



DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**DRAFT STATEMENT
OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

NOVEMBER 2005

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Derwentside District Council
Civic Centre
Consett
County Durham
DH8 5JA

Tel: (01207) 693693
Fax: (01207) 218550
Minicom: (01207) 218518

E-mail: customer.services@derwentside.gov.uk

Also available in large print, Braille, audiotape
and via our website - www.derwentside.gov.uk

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out Derwentside District Council's policy for involving communities in the preparation and revision of the Local Development Framework (LDF) and in considering planning applications. The Statement contains elements such as:
- public and stakeholder access to information;
 - the opportunity to contribute ideas;
 - the opportunity to take an active part in developing proposals and options;
 - the opportunity to be consulted and make representations; and
 - the opportunity to receive feedback and be informed about progress and outcomes.

Why involve the community in the planning process?

- 1.2 The planning system has the potential to affect everyone, and subsequently those involved in the system have a role to play in delivering effective and inclusive planning. Sustainable development requires the community to be involved with developing the vision for their areas. Communities should be able to:
- contribute ideas about how that vision can be achieved;
 - participate in the process of drawing up specific plans or policies; and
 - be involved in development proposals.
- Planning must work as a partnership and engage with the community to deliver sustainable development in the right place at the right time.
- 1.3 The planning system should be more responsive, flexible, pro-active, less time consuming and build on existing opportunities for community involvement. The Council is determined that people, irrespective of age, sex, ability, ethnic background, or disability, have the opportunity to make their views known and have their say in how their community is planned and developed.

How does the Statement of Community Involvement link in with other Council policies and strategies?

Corporate Approach to Community Consultation and Involvement

- 1.4 The SCI is a fundamental part of the Council's corporate approach to community involvement. The Council's draft Corporate Consultation Policy (CCP), produced in October 2005, sets the framework for all corporate consultation processes by highlighting the generic key principles that underpin the Council's consultation work. The CCP contains a great deal of detailed advice on how to consult effectively and this has been incorporated into the SCI where appropriate. The CCP looks to encourage:
- more consultation using a wider range of techniques;
 - more effective use of the results when taking decisions;
 - better feedback of the results of the consultation;
 - better sharing of the results throughout the Council; and
 - joint approaches to consultation.
- 1.5 The Council's Corporate Plan identifies six key aims. Aim 2 is to 'deliver a place with strong, cohesive communities' where the Council will work with others to increase the

community's opportunity to influence decisions. The SCI provides an opportunity to ensure that all sections of the community can get involved with planning and can therefore influence the future development of the areas they live in.

The Community Strategy and The Derwentside Partnership

- 1.6 The Community Strategy for Derwentside seeks to engage and involve local communities and to ensure that there are appropriate structures to adequately support the community, and especially young people, to effectively participate in both the planning and delivery of services.
- 1.7 The Derwentside Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the District and brings together decision makers, communities, and organisations in a network. The Partnership aims to manage and monitor the delivery of the Community Strategy objectives.
- 1.8 The District Partnership has District-wide thematic sub-partnerships, which bring together local organisations including the community and voluntary sector organisations. These groups currently are:
 - Children and Young People
 - Crime and Disorder
 - Economic Development
 - Environment and Housing
 - Education and Training
 - Health Improvement
 - Supporting Communities
- 1.9 There are also four working groups that address specific issues. These are:
 - Hard to Reach Group
 - Performance Management and Learning Group
 - Community Funding Group
 - Consultation/Communications Group
- 1.10 The District Partnership will be a useful and effective way of gaining the views of communities and organisations within the District as part of the community involvement and communication process. The Environment and Housing sub-partnership will be particularly useful as a consultation body that will get involved with the detail of LDF documents. The Hard to Reach and the Consultation/Communications Working Groups will help to co-ordinate LDF consultation with other consultation exercises across the District and engage with specific groups. For details on the important role and influence the Community Strategy will have in production of the LDF see paragraphs 2.43-2.45.

Community Network and Community Partnerships

- 1.11 Derwentside Community Network consists of representatives from voluntary and community groups in Derwentside who meet regularly to develop their abilities by providing training, equipment, and a resource library to learn from each other's experiences. It also helps to improve links between the local communities and those who

make decisions affecting them, by allocating seats on the Derwentside Strategic Partnership and its sub-groups to Derwentside Network representatives.

1.12 The Community Partnerships

Community Partnerships allow local people to play an active part in the economic and social regeneration of their communities. They help contribute to the Council's priority objective to create a greater sense of pride and raise aspirations and they also increase the community's opportunity to influence the decision making process.

- 1.13 Within the District there are currently 21 Partnerships covering 19 wards with some wards having more than one partnership. The Partnerships are at various stages of development with some having been established in excess of 5 years with the youngest being established as recently as February 2003.

Effective community involvement

- 1.14 It is not sufficient to provide information only, or to consult on proposals that have already been developed to the point where it is difficult to take on other views. Community involvement procedures should provide opportunities for participation in identifying issues and debating options from the earliest stages. They should occur at a point when the public recognise that they can make a difference and, crucially, feel a sense of ownership of local policy decisions. The Council intends to put in place an accessible system with clear informal and formal approaches to participation, which reaches out to groups that have not been involved with planning in the past.

Central Government highlights that effective community involvement requires processes for:

- Notifying and informing communities about policies and proposals in good time;
- Enabling communities to put forward their own ideas, and to participate in developing proposals and options, rather than simply commenting when they are fixed;
- Consultation of formal proposals; and
- Feedback.

Which sectors of the community should we involve in planning?

- 1.15 The SCI will be tailored to meet the specific needs and characteristics of the District. It will engage with representatives of all groups and individuals that are interested in planning for their area. The Council will promote equality and diversity, and not discriminate against anyone who wishes to participate in the planning system.

The benefits of community involvement:

- Involvement leads to outcomes that better reflect the views and aspirations, and meet the needs, of the wider community in all its diversity;
- Public involvement is valuable as a key element of a vibrant, open, and participatory democracy;
- Involvement improves the quality and efficiency of decisions, by drawing on local knowledge and minimising unnecessary and costly conflict;

- Involvement educates all participants about the needs of communities and the business sector, and how local government works; and,
- Involvement helps promote social cohesion by making real connections with communities and offering them a tangible stake in decision-making.

1.16 The Council intends to consult three categories of groups:

Statutory consultees

These are bodies that the Council will be required to consult. They include organisations such as Government agencies and adjoining local authorities, and are listed in Appendix 1.

Non-statutory consultees

This group includes organisations whose support of, or opposition to, a development would be significant, or who have particular expertise. Examples include the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) or Sport England.

Community stakeholders

This group includes individuals or organisations that are interested in the planning process because they either live in the community affected by a proposal, or they represent a housing association, club, or faith group in the area.

