to be informed of consultation results.

CONSULTATION METHODS AND CONSIDERATIONS**Media Coverage**

This can be achieved through a regular programme of press releases and a flow of information on the local press, TV, radio etc. Other ways of utilising the media would be through advertisements, interviews slots and media releases. This method can reach cross sections of people on a local basis. Not all households in the Borough receive the free local newspaper so an alternative is needed for these residents.

Public Meetings

These are meetings arranged for members of the public to receive information and express their views on relevant issues. Attendance is open to any interested member of the public. Meetings are usually held at a public place (Town Hall, school or church hall, local sports centre etc), convenient for people to get to. The issue to be discussed is usually publicised in advance through posters, leaflets, letters, the Council's website, press releases, invitations etc.

Using facilitators, these events aim to provide a friendly, informal atmosphere in which local residents can 'brainstorm' a range of ideas. This method can be useful in engaging with large groups of people at one time and also for providing quick feedback. Events of this type should be supplemented with sufficient information to respond to factual questions that may be raised by attendees.

Considerations:

- Attendees should be asked to register their contact details; who they represent and their specific areas of interest, if any.
- Meetings should be advertised on the Council's website, local newspapers, notice boards and flyers.
- This process can be programmed into the 6-week consultation period prescribed in the Regulations.

Formal Written Consultation / Community Surveys / Leaflets

Often this is the most cost-effective method of providing information to a large number of consultees. Thought should be given to combining issues to be consulted on into a cohesive 'package' to avoid confusion and consultation over-load. Also, these processes can be linked to initiatives like public meetings, to enable an informed exchange of views. All documents must provide details on how comments can be submitted to the council e.g. boxes set at community buildings, envelopes in packages that have prepaid stamps.

Exhibitions / Open Days / Stalls / Roadshows

It is important to gain wider public support for more detailed plans once these have been worked up. Holding open days with exhibitions in popular venues throughout the Borough can be a good way of attracting interest. A series of exhibitions are held throughout the Borough, at a number of venues geographically spread. This type of event will require a staff member to attend, who can answer questions posed by the public. It would also provide an opportunity for the public to make comments.

Open days and exhibitions can be relatively informal occasions when users (and potential users) can find out information, meet staff, ask questions and so on. Alternatively, they can be more structured, with formal presentations and discussions.

They may include the use of simple information stands, displays, or something more technical like a video or slide show.

Considerations:

- Attendees should be asked to register their contact details; who they represent and their specific areas of interest, if any.
- This can be a means of reaching the public in areas they most frequent.
- Exhibition packs or leaflets can be handed out to attendees.
- Public display materials to be produced at a size large enough to ensure legibility.
- Meetings should be advertised on the Council's website, local newspapers, notice boards and flyers.
- This process can be programmed into the 6-week consultation period prescribed in the Regulations.

Focus Group

These are semi-structured meetings/ interviews/ workshops with a small group of individual participants using networks of existing and well-established groups in the Borough. This type of consultation activity is used to obtain the views of representative groups of people on a topic to assist in planning for a target group or wider community. They are also useful for area based discussions and presentation of options as they enable in depth discussion and exchange of views.

Considerations:

- Can be labour intensive.
- Representative groups need to be targeted.
- Recording attendance and feedbacks from representative groups.
- This process can be programmed into the 6-week consultation period prescribed in the Regulations.

Steering / Advisory Group

This includes internal and external stakeholders. This group should have its terms of reference developed initially, then regular meetings where updates should be provided. The group should be focused on progressing the document by considering issues and providing options or guidance for resolving various issues.

This group can act as both a critical friend and advisory group to the process. The group will have an input in shaping detailed arrangements for public consultation and participation throughout the process.

Considerations:

- Selection of participants needs to be consistent and transparent.
- Best for focused discussion with key stakeholders/ representative bodies.
- Reporting required in political processes of member organisations needs to be accounted for to avoid adverse impact on timescales.

Internet (Website)

This exercise is primarily to provide detailed information to all parties on a regular basis and is likely to be increasingly used in the future. It may be possible to provide an opportunity for the public to submit comments via e-mail or online forms/questionnaires. Often e-mail notification will be the primary way of informing the public that documents are available online. This is due to the inference that those with e-mail will likely also have Internet access.

Information on consultation can be provided through the Epsom and Ewell Borough Council website.

Considerations:

- Record the number of Web Pages hits.
- Best for informing a large number of people (note that many have internet access).
- Includes all types of consultations, venues, and immediate feedback.
- Includes full document, summary document and media release.
- Consultation period begins upon availability of documents.

Private Workshops

This is an invitation-only event for people who are most involved with the document under consultation. The format of the workshop can be modified to suit the particular circumstances of the consultation exercise with the aim of the exercise being to identify issues and possible solutions. Typically the workshop will involve a presentation and an 'open floor' discussion. Notes from the workshop should be recorded and provided to participants shortly

after the event. Workshop groups can be held with different sectors of the community and in different areas.

Considerations

- Each participant should register his or her attendance.
- Best for focused discussion with key stakeholders/ representative's bodies.
- Potentially could be used throughout the 6-week consultation periods but advantageous to complete early wherever possible.

Questionnaire

Questionnaires can be used to ask residents and other stakeholders to give their preferences and comments on what they see as broad priorities for the Borough or to seek their views on a specific Development Plan Document.

Considerations:

- It is not necessarily the most effective method because people without an interest in the planning process will not give up time to answer/fill questionnaires.
- It can be merged with some of the other means of consultation.
- Record the number of questionnaires filled.
- This process can be programmed into the 6-week consultation period prescribed in the Regulations.

