

# WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT COUNCIL

Local  
Development  
Framework

## **Draft Statement of Community Involvement**

**July 2005**



## Foreword



## Statement of Community Involvement

***WE**, the District Council, are committed to providing the conditions to encourage a two-way dialogue with **YOU**, the community and stakeholders, who have a valuable contribution to make to securing the delivery of a positive future for Wear Valley through the planning process.*

*This dialogue will be facilitated in a realistic, relevant, continuous and meaningful manner and will seek to promote engagement irrespective of gender, age, ethnicity, socio-economic status, educational attainment or disability.'*

Councillor Alan Townsend  
Chair of Regeneration Committee

Bob Hope  
Director of Regeneration

# Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Page</b>
<b>1</b>	What Is The Planning Process And Its Relevance To You?	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	Who Can Become Involved In The Planning Process?	<b>5</b>
<b>3</b>	How Can You Become Involved In The Planning Process?	<b>6</b>
<b>4</b>	When Can You Become Involved in the Production Of The Local Development Framework?	<b>11</b>
<b>5</b>	When Can You Become Involved in Development Control Decisions?	<b>15</b>
<b>6</b>	The Developers Role in Facilitating Community Involvement In The Development Control Process.	<b>19</b>
<b>7</b>	Other Matters	<b>22</b>
<b>Appendix 1</b>	List Of Consultees For The Local Development Framework Preparation Process	<b>23</b>
<b>Appendix 2</b>	Leaflet outlining public speaking at Planning committee	<b>25</b>

**BLANK PAGE**

# What Is The Planning Process and Its Relevance To You?

## The Planning Process

- 1.1. Planning is one of our, the Council's, statutory functions. It is a process which both controls and guides new development and use of land and buildings within the District. The planning process affects all of us on a daily basis, often unknowingly. It shapes the places within which we all live, work, are educated and spend our leisure time. It also influences how and where we travel to in order to live our lives and opportunities for future generations of the District.
- 1.2. There are two main elements making up the local planning process: the formulation of planning policies and proposals and the determination of development proposals by third parties against these policies.
- 1.3. Where planning permission is required the party proposing the development must submit a formal planning application to the Council for determination. The Council will decide whether or not to grant planning permission on the basis of the local planning policies that it has adopted national policy guidance issued by central government and other relevant factors.
- 1.4. Our current planning policies which provide a framework for consistent consideration of developments relating to topics such as housing, business, retail, leisure and recreation, community facilities, natural environment and cultural heritage, are set out in a development plan for the District entitled the Wear Valley District Local Plan, which was adopted in March 1997. In the future planning policies for the District will be contained in a new style development plan known as a Local Development Framework.
- 1.5. This new plan will comprise of a portfolio of individual documents that may relate to particular topics or geographical areas. How these documents all fit together and when they will be produced is described in our adopted project plan, the Wear Valley District Local Development Scheme<sup>1</sup>.

## The Purpose of This Document

- 1.6. This publication, the Council's Statement of Community Involvement represents **our** commitment to facilitating **your** future involvement in this planning process both in terms of the preparation of new local planning policies and in the determination of planning applications. Both of these processes will shape the District's future environmental, social and economic well being.
- 1.7. This document seeks to clarify the importance and relevance of the planning process to you. It describes our strategy for facilitating community involvement in terms of when and how we will provide opportunities to enable your involvement in planning the future of the District if you so wish<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.8. We genuinely consider that you have a valuable role to play in planning for the future of the District. We want you to contribute towards developing a vision for the District and contribute to ideas about how this vision can be achieved. This strategy seeks to enable all parties to have a clearer understanding of each other's concerns and intentions. As a consequence the planning process that operates within the District will be able to be more responsive, flexible, proactive and less time consuming.
- 1.9. In the past we have undertaken many of the activities identified within this Statement of Community Involvement, and this document formalizes and builds upon these. It also illustrates the role that we consider that a developer can and should play in facilitating your involvement in the consideration of planning applications of local significance. This statement is also a mechanism by which we can assess how successful these measures are over time so that we can determine whether changes to seek further improvement are necessary.

<sup>1</sup>Copy of adopted Local Development Scheme available to view at [www.wearvalley.gov.uk](http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk). Hard copy available for inspection at Civic Centre, Crook or to purchase upon request.

<sup>2</sup>This Strategy only related to matters covered by planning legislation.

# Who Can Become Involved In The Planning Process?

**2.1.** The planning process operates in the public interest to ensure that new development and uses of land make places better for people and deliver development where communities need it, without prejudicing the needs of future generations of Wear Valley. Good planning practice, which is reflected in Central Government policy suggests that to secure a positive future the District needs sufficient, quality housing, a flourishing local economy, and the community facilities to support a diverse and vibrant local community. This however needs to be balanced with the requirements of our natural and historic environments, which create Wear Valley's local distinctiveness.