How we intend to consult, communicate and involve people in the planning process

- 1.17 The SCI will set out the various methods that the Council will use to enable people to contribute to the planning process, in regard to both Development Control (the processing of planning applications) and the new LDF. These methods will be customised to suit specific circumstances to enable the process to be as productive as possible.

Resources and management of the process

- 1.18 The Council's Development Plans Team will carry out the majority of the work of community involvement. They may need help from other staff within different Council departments. In particular, they will work closely with the Corporate Strategy Unit, Customer Services, Economic Development and Regeneration, and the Derwentside Partnership. Consultants may also be used when necessary.

Jargon and Plain English

- 1.19 We will avoid the use of jargon and acronyms wherever possible. Members of the public will not always be familiar with terms that many planning officers use. To avoid confusion and to allow people to understand the policies and proposals that they are being asked to consider, we will use everyday language. However, there will be times when we have to use some jargon, simply because of the subject matter that we are discussing. The new planning system uses many acronyms, that is the initial letters of a phrase (such as SCI for Statement of Community Involvement). When we use acronyms we will write the

phrase out in full in the first instance in each chapter of a document. We will provide a glossary in all of our documents. The Glossary for this document is in Appendix 3.

- 1.20 We will have all our planning documents assessed, to ensure that they are in plain English. We will also produce a plain English summary to accompany the complete version.

Review of the Statement of Community Involvement

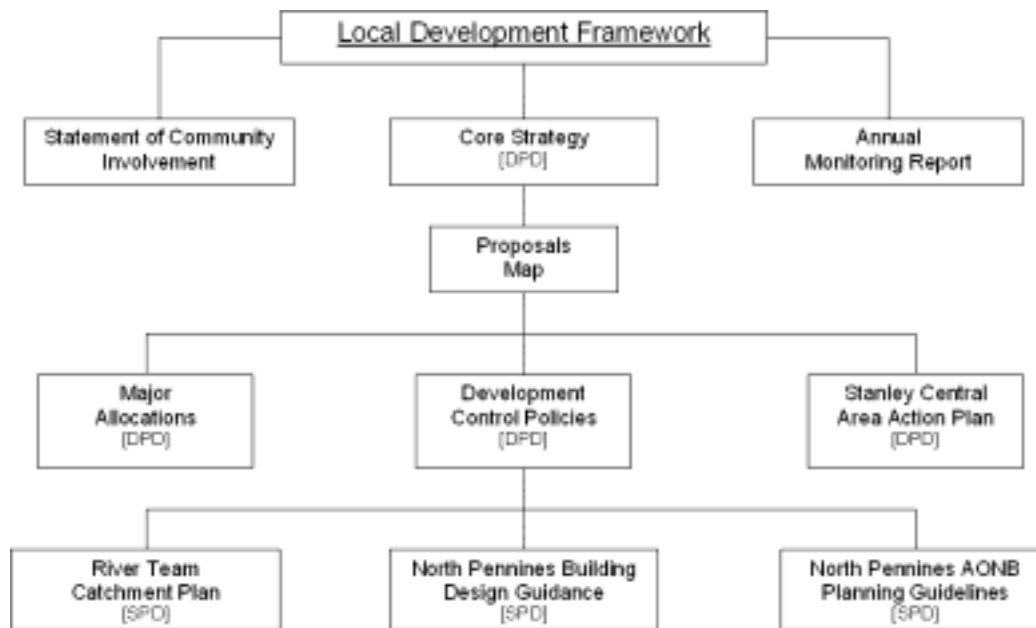
- 1.21 Once the SCI is adopted it will not be a static document. The Council recognises that the way in which community involvement is carried out should be reviewed on a regular basis. There are three main factors to consider when reviewing the SCI:
- the experiences of the community;
 - the experiences of the Council; and
 - best practice from experiences throughout the country.
- 1.22 The Council welcomes comments from the community at any time on issues that they believe this document addresses, including concerns regarding methods used and who the Council should be consulting. All issues raised through these comments will be acknowledged and considered through the process identified below.
- 1.23 Paragraph 2.15 refers to a Statement of Compliance being submitted to the Secretary of State alongside the Development Plan Document (DPD) that it relates to. In this statement, which is prepared by the Council, there will be an opportunity for any issues and problems arising from applying the Statement of Community Involvement to be identified here. As with comments from the community, these comments will then be considered through the process identified.
- 1.24 The Council will continue to review whether the policies contained within this document are working and reflect best practice.
- 1.25 Where changes are proposed to the SCI, generally these will enhance methods already used. The Council is committed, as a minimum, to consulting on these changes with all those groups listed in Appendix 1 along with other groups and individuals who have become involved in preparing Local Development Document (LDDs). The exact nature of the consultation will depend on the changes proposed.
- 1.26 If the review process identifies significant deficiencies or a change in direction for this SCI, this will lead to a formal review of the SCI and resubmission to the Secretary of State.

2 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

What is the Local Development Framework?

- 2.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) is effectively a 'folder' of local development documents. Put together, they make up the planning strategy for the District. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the LDF replaces the Local Plan and is expected to be prepared over a period of months rather than years.

- 2.2 As part of the new system it is vital that the community is consulted on the LDF and is given the opportunity to participate in the development process.
- 2.3 The Derwentside District Council LDF will comprise a range of Local Development Documents (LDDs) consisting of:
- A Statement of Community Involvement (SCI);
 - Development Plan Documents (DPDs);
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).
- The preparation, examination and review of each LDD need not take place at the same time. They should be shorter, simpler, and quicker to adopt, and therefore more reactive to changing circumstances than the previous Local Plan.
- 2.4 The first step in the process of preparing the LDF is the Local Development Scheme (LDS), which sets out the LDDs we will be preparing, the general scope they will cover, and the timetable for their preparation. The Council agreed Derwentside's LDS in March 2005. It included the following key LDDs (a diagram is shown on the next page):
- Core Strategy – This key DPD will set out the Council's vision for its area and the primary policies to achieve that vision;
 - Major Allocations – This DPD will identify proposed sites for housing, employment, retail, recreation, tourism, community and renewable energy developments, to meet the Council's vision and core strategy; and
 - Development Control Policies – This DPD will include general planning policies to cover matters such as the protection of the natural and built environment, highway safety, and design;
 - Stanley Area Action Plan – This DPD will look at the future of Stanley and include policies and proposals specific to the development of that area.
- A number of SPDs will also be prepared, to cover the following issues:
- the River Team Catchment Plan;
 - North Pennines Building Design Guidance; and
 - North Pennines AONB Planning Guidelines.
- 2.5 The Council will carry out extensive and inclusive community involvement and consultation before and during the production of all of these documents. We expect more community involvement in the preparation of DPDs than in SPDs, because SPDs are not subject to independent examination and do not form part of the statutory development plan. Conservation Area Appraisals will be subject to the same consultation arrangements as supplementary planning documents.



