

THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AT A GLANCE

Introduction

The Statement of Community Involvement outlines what the Council aims to do to:

- Involve local people and others in preparing new local development documents for Wear Valley District (to replace the existing Wear Valley District Local Plan); and
- Make sure that local people and other interest groups such as businesses and government agencies find out about planning applications and know how to have their say.

The statement also sets out proposed new arrangements for developers to consult local people and other interest groups *before* making planning applications for significant development.

What is in the document?

Section 1 summarises the plan making and development control planning processes that operate within the District and their relevance to you. The general purpose of the document is also set out in this section.

Section 2 clarifies who can become involved in these planning processes. It recognises the potential that existing community groups have to offer in securing your involvement. A list of parties that Central Government requires us to consult with is provided. This section also explains how you can register your interest with us in becoming involved in the preparation of the new development plan.

Section 3 explains how you can become involved in both the plan making and development control processes. In this section we have identified five types of consultation groups one of which will be applicable to you. These categories range

from those groups or individuals with little or no planning background to Central Government and local planning bodies. The principles upon which this involvement strategy has been based are set out in this section. These are;

- Facilitating early involvement
- Eliminating barriers to participation
- Ensuring transparency and providing feedback.

The methods which we intend to employ to facilitate your involvement in the planning processes include;

- Publishing public notices and articles in local papers telling you about opportunities to comment.
- Holding events and exhibitions where you can meet us, find out more and share your views.
- Making copies of all published documents in a variety of formats, available to view at the Civic Centre, Crook and on our website.
- Disseminating information through the Community Network.
- Writing to consultees identified in section 2 and those parties who have registered an interest with us.
- Use of plain English in documents and written communication.

Section 4 sets out when you can become involved in the plan making process. It outlines the types of documents that will make up the new development plan for the District. The key stages to the preparation of each type of these documents which we must follow and the opportunities for you to become involved in each of these stages is summarised in table form. This section shows you that there will be more opportunities for you to comment on the main documents (known as Development Plan Documents) than on Supplementary Planning Documents (that provide more detail and advice on matters mentioned in

the main documents). You will also have the opportunity to comment on how we assess the sustainability of plans throughout the process. This section also confirms how you can submit comments to us and indicates the length of time you will have to make representations at each stage.

Section 5 sets out when you can become involved in the development control process, according to the type of application in question. You have the opportunity to become involved in proposals that we consider are 'significant' before an application is made, when any application is first received, during its processing, when it is determined and after it is determined.

Section 6 explains why we are proposing to introduce public and other consultations by developers who are going to make 'significant' planning applications, and sets out the types of development that we will consider 'significant'. This includes housing developments comprising of 10 or more dwellings or a site area of more than 0.5ha, and other developments with a floor area exceeding 1000m². We may ask developers to involve the community in smaller schemes, if we consider the location or proposed use to be particularly sensitive.

When developers make 'significant' applications, they will need to be able to show that they have carried out certain consultation and publicity activities. The kinds of consultation they may carry out include collecting views of local community groups, telling local residents and businesses about the proposed scheme and where they can find out more, and holding an event or exhibition to explain the scheme.

If developers fail to carry out adequate and appropriate consultation and publicity, their applications may be delayed while we sort out relevant planning objections to the submitted application. If we cannot sort out these objections within a reasonable time, we will have to consider refusing the application.

Section 7 explains how we will resource our commitment to facilitate your involvement in the planning processes. This

section also explains how and when we propose to monitor and review the Statement of Community Involvement.