**2.2.** We therefore acknowledge that **you**, as a;

- Resident of the District
- Resident Group
- Community / local group
- Customer panel
- Community Network
- Parish or Town Council
- Community Partnership
- Local business
- Developer / landowner
- Regional/ national interest group
- Government/ statutory body

Have interests that rely or could impact upon the economic, environmental and social well being of Wear Valley. We therefore consider that **you** have a significant contribution to make in determining the District's future and openly invite your participation.

**2.3.** Traditionally we have found that some of the parties identified above have been more involved in planning than others. We have found that this is particularly true when it comes to involvement in planning policy where people find it difficult to see the direct relevance to them and their local area or are put off by what they perceive to be complicated and lengthy processes involved in developing policies. Unfortunately, it is often the case that it is not until a party is faced with a development

proposal on their doorstep that the significance of the planning process is realized, by which time development principles could have already been established in the development plan.

**2.4.** Fortunately good networks of local organizations already operate within and with the interests of the District and we propose to build our community involvement strategy upon these and maximize their potential contribution to enable your involvement in planning for the District's future. The Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership and variety of community partnerships that make up membership of the Community Network, for example provide an effective network to inform and involve people. The District also benefits from significant geographical coverage of Parish and Town Councils.

**2.5.** A list of consultees that we are required by Central Government planning regulations to involve in the preparation of the forthcoming Local Development Framework documents is contained within **Appendix 1**.

**2.6.** We also hold a database of other parties who have expressed an interest in the planning process. **Should you wish to have your details entered into this database** please contact the Forward Planning Team, the details of whom are contained on the rear cover of this publication, specifying whether you have general or specific interest(s).

# How Can You Become Involved In The Planning Process ?

- 3.1.** There are numerous ways in which we wish to involve you in one or both of the planning processes. It should however be noted that some approaches are more appropriate to the production of the Local Development Framework and some to involvement in the consideration of planning applications. Notwithstanding this some approaches could be successfully applied to both.
- 3.2.** We recognize that there will be differing degrees to which you may wish to become involved in the planning process, depending upon your individual circumstances and interests.
- 3.3.** We also recognize that you may have differing needs depending upon your existing knowledge and experience of the planning system. We have therefore identified 5 consultation groups for the purposes of formulating and presenting this involvement strategy that are summarized in the tables which are contained in this document. At this stage in your reading it would be useful to consider which of these groups is most relevant to your circumstances, to assist in your interpretation of further tables which illustrate how we can facilitate your involvement in the planning process.

TABLE 1	
GROUP	CHARACTERISTICS
<b>A</b>	Groups or individuals with little or no planning background/ training <i>e.g. hard to reach groups, residents, land owners and local businesses.</i>
<b>B</b>	Groups or individuals with some planning background <i>e.g. Council Members, Parish &amp; Town Councils and active local interest groups</i>
<b>C</b>	Groups or individuals with a planning background <i>e.g. planning consultants and developers</i>
<b>D</b>	National organizations with a planning related statutory duty, interest/ remit <i>e.g. English Heritage, Sport England &amp; Environment Agency</i>
<b>E</b>	Central and local planning bodies <i>e.g. neighboring local authorities, Government Office for NE &amp; North East Assembly.</i>

- 3.4.** We consider that the key to successful community involvement is to give you genuine choice about your level of involvement. In your case this may simply mean us adopting approaches which ensure that you are able to be kept informed if you so wish at any given time, and given the chance to find out more if you so wish. However we intend to adopt methods that will also enable you to participate more actively should you so wish to do so.
- 3.5.** Our strategy for securing your involvement in the planning process is based upon 3 key principles:
- Early involvement** – giving you the opportunity to influence decisions and policies as early as possible in the process.*
- Eliminating barriers to participation** – making sure that you are aware of what is going on and how you can become involved through adequate publicity. Offering you choices about the method and your level of involvement. Ensuring that you can easily access document and planning applications, including use of the Internet and alternative formats/ languages.*
- Transparency & Providing feedback** – being open to you about the issues and how decisions are made and ensuring that we make you aware of the outcome of a matter that you have become involved in.*
- 3.6.** The methods that we will be employing to facilitate your involvement are summarized in a menu form in the following **table 2**. The use of these may vary according to the stage of the development plan preparation process reached. Where resources allow or specific statutory requirements prevail additional measures may be taken. These possibilities are also indicated.
- 3.7.** Of particular significance to the delivery of this strategy is the role of 2D. This is an organisation operating within the district that has a co-ordination role for the local volunteer network. In conjunction with 2D we have identified a somewhat unique opportunity to work in partnership in facilitating a two-way dialogue with the Community Network and volunteer groups which the network represents. Such a partnership will provide widespread opportunity for groups with a variety of interests, including hard to reach groups to become involved in the planning process operating in the district.
- 3.8.** We are also working in partnership with the remaining local authorities of County Durham and Planning Aid North, who are acting on behalf of the Royal Town Planning Institute, to develop a 'Planning and Young Persons' project. This seeks to introduce planning studies into the curriculums of participating primary, secondary and special needs schools, raising awareness and capacity of both students and their parents / guardians throughout the District and wider county area.