Sustainability Appraisal

- 2.6 The Council must carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) as an integral part of the process of preparing a LDF. The SA also meets the requirements of the European Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations, which now apply to all plans and strategies.
- 2.7 We will carry out a SA on all LDDs, to assess the potential social, environmental, and economic effects of the proposed policies. The SA report will set out the likely significant effects of each draft LDD and, where appropriate, what changes will be needed. As with LDDs, the SA will conform to the procedures and techniques for community engagement set out in the SCI.
- 2.8 There are four stages of community involvement in the SA process:
Stage 1: Context, Objectives and Baseline (district wide);
Stage 2: Scoping Report (district wide);
Stage 3: Assess Alternative Strategies (individual DPDs);
Stage 4: Assess the Preferred Option (individual DPDs).
- 2.9 The first two stages of consultation occur only once and relate to the preparation of a scoping report which, when adopted will provide the basis for preparing DPDs.
- 2.10 As in the preparation of LDDs, paragraphs 2.28 to 2.47 set out the general methods that the Council proposes to use at each stage of the preparation of the SA.
- 2.11 SAs require more technical input into their preparation than LDDs. Therefore the consultation methods will place more emphasis on consulting with those groups that have experience and expertise in these areas. The SA has specific requirements for consultation with the public and local organisations and the Government has designated four statutory consultees that must be consulted during the process; the Countryside Agency, English Nature, English Heritage, and the Environment Agency. We will also

consult the Derwentside Partnership and community groups or forums on specific options and considerations for the SA.

When will consultation take place?

- 2.12 The Council's LDS sets out the proposed dates of each of the key stages outlined below for each of the LDDs to be produced.

Early engagement

- 2.13 Before the Council starts writing a LDD there will be a period of early community engagement. During this period, the Council will identify the issues and suggest alternative options for the future development of the area, by gathering opinions from the community and local groups, using a variety of engagement techniques.

Preferred Options

- 2.14 When we have fully considered these initial comments, we will select preferred options and proposals, with clear reasons why they were chosen over the other identified alternatives. We will then publish this Preferred Options document for a formal consultation period of six weeks. We will widely publicise the document in the local press and by using a range of engagement methods (identified in paragraphs 2.28 to 2.47). We will acknowledge in writing all written comments. At subsequent stages we will automatically consult anyone who made comments at the pre-submission stage. We will make all responses publicly available.

Submission

- 2.15 Once the Council has analysed all of the responses received from the public and made all necessary amendments, we will submit the DPD to the Secretary of State, and publish it for a further six weeks of public consultation. The community can comment on policies and proposals at this stage even if they have not been involved in the earlier preparation stages. If at this stage anyone puts forward alternative sites, for example for housing, the Council must also publish them for public consultation for a further six weeks following the original six week period for consultation. At the Submission stage we must also prepare a statement of compliance, which details how we have complied with the SCI.

Examination in Public

- 2.16 The Secretary of State will then appoint an independent Planning Inspector to chair an Examination in Public. The purpose of the Examination is to test the 'soundness' of the DPD that was submitted, by looking at the evidence provided to justify the policy and proposals in the document and by considering representations that propose alternatives. The Inspector will publish a Report, which may suggest changes to the DPD. These changes are then binding on the local planning authority.
- 2.17 One of the key tests of an LDD's soundness will be its compliance with the SCI with regard to community involvement. It is the Council's responsibility to coordinate the community consultation and ensure that the provisions of this SCI are met even if an

external body, such as the Great North Forest or the North Pennines Partnership, has produced the document.

Response to community participation

- 2.18 At the end of each consultation period, officers will prepare a summary of written representations received. We will make this summary publicly available in both paper and electronic form, on the Council's website and at the Civic Centre. In addition, after the consultation period for the Preferred Options document, the Council must state how the Submission DPD has changed as a result of representations.
- 2.19 In relation to SPD documents, following the final period of consultation, the Council will consider all comments submitted during the consultation period and make any changes it considers appropriate before adopting it. The Council's response to comments made during the SPD process will be published when the Council adopts the SPD.

Access to information

- 2.20 We will make information about the drafting of the LDDs available to the community through a number of methods:
- people can see copies of all documents at the Civic Centre in Consett; Front Street Offices in Stanley; the Neighbourhood Offices at South Stanley, Annfield Plain, Moorside and Langley Park, and the libraries at Consett, Stanley, Annfield Plain, Blackhill (trailer), Lanchester, Langley Park (trailer), Leadgate (trailer), South Moor and Esh Winning;
 - the documents will be available in electronic format through email and the Council's website;
 - upon request, we can make the information available in Braille, large print, translated into another language, or put on audio cassette;
 - the Development Plans Team will offer advice and assistance over the telephone, and in letters or e-mails; and
 - upon request, we will send information by post, at a reasonable cost.
- 2.21 In addition:
- adverts will be placed in the local press advising on where and when the document can be inspected, how copies can be obtained, what the closing date is for representations and where to send any representations;
 - all consultees identified in Appendix 1 will be sent a copy of the consultation document(s); and
 - all members of the community who get involved during the process will continue to be kept informed of the process including details of future consultations.

Political procedures

- 2.22 The LDF forms part of the Council's policy framework and it is important that the Council's Executive leads the LDF preparation process. However, it is equally important that all Council Members have an opportunity to influence the LDF. Therefore Full Council will approve all DPDs for consultation. The Council's Environment Scrutiny Panel and Development Control Committee will also be consulted throughout the process.

Target groups

2.23 The Council understands that a wide variety of groups should be targeted for consultation. Some of the key groups are listed below:

- Public
- Voluntary Bodies
- Community Organisations
- Residents' Associations
- Councillors
- Business and Commerce
- Developers/Agents/Landowners
- Central, regional, and local government, including neighbouring authorities, parish and town councils
- Statutory bodies and groups
- Interest and Pressure Groups (for example Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) or Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB))
- The Media
- Service Providers

Parish Councils

2.24 We will keep Parish Councils fully informed of progress throughout the preparation of LDDs. We will make them aware of opportunities for their input and arrangements for local public participation. Planning Officers will engage with the Parish Councils, in writing and in person, on a regular basis to discuss emerging planning issues, and seek their views on how they would like them addressed in the LDF. Full copies of all consultation documents will be sent to the Parish Councils.

Hard To Reach Groups

2.25 The Government has put specific emphasis on trying to involve 'hard to reach groups' on planning issues. Hard to reach groups may have needs or views that are different from the vocal majority, but if these groups are not consulted effectively they will remain unheard. Therefore the Council will give particular consideration to the needs of those who may not be able to access council services because of:

- physical inaccessibility (i.e. less able-bodied);
- language (e.g. people whose first language is not English);
- cultural perceptions and traditions (e.g. Travellers);
- social expectations (e.g. children and young people, who are often not considered appropriate consultees and who often do not consider themselves as likely to be taken seriously).