One-to-one Meetings with Selected Stakeholders

These meetings should take place with those stakeholders most affected by the document under consultation. The aim of these meetings should be to obtain in-depth comments regarding the document and resolution of potential issues. This requires the number of people to be kept to a minimum. Thought needs to be given to suitable locations and times. At all levels of the partnership structure, it is very important that meetings should be conducted in a style that community partners are comfortable with. Attention should be paid to:

1. The time of day set for meetings.
2. The language used in meetings.

3. The level of formality to be adopted at meetings.
4. The possibility of larger meetings being broken down at certain points into smaller groups, to facilitate participation.
5. The most appropriate venues; transport; childcare arrangements; and any translation services that may be needed.

Considerations:

- Participants should register their attendance.
- Best for focused discussion with key stakeholder/representative bodies.
- This process can be programmed into the 6-week consultation period prescribed in the Regulations.
- Allows participation.

Letters to Statutory Bodies

These bodies have been prescribed under the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulation 2004 and Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, Annex E. Thought should be given to providing multiple documents in a 'package' to assist efficiency and consistency. All documents must provide details on how comments can be submitted to the Council.

Considerations:

- Record number distributed and number returned with comments. Ensure that all consultees are advised by either acknowledgement or follow up calls.
- Statutory requirement.
- Best for notifying statutory bodies.
- Consultation period begins upon delivery of formal consultation correspondence.

Documents Available for Inspection at Council Offices During Set Consultation Period

Documents should be provided to the public libraries and Town Hall reception for public viewing.

Considerations:

- Statutory requirement
- Can be a cost effective way of informing the public
- Can include various languages.
- Documents can be in Braille.

Hotline / Contact Number / Contact Email

A contact number should be included in documents for contact. This would be a direct number to a planning officer with the primary aim of answering questions/ informing/enlightening the public. There should also be a contact e-mail address provided using a generic e-mail 'box' but directed to the officer responsible for the consultation exercise.

Considerations:

- Record number of calls.
- Best for informing large numbers of people and answering concerns.
- Should be available for the entire consultation period and continue to be available until document is adopted.

Official Launch

A launch may be used to raise awareness of a significant document being released. This should be a publicly advertised/notified event, which is open to all interested parties. Written information in the form of leaflets and brochures should be available to attendees.

Considerations

- Each participant should register their attendance.
- Should take place on or shortly after the 6-weeks consultation period begins.

The Council is mindful of the criticism that decision-makers can become preoccupied with the mechanisms used to involve the public at the expense of how they will actually use the end results to support the development of a particular policy. This appendix therefore considers the steps that will be taken in handling responses received from the various consultation exercises to be undertaken. Decisions will be taken by both officers and Members.

The precise method of analysis will depend on the consultation technique used.¹

- Step 1:** Ensure that accurate and complete records are kept of all responses, whether received through a formal written consultation or more interactive methods.
- Step 2:** Try to sort the responses into particular types, for example, business groups, employees' representative groups and individual views. This will help you to identify variations in perspectives on particular issues.
- Step 3:** Develop a 'framework grid' for analysis of the key policy issues, and then a summary of the primary viewpoints on each aspect.
- Step 4:** Examine the primary viewpoints and consider the implications. Separate the practical/realistic solutions from those that cannot be pursued.
- Step 5:** Prepare an outline response to the consultation based on analysis of the responses. This should set out the key themes identified by the consultation and how to resolve these. Explanations of why popular recommendations have not been carried forward should also be included.
- Step 6:** Draw together all of the above into a single 'outcome' paper, which will be reported to Members.
- Step 7:** Develop a clear position on the ramifications of what is set out in the outcome paper.
- Step 8:** Submission of DPD or SCI to the Government Office followed by a 6-week period of consultation and public examination of the soundness of that document. The examination Inspector will then issue a binding report to the Council.

(1) www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/consultation-guidance

APPENDIX 4 FEEDBACK

The Council acknowledges that people take time out of their busy lives to contribute to involvement exercises and it is therefore important for them to know how their views were taken into account.

Feedback on Local Development Documents

Feedback to participants and other parties interested in the document can enhance the legitimacy of the final policy by showing that it was subject to a public involvement process, and appropriate views were incorporated in shaping the outcome. It should also be viewed as an important part of the communication strategy for the policy, both internally and externally.

Once the consultation period for any Local Development Document is completed the result from the process will be presented back to the community. These results will be made available on the Council's website and in hard copy at the Town Hall. All consultation response sheets will include an option to receive these results via e-mail or to a postal address, which will be supplied by the respondents.

Table 8 describes how analysed responses can be presented to the community.

Table 8: How Analysed Responses can be Presented to the Community

	General public with internet access	General public without internet access	Respondent with internet access	Respondent without internet access
How do people get copies of the LDD consultation result	Provided on Council's website	Hard copy available at Town Hall	Provided on Council's website	Hard Copy Available at Town Hall
How do people get copies of the finalised DPD	Download from the website	Available during consultation period following submission at the Town Hall and local libraries	Document is e-mailed, if requested	Document is posted, if requested

Results will be provided in a timely manner. However, the actual time to provide such reports will vary in line with the complexity, scale, success and interest associated with the consultation programme. It is suggested that results will be published within 2-3 months of the close of the

consultation period before the political reporting process (for the adoption of SPD or the submission of DPD to examination) is complete.

All those involved in earlier consultation stages will be notified when the revised document is available for further consultation.

Feedback on Planning Applications

Once a decision has been reached on a planning application, a decision letter will be sent to anyone who submitted a written comment on the application, in addition to the applicant.

The decision letter will provide details relating the decision:

- If the application was refused, reasons for the refusal will be supplied
- If the application was permitted, details will be provided on any conditions attached to the permission

Copies of the decision reports will also be made available at the Town Hall.