**Table 2**

<b>TABLE 2</b>			
<b>Key principle of strategy</b>	<b>Involvement opportunity</b>	<b>Relevant to LDF and/or DC process</b>	<b>Most relevant to groups</b>
<b>Early Involvement</b>			
<b>How we will provide for This;</b>	Delivery of Planning & Young People Project.	LDF & DC	A
	Written Correspondence to those consultees identified in <b>Appendix 1</b> and others who have expressed an interest.	LDF & DC	A, B, C, D, & E
	Articles published in 'Wear Valley Matters' newsletter.	LDF	A, B & C
	Dissemination of information through the Community Network.	LDF & DC	A & B
	Dovetailing with other meetings e.g. Parish & Town Councils, Community Network, Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership.	LDF	A & B
	Articles published on the Council's website.	LDF	A, B, C, D & E
	Making available copies of adopted Statement of Community Involvement document in a variety of formats for viewing at the Civic Centre, Crook, on the Council's website and/or to purchase – so that you know how and when you can be involved.	LDF & DC	A, B, C, D & E
<b>Other possibilities;</b>	<i>Planning for Real (a specific method of using maps and models to develop ideas for that particular area).</i>	LDF	A & B
	<i>Master Planning – a series of workshops, exhibitions and seminars to generate professionally produced urban design proposals that can be influenced by local opinion.</i>	LDF & DC	A, B, C, D & E

## Table 2 Continued

Eliminating barriers to participation			
<b>How we will provide for this;</b>	Facilitating the Planning & Young People Project.	LDF & DC	A
	Making available copies of adopted Statement of Community Involvement document in a variety of formats for viewing at the Civic Centre, Crook, on the Council's website and/or to purchase – so that you know how and when you can be involved.	LDF & DC	A, B, C, D & E
	Consultation and adopted documents and all planning applications available to view at Civic Centre Crook.	LDF & DC	A, B, C
	Consultation and adopted/ Documents available to view on Council's website.	LDF	A, B, C, D & E
	Documents posted out upon request in a variety of formats ( <i>N.B a fee may be applicable for copies of adopted documents</i> ).	LDF	A, B, C, D & E
	Use of plain English when preparing documents and written communication	LDF & DC	A, B, C, D & E
	Articles published in 'Wear Valley Matters' newsletter.	LDF	A, B & C
	Dissemination of information through the Community Network.	LDF & DC	A & B
	Exhibitions relating to consultation documents providing opportunities to comment.	LDF & DC*	A, B & C
	Dovetailing with other meetings e.g. Parish & Town Councils, Community Network, Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership & hard to reach groups.	LDF	A & B
	Raising awareness of availability of Planning Aid North service to assist the general public.	LDF & DC	A & B
<b>Other possibilities;</b>	<i>Documents &amp; letters to target groups.</i>	<i>LDF &amp; DC</i>	<i>A, B, C, D, &amp; E</i>
	<i>Availability of summary leaflet relating to a document.</i>	<i>LDF</i>	<i>A, B, C, D &amp; E</i>
	<i>Publication of Public Notices. and press releases.</i>	<i>LDF&amp; DC</i>	<i>A, B, C, D &amp; E</i>
	<i>Posting of site notices.</i>	<i>DC</i>	<i>A, B &amp; C</i>
	<i>Calling public meetings.</i>	<i>LDF &amp; DC</i>	<i>A, B &amp; C</i>
	<i>Master Planning – a series of workshops, exhibitions and seminars to generate professionally produced urban design proposals that can be influenced by local opinion.</i>	<i>LDF &amp; DC</i>	<i>A, B, C, D &amp; E</i>

## Table 2 Continued

Transparency & Feedback			
<b>How we will provide for this;</b>	Written correspondence to those who have made representations in plain English.	LDF & DC	A, B, C, D & E
	Discussions and meetings with the Community Network and Wear Valley Local Strategic Partnership.	LDF	A & B
	One to one meetings upon request.	LDF & DC	A, B, C, D & E
	Use of Council web site.	LDF	A, B, C, D & E
<b>Other possibilities;</b>	<i>Questionnaires &amp; public surveys.</i>	<i>LDF &amp; DC</i>	<i>A, B, C, D &amp; E</i>
	<i>Public meetings/ exhibitions.</i>	<i>LDF &amp; DC</i>	<i>A, B &amp; C</i>

# When Can You Become Involved In The Production Of The Local Development Framework?

- 4.1.** We will ensure that a variety of opportunities to facilitate your involvement in the production of the Local Development Framework from the menu of methods summarized in **table 2** are provided according to each key stage of the process. We will place an emphasis upon getting you involved at an early stage. The proposed dates of each key consultation stage are set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme<sup>3</sup>. At each of these stages we will carry out consultation over a 6-week period. We will require you to make any representations in writing or by e-mail
- 4.2.** A summary of these different stages is provided in **table 3** along with how your input can influence the preparation process.
- 4.3.** The types of documents that make up a Local Development Framework are summarised below. Our work program and priorities for the forthcoming 3-year period are set out in the adopted Local Development Scheme.