2.26 Groups that are least likely to be able to access Council services may include:

- Homeless people
- Children and young people
- Substance misusers
- Gay men, lesbian women, transsexual and transgendered people
- Minority ethnic communities, especially those whose first language is not English

- Older people (especially less able-bodied and those who feel isolated)
- Travellers
- Asylum seekers
- People with learning difficulties
- People with disabilities
- People with mental health issues
- Faith communities
- People who travel or commute into the area
- Small businesses
- Rural communities
- Tourists

Links to the Community Strategy

- 2.27 Derwentside Partnership produced the Community Strategy for the District in 2004. It is currently under review and expected to be published in 2006. It is the overarching plan that identifies the community's priorities and the LDF will share many of its aims and objectives. Therefore, there are obvious benefits in synchronising community involvement between the Community Strategy and the LDF to reduce costs and avoid 'consultation fatigue'.

Consultation methods

- 2.28 There are several consultation methods that could be used at various stages during the preparation of LDDs. These may not be exhaustive, and may be supplemented by other methods contained in the Council's Corporate Consultation Policy.

Newspapers

- 2.29 Newspaper supplements are one of the most effective ways of spreading planning and development ideas to large numbers of people and generating public debate. The Council generally uses the *Advertiser* as it provides the greatest coverage on a District-wide level. However, the *Advertiser's* coverage of the District is not complete therefore when there is a statutory duty or a perceived need to consult the whole District, we will also use the *Northern Echo*.

Inside Derwentside

- 2.30 The Council's free publication *Inside Derwentside*, which is sent to every household in the District, will be used to disseminate information about the LDF process, emerging issues, and consultation events.
- 2.31 The Council also produces *Key Issues*, a quarterly newsletter for tenants, which is distributed to all Council properties in the district. We will use this where possible, when the publication date ties in with the preparation of LDDs.

Questionnaires

- 2.32 Questionnaires can be a useful and cost effective way of obtaining the views of large numbers of people. They are generally more useful in the early stages of a consultation exercise to generate a list of issues that people find important. The questions used should be clear and unambiguous, and using multiple choice answers rather than open-ended questions can often be more effective.

Citizens Panel

- 2.33 The Citizens Panel consists of members of the public who have volunteered to be contacted on a regular basis, to give their opinions on various aspects of the Council's performance by completing surveys. Whenever possible the Citizens Panel will be used as part of the consultation arrangements for the LDF.

Written Notification

- 2.34 At each stage of the LDF process all people and organisations listed in Appendix 1, and included on our consultation database, will receive written notification. In addition when a site is proposed for a specific use, for example housing, all properties immediately adjoining the site will receive a letter informing them of the proposal.

Public Meetings

- 2.35 Public meetings can help the Council to present information and proposals in a setting that enables immediate discussion and feedback. Public meetings should be used in conjunction with other techniques and not as the only consultative tool, as the participants do not always reflect the views of the wider community.

Planning for Real

- 2.36 "Planning for Real" can be used to help communities develop simple models to put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area can be improved. It is a highly visible, hands-on community development and empowerment tool, which people of all abilities and backgrounds find easy and enjoyable to use. The participants, preferably local people, construct a large three-dimensional model of a neighbourhood, using cardboard cut outs for buildings pasted onto a base plan fixed to polystyrene or cardboard. This could be used specifically to think about areas where major change is proposed, for example housing renewal areas. Planning for Real is very time consuming, and the limited resources available in the Development Plans Team may limit the use of this particular technique. Due to a lack of expertise within the Council, it is likely that an outside facilitator would lead these events.

Public Exhibitions

- 2.37 As part of the formal consultation exercises for LDF preparation, we propose to hold a series of exhibitions or 'roadshows' throughout the District. These will be at accessible venues such as libraries or supermarkets, and staffed by planning officers to answer questions. They will be open during and outside of normal working hours, to allow the

maximum number of people to attend. We will use visual methods to make the process open, interesting, and inclusive.

Table Scheme Display

- 2.38 A Table Scheme Display allows large numbers of people to understand and make an input into development proposals. They can be used as part of an exhibition and consist of drawings or models of a proposed scheme placed on a table. Separate voting sheets around the edge identify the main elements of the scheme. People vote on what they like or dislike by placing dots on the voting sheets. They can make more detailed comments by using 'Post-it' type notes. We analyse the results afterwards to feed into the next stages of the planning process.

Briefing workshops

- 2.39 Briefing workshops are simple, easy to organise working sessions held to establish a project agenda or brief. Briefing workshops are useful at the start of a project and can act as a public launch. They can simultaneously:
- introduce people to the project;
 - help establish the key issues;
 - get people involved and motivated;
 - identify useful talent and experience; and
 - identify the next steps needed.

Focus Groups

- 2.40 When the Council wants to discuss a particular issue in more detail Focus Groups could be used. These generally consist of between 8 and 12 people who have an interest in a particular issue. They discuss that issue in detail for a couple of hours, with a facilitator to aid the discussion. We keep a record of the focus group's proceedings. Focus Groups are particularly useful to consult with 'hard to reach' groups as we can target them at specific areas or groups.

Web-based consultation – bulletin board/discussion groups

- 2.41 The Internet provides quick and efficient opportunities for interested people to engage in the planning process. At every stage of LDD preparation the document being consulted on and any accompanying amendments to the Proposals Map will be available on the Council's website at www.derwentside.gov.uk/planning. In addition all information relating to the availability of paper copies of documents and arrangements for consultation events will also be posted on the website.
- 2.42 At all stages of LDD preparation, representations by email will be accepted as valid. We have set up a specific email address that will be used whenever consultation is being undertaken to give people the opportunity to respond on-line: ldfconsultation@derwentside.gov.uk.

Derwentside Community Representatives

- 2.43 The Environment and Housing sub-group will be used to involve members of the Derwentside Partnership in LDD preparation. The group's input will be particularly important during the early stages of LDD preparation.
- 2.44 The Council will use the Community Partnerships already established as part of the Derwentside Partnership, to widen community involvement in the LDF process. These partnerships will be used to inform the local community of the stages reached in the preparation of LDDs and to provide opportunities for their input and participation. The Community Partnerships cover most settlements in the District and will be involved directly if a particular development or policy will impact on their specific locality. Otherwise, and in addition to written notification, the Partnership Liaison meeting, which meets quarterly and to which all Partnerships are invited, will be used as the primary means of involving the Community Partnerships.
- 2.45 The Derwentside Community Network has been included in the list of consultees in Appendix 1 and will be contacted at all stages in writing and if appropriate by presenting information at their regular meetings.

SPICE Project

- 2.46 SPICE is a project run by Derwentside District Council and funded in partnership with the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund. The SPICE project aims to encourage young people to play an active role in citizenship by becoming involved in community issues, local democracy and the use of ICT.
- 2.47 As part of the SPICE project a Youth Forum has been developed, which is made up of two groups of young people, aged between 8 to 11 years and between 12 to 19 years. Members of the Forum are elected by other young people and have been involved with consultation on the Community Strategy and the allocation of a small grants scheme that local youth clubs and groups can access. The Youth Forum will be involved throughout the preparation of the LDF.

Planning Aid

- 2.48 The Government provides financial support to Planning Aid to provide advice and assistance to the community. Planning Aid is a voluntary service offering FREE, independent, and professional planning advice to community groups and individuals who cannot afford to employ a planning consultant. It aims to give people the confidence to deal with the planning system and to become involved in wider planning issues.
- 2.49 Planning Aid can help the community or individuals to:
- comment on planning applications;
 - get involved in the preparation of the LDF; or
 - apply for planning permission or appeal against the refusal of permission.

Planning and Young People

- 2.50 The Council is jointly sponsoring a unique community outreach project 'Planning and Young People', which is an independent service provided by Planning Aid North. The project will provide an opportunity for young people in Derwentside to increase their understanding of planning issues through school curriculum and project studies. It is also hoped that this will help generate greater awareness in the wider community of the opportunities to become involved in the new Plan-making system, through the education process. A Community Planner has been recruited to help Planning Aid North deliver the project. The Council, through the SPICE project, has been identified as a key partner to help evolve a wider participation of young people, through its Young People's Forum.
- 2.51 Planning Aid is a charity and independent of any planning authority. It is co-ordinated by the RTPI Northern Branch and the contact details are given below:

Regional Co-ordinator RTPI Northern Branch School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape University of Newcastle Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 7RU Tel: 0191 222 8772 Email address: ntcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk Website address: http://northofengland.rtpi.org.uk/
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3 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MATTERS

- 3.1 Development Control is the process by which the Council determines whether a proposal for development should be granted planning permission, taking into account the development plan and any other material considerations such as the effect it may have on neighbouring properties. Planning applications are generally determined by Council Members on the Development Control Committee. However, in certain circumstances the Director of Environmental Services can make decisions on planning applications without referring them to Development Control Committee.

Planning applications determined by Durham County Council

- 3.2 Planning application for minerals or waste related developments are determined by Durham County Council. The consultation arrangements for these types of application are contained in the County Council's own Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.3 To achieve community involvement, we must inform and engage both the wider community and individuals. With community involvement in development control matters, we must strike a balance. We must make decisions in a timely and cost-effective way, and we must also provide the general public with a reasonable opportunity to comment. Consultation involves not only the public but also statutory consultees. Whom to consult will vary with the nature of the proposal and location, so we do not consult all bodies on each application. Statutory consultees generally have 21 days in which to respond to

consultation. As a result of these consultations, the case officer may have to contact the applicant to request more information or to seek amendments.

Involvement of the community in planning applications

Involvement of the community when a planning application is first received

- 3.4 A weekly list of new planning applications received by Planning Services is available on the Council's website at www.derwentside.gov.uk. The website also includes details of those applications currently being considered by the Council and all past applications decided by the Planning Committee and by officers using delegated powers. The list of all applications is completely interactive and can be searched using a number of criteria. All maps and plans associated with the applications can also be viewed online.
- 3.5 Details of current and past planning applications can be viewed at the Civic Centre in Consett or, in the case of current major planning applications in the Stanley area, at Front Street offices in Stanley, during normal office hours (8.30am - 5.00pm Mon -Thurs and 8.30am - 4.30pm Friday). The weekly list of new applications is also sent directly to parish councils, residents groups, some community associations, and a number of other organisations.
- 3.6 We write to the occupiers of premises most likely to be affected by a proposal to tell them that we have received an application. We also tell them that they can inspect the application at the Council offices and make any written comments within 21 days. For major applications, we also put up a site notice and/or a notice in the local papers. As mentioned previously, the Council generally uses the *Northern Echo* as it provides the greatest coverage on a District-wide level.
- 3.7 We will notify the occupiers of the properties bordering an application site, and those close to the property. The Council has approved guidelines for neighbour notification (Appendix 4). This is known as Neighbour Notification. In areas where there are no neighbouring properties, we will post a site notice. The case officer has the discretion to decide how far neighbour notification should extend. For larger proposals, which are likely to have an impact across a wider area, case officers will normally extend the notification letters to a wider section of the community.
- 3.8 For applications that are likely to affect people who are not resident in a neighbouring property, it will be appropriate to display a site notice advertising the application. The case officer, on request, may visit at home people who are unable to visit the Civic Centre, such as disabled or elderly people or parents with young children, to explain the planning process and the application.

Involvement of the community during the processing of a planning application

- 3.9 There is a considerable amount of negotiation on some planning applications, particularly the complex ones. This is a vital part of the development control process, guiding development from potentially being unacceptable towards an acceptable form. Negotiations should take place at the earliest opportunity. This will help to ensure that they have a positive impact on proposals, and that decisions are made in accordance with statutory deadlines.

- 3.10 The Council offers a free pre-application advice service to applicants. The service is intended to give applicants an indication about the acceptability of their proposals, but it is not binding on the Council's final decision. Such discussions can also improve the quality of applications in terms of design. Applicants can make appointments with development control officers by phoning the planning division at the Civic Centre on 01207 218275 or 276, or by e-mail planning@derwentside.gov.uk. However, officers will normally only be prepared to comment formally when an applicant provides details of the proposal in writing. This is to ensure consistency of the advice provided and that a written record exists of both the proposal and the officer's response. The Development Control Team provides enquiry forms for use with householder proposals. The Team aims to respond to 90% of minor enquiries in 14 days, and 90% of other, more complex enquiries in 21 days. As part of the pre-application advice service officers will provide advice on the level of information applicants will be required to submit with a particular application. This will include advice regarding any specialist surveys and reports as considered appropriate. If an application is deficient in the required level of detail, or supplementary surveys/reports, the Council may refuse the application.
- 3.11 Certain planning applications will cause concern, either to neighbours or other members of the public. In these circumstances, objectors should submit an objection, outlining their concerns, to the Council. Planning Policy Statement 1 states that 'the planning system does not exist to protect the private interests of one person against the activities of another, although the private interest may coincide with the public in some cases. The basic question is not whether owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties would experience financial or other loss from a particular development, but whether the proposal would unacceptably affect amenities and the existing use of land and buildings which ought to be protected in the public interest'. Therefore objections should relate to planning issues such as overshadowing, loss of privacy, design and scale, highway safety, housing supply, or environmental impact. Objections on non-planning grounds such as questions of land ownership, neighbour disputes, devaluation of property, or loss of view will not carry weight in helping the Council reach a decision.
- 3.12 The Council will make copies of plans available on request *provided* they are only required in order to assist the process of consultation on the application. Persons requesting plans must complete a pro forma giving their details and certifying that they have only taken a copy of the application for the purposes of commenting on the application. The completed pro forma will be placed on the public application file. The Council will make a reasonable charge for such copies.
- 3.13 When a proposal has been altered before a decision has been made, the Council does not automatically re-notify neighbours. To do so would significantly delay consideration of the application. However, if there was an objection to the original application, and the proposed amendment may resolve the objection, we will tell the objector about the proposed amendment. The Council is unlikely to re-notify neighbours about:
- minor alterations to the design of proposals,
 - a proposal of reduced scale, or
 - alterations which cause no material change in the appearance and/or form of the proposal.
- Case officers will decide whether or not to re-notify neighbours, taking into account the nature of the proposed amendments. However, we will always re-consult when we think

that the amendment is likely to have a greater impact on neighbours or if the proposals are significantly amended in any manner. Applicants should be aware that if an amendment proposes a materially different form of development then they may be required to withdraw the application and to re-submit it.