## Strategic Environmental Assessment /Sustainability Appraisal (SEA/SA)

- 4.4.** This is a mandatory process under which the Local Development Framework must be prepared. We will prepare a report in parallel with each Development Plan Document. This will consider the environmental, social and economic impacts of forthcoming policies and proposals and demonstrate how the results of the appraisal have been taken into account when finalising a Local Development Document.

## Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 4.5.** These are subject to independent Examination In Public (EIP) and have the weight of 'development plan' status as defined by Section 38(6) of the Town & Country Planning Act

(1990). The following Development Plan Documents are mandatory;

A Core Strategy DPD is required to set out the spatial vision, objectives, and policies together with a monitoring and implementation framework for the local authority area.

A Proposals Map DPD is also mandatory, illustrating the geographical extent of policies.

The number and content of the remainder of these Development Plan Documents is not specified by Government but can include;

site specific allocations of land based upon robust and credible assessment of the suitability and availability of land.

Action Area Plans (AAPs) focusing upon areas where opportunities for comprehensive change or conservation exist and where there is sensitivity to change, multiple ownership and/or delivery issues.

thematic documents, for example housing or retail.

generic development control policies contained either within other Development Plan Documents or developed as a separate Local Development Document.

## Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 4.6.** These are intended to expand upon policy or provide further detail to policies in Development Plan Documents. They can include design guides, site development briefs, issue or thematic-based documents. However they do not enjoy development plan status and therefore must not contain land allocations or policies that should be subject to Examination In Public.

<sup>3</sup>Copy of adopted Local Development Scheme available to view at [www.wearvalley.gov.uk](http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk). Hard copy available for inspection at Civic Centre, Crook or to purchase upon request.

## Table 3

Table 3		
KEY PREPARATION STAGES	OUR ACTIONS	WHAT YOU CAN DO
<b>Development Plan Documents</b>		
<b>1. Pre-submission Consultation (Regulation 25)</b>	<p>We will invite initial representations regarding the content of the proposed Development Plan Document by writing to those consultees identified by Regulation 25 Of the Town &amp; Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 listed in <b>appendix 1</b> and by posting an item on the Council's website.</p> <p>This will enable us to gather evidence and stimulate public discussion on relevant issues and alternative options available thus informing the production of an Issues and Options Document and initial Sustainability Appraisal. This will help us to decide upon the preferred options to be pursued in the draft Development Plan Document and formal Sustainability Appraisal report.</p>	<p>You can forward your comments to us in writing or by e-mail within the period prescribed. This may vary according to other timescales set out in the Local Development Scheme and the subject matter of the particular Development Plan Document. At this stage we will encourage a continuous process of informal discussion.</p> <p>We will employ methods set out in <b>table 2</b> to ensure that you will have the opportunity to make formal representations over a 6-week period on the Issues and Options document and initial Sustainability Report. These comments must be made in writing or by e-mail to us within the time scale specified by us.</p>
<b>2. Preferred Options (Regulation 26)</b>	<p>We produce a Draft Submission Development Plan Document and draft formal Sustainability Appraisal report for consultation with you based upon the preferred options that are established having taken into account previous representations received from you. We will provide you with feedback in accordance with the methods set out in <b>table 2</b>.</p>	<p>By employing methods set out in <b>table 2</b> you will have the opportunity to make formal representations over a 6-week period that will influence the form they takes in the final submission to the Secretary of State. These comments must be made in writing or by e-mail to us within the time scale specified by us.</p>

## Table 3 Continued

KEY PREPARATION STAGES	OUR ACTIONS	WHAT YOU CAN DO
<b>3. Submission (Regulation 27 &amp; 28)</b>	<p>We will finalise the draft Development Plan Document and draft Sustainability Appraisal report having taken into account representations received from you. Upon completion we submit these documents to the Secretary of State for independent assessment. We will advertise our actions via the council's web site, press notices, Wear Valley Matters and by writing to all parties who have previously made representation.</p> <p>Whilst we will analyse any representations received we are unable to make any changes that will alter the substance of the documents prior to the Examination in Public.</p>	We will employ methods set out in <b>table 2</b> to ensure that you have another 6 weeks to make comments on the submitted Development Plan Document and Sustainability Appraisal report. These comments must be made in writing or by e-mail to us within the timescale specified by us.
<b>4. Examination</b>	An independent inspector will assess the soundness of the submitted Development Plan Document and Sustainability Appraisal report during an Examination in Public. (In the case of a Statement of Community Involvement this may take place by way of the written representation process). The length of the examination period varies according to the complexity of the document.	You can attend the Examination in Public. The inspector will consider any representations that you have made to the submission documents in question. The inspector will consider these by way of written or oral representations that will be determined according to circumstances.
<b>5. Adoption</b>	The inspector will issue us with a report, the findings of which are binding. We must make any alterations to the documents that the inspector requires. We will then publish the final Development Plan Document and Sustainability Appraisal report for adoption, a statement of how the sustainability appraisal process has been taken into account and an adoption statement.	We will employ methods set out in <b>table 2</b> to ensure that you are given the opportunity to view our adoption statement and the adopted documents.