- 3.14 If it is necessary to re-consult, the development control case officer will normally set a shorter consultation period, usually no more than 14 days.

Involvement of the community when an application goes to Committee

- 3.15 An application will go to Development Control Committee if:

- an objection is made to the proposal; or
- the planning application is recommended for refusal.

We will send applicants a copy of the Committee report and tell them the date and time of the Committee Meeting. We will do the same for objectors or other third parties if they have previously requested this in writing. There may be a charge for a copy of the report.

- 3.16 Anyone can speak at the Committee meeting if they:

- have written in to support or to oppose an application;
- have submitted an application themselves; or
- are the agent of someone who has submitted an application.

We have to strike a balance between allowing representations to be heard and ensuring the smooth running of the Committee. We set a limit of five minutes for speakers in support of the application and a further five minutes for those opposed. If more than one person wishes to speak the 5 minutes will be divided.

- 3.17 In addition to the five minutes mentioned above we also allow Parish Councils, which make representations about a planning application, to speak at the Committee.

- 3.18 You can find more information in the leaflet "*Public Speaking at Development Control Committee*" available from the Civic Centre or online at www.derwentside.gov.uk

- 3.19 You can find the agenda for the Committee meeting on the Council's website or at the Council Offices at the Civic Centre, five working days before the meeting.

Involvement of the community after a decision is taken on a planning application

- 3.20 For all applications determined at Committee, we write to all consultees and neighbours who made representations, advising them of the decision that has been reached.

- 3.21 The decisions on all planning applications determined by the Council are available on the Council's website.

Involvement of the community in planning appeals

- 3.22 Government legislation stipulates that only applicants have the right to appeal against a local authority's planning decision. There are no third party rights to appeal against a decision. However, it is possible to challenge a decision on procedural grounds through the High Court.

- 3.23 When we receive an appeal, we write to the original consultees and persons who previously made comment on the application. The letter notifies them about the appeal and informs them how to make representations to the Planning Inspectorate. Their representations could either be in writing to a written representations appeal, or in person at an informal hearing or public inquiry.
- 3.24 We forward to the Planning Inspectorate copies of letters from interested parties who have already made their views known.
- 3.25 For informal hearings or public inquiries, the Council displays a site notice or writes to previous consultees publicising the date, time, and location of the hearing or inquiry.
- 3.26 The Council's website contains advice on how to make an appeal and a list of appeals received by the Council.

Enforcement issues

- 3.27 Planning Enforcement deals with the reported breaches of planning control such as constructing a new dwelling without planning permission or the felling of protected trees. We register all enforcement complaints, give them a file number and allocate a case officer. As far as possible, we deal with all cases in confidence.
- 3.28 Most people have concerns for the environment and in particular the area in which they live and work. The public expects that local authorities should, whenever necessary, take firm action where development is carried out in contravention of the planning regulations.
- 3.29 The Planning Authority is responsible for the investigation of complaints of a planning nature. Decisions on whether to proceed with such action in individual cases are a discretionary matter for the Council. Action is taken only when it can be demonstrated to be necessary and only on planning related grounds. In considering any decision to take enforcement action, the Council will have regard to the provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 where appropriate.
- 3.30 The cost of investigating breaches of planning control is substantial, particularly in cases where investigation has to be carried out over a significant period of time. The aim of the Council is to investigate breaches of planning control fairly, in confidence and as speedily as possible.
- 3.31 Not all breaches of control have immediate or serious effects and may not need to be investigated urgently. In order to make the most efficient use of resources the Council will prioritise cases, which cause the greatest harm in terms of loss of amenity or where for other reasons it is important to respond promptly to the breach.
- 3.32 All complaints will be acknowledged in three working days. Within 15 working days of receipt of the complaint the complainant will be informed what action can or cannot be taken.

Community involvement in other types of planning application

Tree applications (for example, trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order or within a Conservation Area)

- 3.33 The Council aims to determine applications for works to trees within a conservation area eight weeks from the date of receipt. Durham County Council's Arboricultural Officer, on behalf of the District Council, will assess the condition of the trees. If they are worthy of protection, the Council will place a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) on them. The Council also aims to determine applications for works to trees covered by an existing TPO within eight weeks from the date the application is received.
- 3.34 We will write to neighbours about works to trees covered by a TPO, and put up a site notice at the discretion of the case officer.

Advertisement applications

- 3.35 The Council will consult neighbours in the usual way for all advertisement applications, and also use site notices, if necessary, at the case officer's discretion.

Prior Approval

- 3.36 Some types of development, such as telecommunications, agriculturally related development, and demolitions, do not require planning permission. However, they may require 'prior approval' for certain elements of the works to be carried out. For example, the planning division may need details about the design and siting of an agricultural building. The planning officers must then agree or object to these details within a certain time, or else development can go ahead without approval. For further information on prior approvals please contact the planning division.

Development by telecommunication code system operators

- 3.37 Applications for prior approval for telecommunications equipment are subject to the same consultation procedures and publicity as planning applications. The Government also advises operators to carry out pre-application discussions with nearby schools and colleges, and to provide evidence that such consultation has been carried out. Bearing in mind the contentious nature of many telecommunications proposals, the Council will seek to consult widely on such proposals.

Development affecting listed buildings and Conservation Areas

- 3.38 When we receive planning applications for Listed Building Consent or Conservation Area Consent, we place an advertisement in the *Northern Echo*. We will also post a site notice, and carry out the same neighbour consultation exercise as that for a normal planning application.

Lawful Development Certificates

- 3.39 A Lawful Development Certificate may be applied for to confirm that a proposal is permitted development (it does not require planning permission) or that a current

unauthorised use has been operating long enough, and without a break, to render it immune from planning enforcement. These are not applications for planning permission, and the Council cannot consider the merits of the use. We will only carry out consultations where these may help to establish the facts of the case.

High Hedges

- 3.40 In 2005, under Part 8 of the Anti Social Behaviour Act, the Government introduced new policy advice on dealing with complaints about high hedges. If a dispute cannot be resolved between neighbours then as a last resort following receipt of a complaint the Council can be asked to make a determination whether the hedge height should be reduced.
- 3.41 Most cases are unlikely to raise wider neighbourhood issues and so Council's should not normally publicise these complaints in the same way that they do with planning applications. An exception might be where the trees in the hedge are protected by a tree preservation order or the hedge is situated in a conservation area. In some cases where there is clear public interest in the trees/hedgerows affected, the Council may carry out some consultation e.g. with Parish Councils or residents associations.

Complaints

- 3.42 The Council's 'How to Make a Complaint' leaflet defines a complaint as 'an expression of dissatisfaction with a response, or lack of response, from the Council that cannot be resolved through the normal line management process of the directorate involved, by an alternative complaints mechanism or through an in house appeals procedure'. It also states that the complaints mechanism should only be triggered when the designated line manager is satisfied with the response and the complainant is not.
- 3.43 All complaints are treated in the same way, whether they are made in writing, in person, over the telephone, or by e-mail. If your complaint is particularly serious or complicated, you might find it useful to put it in writing, so that you can state clearly all the things that concern you.
- 3.44 First contact for complaints is the Customer Services Helpdesk on 01207 693693, or email customer.services@derwentside.gov.uk. If they cannot deal with your complaint it is forwarded to the designated complaints officer in the appropriate Directorate. The Council promises to provide a written response to any complaint within 15 working days. If that is not possible you will be advised of the reason.
- 3.45 If you are unhappy with the response you receive you can take your complaint further by providing written details and requesting that the matter is reviewed by the Monitoring Officer who will look at your case independently and may refer your complaint to the Council's Standards Committee.
- 3.46 If your complaint is about something that falls outside the Council's jurisdiction, or if there is another organisation that might be able to help you, we will write to you with advice about the most appropriate action for you to take.

- 3.47 Anyone who is unhappy with the decision reached at the final stage of our internal complaints process can take the matter to the Local Government Ombudsman who will carry out an independent review of the case. Although you can contact the Ombudsman at any time, the service is intended as a last resort. The Ombudsman will only examine cases once the Council has carried out its own full investigation first. The contact details for the Local Government Ombudsman's Office for the North East are given below:

Local Government Ombudsman Beverly House 17 Shipton Road York YO30 5FZ Tel: 01904 663200 www.lgo.org.uk

4 RECOMMENDED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY DEVELOPERS AND AGENTS (ADVICE BY DERWENTSIDE DISTRICT COUNCIL)

When should a developer start to consider community involvement?

- 4.1 The Council encourages developers to start pre-application discussions and early community consultation on significant applications as early as possible in the design of their scheme. The Council cannot subsequently refuse to accept a valid planning application if it disagrees with the way in which a developer has consulted the community. However, if the developer fails to carry out appropriate consultation, this may lead to unnecessary objections. These may create difficulties at a later stage of the process.
- 4.2 Developers should also consult organisations such as English Heritage, English Nature, the Highways Agency and the Environment Agency at an early stage to discuss their proposals.

What are the benefits to the developer of a community involvement exercise?

- 4.3 A genuine exercise can:
- provide an ideal opportunity for the developer to explain their proposal, before the public form unfavourable opinions based on inaccurate information;
 - potentially save the developer time in obtaining a decision on a planning application;
 - produce more certainty about the outcome;
 - create a more sustainable and acceptable development; and
 - avoid appeals and call-in procedures.

What type of development would benefit from a community involvement exercise?

- 4.4 Developers should regard community involvement as an opportunity to explain and refine their proposals, rather than a process that acts as a restraint on their intentions. People who live within an area are often very interested to learn about proposals that may have an affect on them. They also understand that new development can bring many advantages in addition to the disadvantages. These advantages may include an increase

in jobs, or more local facilities for the community to use and enjoy. The Council therefore believes that the following proposal types would benefit from early involvement of the community:

- large scale industrial and commercial development (over 1000sqm);
- large scale residential development (50 or more dwellings);
- new education, religious, or institutional buildings;
- major infrastructure projects such as roads, pipelines, or overhead power lines;
- smaller developments on sensitive sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Conservation Areas, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or alterations to Listed Buildings;
- large scale renewable energy developments, for example wind turbines, which produce more than 1 megawatt; and
- telecommunication masts.

- 4.5 Small-scale proposals such as house extensions or advertisements will not normally require a community involvement exercise.

Example of a method to involve the community

- 4.6 Open house events allow those promoting development initiatives to present to a wider public, and assess reactions in an informal manner. They are less structured than a workshop, and more informal than a traditional exhibition. Any of the parties involved can organise open house events at any stage of the design and development process. They can last from a few hours to several weeks. We recommend that a venue be arranged with a number of displays on the proposals and options. Organisers should be present to deal with queries and engage in informal debate. They should analyse the information they have collected on this day, and use the analysis to further develop the proposal.

Additional advice from the Planning Division

- 4.7 The Planning Officers at the Council are happy to be contacted to give guidance on whether your proposal would benefit from a community involvement exercise and how it may be achieved.

Planning Policy:

Tel. 01207 218276

E-mail: developmentplans@derwentside.gov.uk

Development Control:

Tel. 01207 218276

E-mail: developmentcontrol@derwentside.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1: CONSULTEE DETAILS

The Council will hold a database of bodies, organisations, and individuals, and these will be informed throughout the Local Development Framework (LDF) production process. Planning Policy Statement 12 (Local Development Frameworks) suggests a list that should be consulted in the preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This list has been modified to include local groups that the Council will consult throughout the LDF process and make it more specific to Derwentside.

The Council considers that this should be a fluid list and will add further groups as they are identified as part of the ongoing process. Similarly, there will be other groups that no longer wish to be involved and they will be removed from the list upon request.

Statutory Consultation Bodies

These are statutory consultation bodies that must be consulted in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and its associated Regulations.