## Table 3 Continued

KEY PREPARATION STAGES	OUR ACTIONS	WHAT YOU CAN DO
<b>Supplementary Planning Guidance</b>		
<b>Preparation</b>	We will gather evidence and information to inform the preparation of a draft document.	Depending upon the subject of the document we may seek representation from you using a variety of methods outlined in <b>table 2</b> .
<b>Draft document</b>	<p>We will prepare a draft document from the evidence and advice collated.</p> <p>We will analyse any representations received and determine as to any subsequent amendments required.</p>	We will employ methods set out in <b>table 2</b> to facilitate your ability to provide formal comments to us. The length of the consultation period will be clearly stated at the time of the consultation and will last for between four and six weeks. Any representations must be made via e-mail or in writing.
<b>Adoption</b>	<p>We will prepare a final document for adoption. We will report this to the Council's Regeneration Committee along with any representations that you have made. Subject to any further amendments required by the committee the document will be formally adopted.</p> <p><i>N.B this type of document does not need to be the subject of examination by an independent inspector.</i></p> <p>We will write to you to provide you with feedback.</p>	We will employ methods outlined in <b>table 2</b> to inform you of the adoption of the document and how you can access it to view.

# When Can You Become Involve In Development Control Decisions?

5.1. Central Government measures the performance of the Council's Development Control function by the speed by which decisions are made. Therefore, when preparing our strategy for facilitating your involvement in Development Control matters we have had to balance providing you with reasonable opportunity with cost and speed of decision making. We will involve both the general public and statutory consultees in these matters. It must be noted that whom we consult will vary with the nature and location of the proposal and subsequently we will not consult everyone on every application. We will give you a period of 21 days to make any written representations. Representations must relate to planning related matters.

5.2. **Table 4** overleaf summarizes how and when you have the opportunity to participate in the decision making process

relating to the following types of application;

- Householder development
- Full detailed applications
- Change of Use
- Outline development
- Determination of Reserved Matters
- Works to trees which are subject to a Tree preservation Order
- Listed Building Consent
- Conservation Area Consent
- Amendment, Variation or Removal of a Condition

5.1. **Table 5** summarizes how and when you have the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process relating to the types of application.



## Table 4

### Opportunities to participate in the Development Control Process

METHOD	TARGET AUDIENCE	PURPOSE
<b>Before a 'significant' application is submitted to us.</b>		
Encouragement of developers of significant proposals to undertake pre-submission community consultation.	A & B	To enable the developer to fully explain their proposal at the earliest stage in order that any objection/concerns/suggestions by the community can be identified and addressed.
<b>When a planning application is first received by us.</b>		
<b>Weekly List</b> made available on Council's website and in hard copy form <sup>4</sup>	A, B, C, D & E	To publicize the receipt of all applications submitted in a given week.
<b>Statutory Planning Register</b> located at the Regeneration Department for public inspection.	A, B, C, D & E	To record details of all planning applications submitted to the Council, including the final decision.
<b>Notification Letters</b> <sup>4</sup>	A, B (Those parties whose land or property lies close to the proposal) & D	To inform third parties within the immediate vicinity of a site of the submission of an application that may be of relevance/ has an impact upon them.
<b>Site notice</b> <sup>4</sup>	A & B	To inform third parties of the submission of an application that may be of relevance/ have an impact upon them where <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the site falls within a conservation area, affects a listed building,</li> <li>• there is no postal address known for the owner of adjacent land</li> <li>• the proposal has more widespread impact due to its nature or scale.</li> </ul>
<b>Press notice</b> <sup>4</sup>	A, B, C, D & E	To inform third parties of the submission of an application that may be of relevance/ have an impact upon them <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• where the site falls within a conservation area,</li> <li>• affects a listed building</li> <li>• has more widespread impact due to its nature or scale.</li> </ul>
<b>Duty Planning Officer</b> Contactable at Regeneration Department	A, B, C, D & E	Availability of duty officer to provide information and help on request.
<b>Council Web Site</b> <a href="http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk">www.wearvalley.gov.uk</a>	A, B, C, D & E	To publicize the receipt of all applications received to view details of applications submitted, including the final decision.

<sup>4</sup>Representation to be made by you within 21 days.

Table 4 continued

METHOD	TARGET AUDIENCE	PURPOSE
<b>During the processing of a planning application.</b>		
<b>Written invitation to attend Committee</b>	Applicants and those third parties who have made representation about the application.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To circulate a copy of the relevant committee report to parties</li> <li>To inform parties of the opportunity to attend committee and notify them of their right to speak.</li> </ul>
<b>Public speaking at Development Control Committee</b> <sup>5</sup>	<b>General public, applicants or their representative in cases where;</b> 3 or more parties have made written representations. A Council Member has requested an application be referred to committee for determination. Applications which do not fall under the scheme of delegation.	To enable parties to put forward their representations to Members of the Development Control Committee.
<b>Duty Planning Officer</b> Contactable at Regeneration Department	A, B, C, D & E	Availability of duty officer to provide information and help on request.
<b>After an application is determined.</b>		
<b>Decision Letter</b>	Parties who have made representations to an application	To inform parties, who have made representation the outcome of a planning application, including reasons for refusal, approval and conditions attached.
<b>Notification of Appeal Letter</b> <sup>6</sup>	Parties who have made representations to an application which is subsequently the subject of an appeal	To inform interested parties of the receipt of an appeal and to give the opportunity to modify previous representations.
<b>Notification of an informal hearing/ public enquiry (Public Notice)</b>	A, B, C, D & E	To inform all interested parties of the scheduling of the event.
<b>Duty Planning Officer</b>	A, B, C, D & E	Availability of duty officer to provide information and help on request.
<b>Web Site</b> <a href="http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk">www.wearvalley.gov.uk</a>	A, B, C, D & E	To make publicly available committee minutes (Committee diary) To make publicly available details of appeals both pending and determined.

<sup>5</sup> Notice letters to third party and leaflet explains your rights to appeal

<sup>6</sup> Representation to be made by you within 21 days.

## Table 5

### Opportunities to be involved in other types of application

APPLICATION TYPE	METHOD OF INVOLVEMENT	TARGET GROUPS
<b>Works to trees within a conservation area</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning register located within Regeneration Department for public inspection.</li> <li>• Site notice<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Neighbour letters<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Web site</li> <li>• Weekly list<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Availability of duty officer to provide advice and information upon request</li> <li>• Renotification of letters</li> <li>• Decision letters to those who have made representations.</li> </ul>	A & B
<b>Advertisements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly list<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Neighbour letters<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Web site</li> <li>• Statutory consultees<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Press notice (depending upon location)<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Availability of duty officer to provide advice and information upon request</li> <li>• Renotification of letters</li> <li>• Decision letters to those who have made representations.</li> </ul>	A, B & D
<b>Prior approval for agricultural, telecommunication and demolition works</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public register.</li> <li>• Weekly list<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Web site</li> <li>• Availability of duty officer to provide advice and information upon request</li> </ul> <p><i>N.B Representations are not invited as failure to determine within 28 days results in deemed consent.</i></p>	A & B (for information only).
<b>Certificate of Lawfulness.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public register</li> <li>• Weekly list<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• Web site</li> <li>• Availability of duty officer to provide advice and information upon request</li> </ul> <p><i>N.B. Representations are not invited as the acceptability of the application is purely based upon submission of evidence that the development has taken place for a certain amount of time.</i></p>	A & B (for information only).
<b>High Hedgerows</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site notice<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Weekly list<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Public register<sup>7</sup></li> <li>• Availability of duty officer to provide advice and information upon request</li> <li>• Renotification of letters</li> <li>• Decision letters to those who have made representations.</li> </ul>	A & B

<sup>7</sup> Representation to be made by you within 21 days.

# The Role of the Developer in Facilitating Community Involvement in the Development Control Process

## Introduction

**6.1.** We will encourage developers to undertake pre-application discussions and early community consultation on significant planning applications as soon as possible in the design of their scheme. This process supplements the involvement measures outlined in the preceding sections of this document.

**6.2** Whilst this is not a statutory requirement we consider that such a process can;

provide an ideal opportunity for the developer to fully explain their proposal prior to you therefore avoiding the formulation of unfavourable opinions based upon inaccurate information

potentially save the developer time in obtaining a decision on a planning application as there is an opportunity to seek to resolve your concerns.

give all parties more certainty

secure a more sustainable and acceptable development

avoid appeals and call-in procedures.

create a more transparent and accountable planning process for the District.

## Definition of 'significant development.'

**6.3** When proposing a 'significant' development, we request that you as applicant undertake pre-application community engagement that is appropriate to the scale of the development. As applicant you are advised to contact our Development Control section to establish if the planning application will be regarded as 'significant'. As a guide we will regard the following types of development as being 'significant':

Housing developments comprising of 10 or more dwellings or a site area of more than 0.5ha.

Offices, research & development and light industry developments with a floor area of more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> or a site area of 1ha or more.

Heavy industry, storage and distribution developments with a floor area of more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> or a site area of 1ha or more.

Retail, distribution and servicing developments with a floor area of more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> or a site area of 1ha or more.

All other major developments with a floor area of more than 1000m<sup>2</sup> or a site area of 1ha or more.

Any proposal deemed to be significant for example because of its location, impact etc.

**6.4** We would urge that if your proposal falls under the scope of 'significant' development that you discuss pre submission involvement measures with a member of our Development Control section as part of your pre-application discussions with the Council.

## Publicity measures

**6.5** As applicant of a 'significant' development the minimum publicity expected of you is;

Notification of local residents and businesses by letter of the proposed development, stating when and where they can find out more.

Placing an advert in a local newspaper, detailing the proposed development and stating when and where people can find out more.

Additional information should be circulated as a press release.

**N.B.** The above publicity should include provision of details of at least one event, and the event should be no earlier than four days after they have been circulated or published. The closing date for comments should be set no earlier than 10 days after the close of a consultation event. Publicity material should concentrate on conveying the facts of the proposed scheme and avoid bias.

**6.6** We will expect that the event;

Is staffed and include display material detailing your proposals for the site, the scope for public comment, how comments will be dealt with and an explanation of what will happen next. Presentation material and any questionnaires for the public should avoid bias.

Takes place at a time or times that enables as wide a cross section of the public as possible to attend it; it may therefore need to cover weekends and evenings.

Is held on the application site/building, or at a venue as close as possible to the application site. Venues should be fully accessible but if not, reasonable adjustments must be made to permit access for people with disabilities.

**6.7** As applicant of a 'significant' development we advise you that;

contact should be made with all local community groups and interested groups, together with any other relevant groups who may have a specific interest in a particular proposal. Applicants should discuss this with a member of the Development Control team, who will be able to provide all necessary contact details.

all District Councillors whose ward includes the application site together with any Parish Council whose parish includes or adjoins the site should be informed. It should be noted that a code of conduct prevents District Councillors from expressing any views on proposals at this stage, as they must remain impartial until any application is formally presented to them at a Planning Committee.

**Additional approaches to outline and reserved matters applications**

**6.8** In the case of outline applications where as applicant you are trying to establish the principle of development we would encourage you to include illustrative material. You should explain this approach in any presentation to focus the audience's attention on the broad principle of development, rather than details at this stage. This will allow the public to make meaningful comments on the proposals.

**6.9** Further pre-application publicity events may be necessary when submitting a detailed reserved matters application.

**6.10** As applicant we would encourage you to check with a member of our Development Control section before making such submissions.

**6.11** In the case of variations to significant schemes further pre-application publicity events may also be necessary where it is proposed to formally vary or modify an existing permission, where this relates to a significant application. Again, as applicant you are encouraged to check with a member of the Development Control Team before making such submissions.

### Submitting a Significant Planning Application

- 6.12** Significant planning applications should be accompanied by a statement setting out the community engagement undertaken, including:

The scale of the notification, including a list of properties and businesses contacted.

A list of interest/pressure groups or other organisation contacted.

The location and duration of any event held.

A summary of all the comments received and issues raised.

A clear indication of which comments have resulted in amendments to the scheme and what those changes are, and which comments have not and why not.

Highlighting any criticism by groups or individuals about the public engagement process.

- 6.13** As applicant you should also retain all consultation responses.

### Failure to comply with these guidelines

- 6.14** We cannot refuse to accept a valid application because we disagree with the way in which a developer has consulted the community, but failure by the developer to consult could lead to objections being made which could be material to the determination. Our aim is to encourage discussion before a formal application is made and therefore avoid unnecessary objections being made at a later stage.
- 6.15** If a developer fails to carry out any community engagement or carries out engagement that falls short of these guidelines, Councillors will be made aware of this in the officer's report on the submitted proposals. If material public objections are also received, we will have to consider whether refusal of planning permission is justified, in order to help it meet the Government's demanding targets for speed in decision making.
- 6.16** Where an applicant is genuinely unaware of the Council's pre-application consultation process we will advise them of the requirements as soon as possible and give them an opportunity to suspend the submission of the application to allow the necessary community engagement to take place. If an applicant refuses to comply with the adopted guidelines, then we will make them aware of the consequences set out in this section.

## Other Matters

### Resources

7. This draft Statement of Community Involvement is based on a realistic and robust assessment of likely resource availability over the next three years. In short, Wear Valley District Council does not have either the financial or staff resources with which to undertake community and stakeholder consultation on a massive scale. Instead it has been necessary to devise a program of consultation that is achievable,

The majority of the work involved in delivering our commitment to facilitate your involvement will be the responsibility of the Forward Planning team, in relation to the preparation of the Local Development Framework and the Development Control team in relation to planning application matters. Assistance from other staff within the Regeneration Department, within which these two sections are located, may also be sought. We will endeavor to co-ordinate consultation with the activities of other departments to ensure the efficient use of resources and to avoid 'consultation fatigue'.

- 7.1 The results of your involvement and key decisions relating to the Local Development Framework preparation process will be presented to the Council's Regeneration Committee. You will be notified in writing of the outcome of any representations that you make.

### Reviewing this strategy

- 7.2 We will actively monitor the success of community involvement techniques and use these findings to refine methods in the future wherever required. We will assess the effectiveness of each initiative and the findings will be published alongside the feedback on how your comments have been considered. Changes may also arise to reflect emerging best practice and government requirements, or to respond to changing local expectations. Where we find that changes to the methods are required, they will be subject to further

consultation with you and will be proposed as updates to this document. These will be highlighted through the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report.

We will measure the performance of this strategy by assessing;

How successfully the community and other stakeholders are able to find information on the Local Development Framework documents.

The level of involvement of 'hard to reach' groups.

Respondents satisfaction with our overall consultation standards.

- 7.3 In any instance we intend to formally review this Statement prior to the production of further Development Plan Documents not yet identified in our Local Development Scheme.

### Links to the Community Strategy

- 7.4 In response to the requirement of The Local Government Act 2000 we have set up a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) bringing together public, private, and voluntary sector organizations and community groups to prepare a community strategy, known as The Community Plan.

This seeks to provide and improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Wear Valley District and contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK. The Local Development Framework is one tool to deliver the aspirations of the Community Plan on the ground. We will produce and keep under regular review a separate document identifying the links between the Local Development Framework and the Community Plan.

# Appendix One

The Council will hold a database of bodies, organizations and individuals and these will be informed throughout the Local Development Framework production process. Planning Policy Statement 12 suggests that the following should be consulted in the preparation of the Local Development Framework:

## Specific Consultation Bodies

(These are specific consultation bodies and must be consulted in accordance with the Act and Regulations)

The regional planning body  
 Any local planning authority for an area adjacent to the area covered by the proposals  
 The Countryside Agency  
 The Environment Agency  
 Highways Agency  
 The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England  
 English Nature  
 The Strategic Rail Authority  
 Regional Development Agency whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority (One North East)  
 Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a directive given under Section 106 (3) (a) of the Communications Act 2003  
 Any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local planning authority: and  
 Any of the bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the local planning authority:

- Strategic Health Authority
- Person to whom a license has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986;
- Sewage undertaker; and
- Water undertaker

## Government Departments

The First Secretary of State (through Government Office for the North East)  
 Home Office;  
 Department for Education and Skills (through Government Office for the North East)  
 Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)  
 Department for Transport (through Government Office for the North East)  
 Department of Health (through relevant Regional Office of NHS Executive)  
 Department of Trade and Industry (through Government Office for the North East)  
 Ministry of Defense  
 Department of Work and Pensions  
 Department of Constitutional affairs  
 Department of Culture, Media and Sport  
 Office of Government Commerce (Property Advisers to the Civil Estate)



### General Consultation Bodies

Voluntary Bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area;  
Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area;  
Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area;  
Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area; and  
Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the authority's area.

Other Consultees (Wear Valley District Council will where appropriate consult with the following agencies and organizations in the preparation of local development documents)

Age Concern  
Airport Operators  
British Chemical Distributors and Traders Association  
British Geological Survey  
British Waterways, canal owners and navigation authority's  
2D (Wear Valley)  
Community Network (Wear Valley)  
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology  
Chambers of Commerce, local CBI and local branches of institute of directors;  
Church Commissioners  
Civil Aviation Authority  
Coal Authority  
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment  
Commission for New Towns and English partnerships  
Commission for Racial Equality  
Crown Estate Office  
Diocesan Board of finance  
Disability Rights Commission  
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee  
Electricity, Gas, and Telecommunications Undertakers, and the National Grid Company;  
Environmental Groups at National, regional and local level, including:

Council for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)  
Friends of the Earth  
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and  
Wildlife Trusts;



**Wear Valley District Council is committed to the removal of all barriers preventing access to our services arising from ethnicity, religion, geographic location, special needs, language differences, learning difficulties, sexual orientation, gender, age or disability.**

**We can produce this document in other formats such as Braille, in large print, on audio tape, on CD Rom, or in other languages.**

**You can request a copy from the marketing and Communications Manager on (01388) 761958**



**WEAR  
VALLEY**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Forward Planning Team, Regeneration Department,  
Wear Valley District Council, Civic Centre,  
Crook, Co Durham, DL15 9ES.  
Tel: 01388 765555 Fax: 01388766660  
Email: [forward.plans@wearvalley.gov.uk](mailto:forward.plans@wearvalley.gov.uk)  
Website: [www.wearvalley.gov.uk](http://www.wearvalley.gov.uk)**