- The North East Assembly
- Durham County Council
- Chester-le-Street District Council
- Durham City District Council
- Wear Valley District Council
- Tynedale District Council
- Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council
- Burnhope Parish Council
- Cornsay Parish Council
- Esh Parish Council
- Greencroft Parish Council
- Healeyfield Parish Council
- Hedleyhope Parish Council
- Lanchester Parish Council
- Muggleswick Parish Council
- Satley Parish Council
- Lamesley Parish Council
- Urpeth Parish Council
- Edmondsley Parish Council
- Sacriston Parish Council
- Witton Gilbert Parish Council
- Bearpark Parish Council
- Brandon and Byshottles Parish Council
- Tow Law Parish Council
- Wolsingham Parish Council
- Wolsingham Park Moor Parish Council
- Stanhope Parish Council
- Edmundbyers Parish Council
- Shotley Low Quarter Parish Council
- Hedley Parish Council
- The Countryside Agency
- The Environment Agency
- Highways Agency
- English Heritage
- English Nature
- Network Rail
- One North East
- Mobile Operators Association
- Strategic Health Authority
- Transco
- Northumbrian Water

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 Trade and Industry (through Government Office for the North East)
- Ministry of Defence
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Department of Constitutional Affairs
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Office of Government Commerce (Property Advisers to the Civil Estate)

General Consultation Bodies

- North Pennines AONB Partnership
- Derwentside CVS
- The Derwentside Environmental Federation
- Derwentside Business Association
- Durham and Northumberland Archaeological Society
- Derwentside Local Heritage Association
- Durham and Northumberland Archaeological Society
- Durham Wildlife Trust

Other Consultees

The Council will, where appropriate, consult with the following agencies and organisations in the preparation of local development documents.

- Age Concern
- British Geological Survey
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
- Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- North East Chamber of Commerce
- CBI North East
- Institute of Directors North East Region
- Church Commissioners
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Coal Authority
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- English Partnerships
- Commission for Racial Equality
- County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals Trust
- County Durham and Darlington Priority Services Trust
- Crown Estate Office
- Diocesan Board of Finance
- Disability Rights Commission
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- Derwentside Primary Care Trust
- Northern Electric
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Forestry Commission
- Freight Transport Association
- Friends of the Earth (FoE)
- Gypsy Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Help the Aged
- Housing Corporation
- Learning and Skills Councils
- National Playing Fields Association
- Passenger Transport Authorities
- Passenger Transport Executives
- Police Architectural Liaison Officers
- Post Office Property Holdings
- Rail Companies and the Rail Freight Group
- Regional Development Agencies
- Regional Housing Boards
- Regional Sports Boards
- Road Haulage Association
- Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB)
- Sport England
- The House Builders Federation
- Traveller Law Reform Coalition
- Women's National Commission

- Derwentside Local Heritage Association
- Ancient Monuments Society
- Council for British Archaeology
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
- The Victorian Society
- The Georgian Society
- The Twentieth Century Society
- Garden and History Society
- The National Trust

APPENDIX 2: CONSULTATION METHOD MATRIX FOR THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Consultation Options	Development Plan Documents				Supplementary Planning Documents
	Core Strategy	Major Allocations	Development Control Policies	Stanley AAP	
Newspaper Supplements	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B
Inside Derwentside	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B	A,B
Questionnaires	A,B,C,D,E	A,B,C,D,E	A,B,C,D,E	A,B,C,D,E	A,B,C,D,E
Public Meetings	A,B,C	A,B,C		A,B,C	
Planning for Real		A,B,C		A,B,C	
Public Exhibitions	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	A,B,C	
Table Scheme Display		A,B,C		A,B,C	
Briefing Workshops	A,B,C,D,E,F				
Focus Groups	A,B,C,D,E				
Written Notification	B,C,D,E,F	B,C,D,E,F	B,C,D,E,F	B,C,D,E,F	B,C,D,E,F
Web-based Consultations	A,B,C,D,E,F	A,B,C,D,E,F	A,B,C,D,E,F	A,B,C,D,E,F	A,B,C,D,E,F

Group A	Group B	Group C	Group D	Group E	Group F
Hard to reach groups, for example young people, ethnic minorities	Groups and individuals with little or no planning background/ training, for example residents associations, businesses	Groups and individuals with some planning background, for example Parish Councils, Primary Care Trusts	Groups and individuals with planning background, for example planning consultants and developers	National Organisations , for example, English Heritage, Sport England, Environment Agency	Durham County Council, neighbouring planning authorities, and Government Office

APPENDIX 3: GLOSSARY

Below is a glossary of terms used within the Local Development Framework.
The Act: the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR): part of the Local Development Framework, the annual monitoring report will assess the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which policies in Local Development Documents are being successfully carried out.

Area Action Plan: used to provide a planning framework for areas of change and areas of conservation. Area Action Plans will have the status of Development Plan Documents.

Corporate Consultation Strategy: will develop a Council wide approach to community engagement and involvement in all services the Council provides.

Community Strategy: local authorities are required by the Local Government Act 2000 to prepare these, with aim of improving the social, environmental, and economic well being of their areas. Through the Community Strategy, authorities are expected to co-ordinate the actions of local public, private, voluntary, and community sectors. Responsibility for producing Community Strategies may be passed to Local Strategic Partnerships, which include local authority representatives.

Core Strategy: sets out the long-term spatial vision for the local planning authority area, the spatial objectives, and strategic policies to deliver that vision and those objectives. The Core Strategy will have the status of a Development Plan Document.

Corporate Plan: sets out the Council's vision, aims, values, priorities, and proposals to achieve the Community Strategy.

Development Plan: as set out in Section 38(6) of the Act, an authority's development plan consists of the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy and the Development Plan Documents contained within its Local Development Framework.

Development Plan Documents (DPD): spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination, and together with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy, will form the development plan for a local authority area for the purposes of the Act. They can include a Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations of land, and Area Action Plans (where needed). Other Development Plan Documents, including generic Development Control Policies, can be produced. They will all be shown geographically on an adopted proposals map. Individual Development Plan Documents or parts of a document can be reviewed independently from other Development Plan Documents.

Local Development Document (LDD): the collective term in the Act for Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, and the Statement of Community Involvement.

Local Development Framework (LDF): the name for the portfolio of Local Development Documents. It consists of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents, a Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and

Annual Monitoring Reports. Together these documents will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for a local authority area.

Local Development Scheme (LDS): sets out the programme for preparing Local Development Documents.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP): non-statutory, multi agency bodies which bring together the public, private, community, and voluntary sectors. The District Partnership, the LSP for Derwentside, brings together decision makers, communities, and organisations to improve the quality of life of all citizens, but particularly those that face disadvantage.

Proposals Map: the adopted proposals map illustrates on a base map (reproduced from, or based upon a map base to a registered scale) all the policies contained in Development Plan Documents. It must be revised as each new Development Plan Document is adopted, and it should always reflect the up-to-date planning strategy for the area.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): sets out the region's policies in relation to the development and use of land, and forms part of the development plan for local planning authorities.

Site Specific Allocations: allocations of sites for specific or mixed uses or development to be contained in Development Plan Documents. Policies will identify any specific requirements for individual proposals.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): sets out the standards which authorities will achieve when they involve local communities in the preparation of local development documents and development control decisions. The SCI is not a Development Plan Document but is subject to independent examination.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): a generic term used to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. The European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC) requires a formal 'environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes, including those in the field of planning and land use'.

Supplementary Plan Documents (SPD): provide supplementary information about the policies in Development Plan Documents. They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): tool for appraising policies to ensure that they reflect sustainable development objectives (that is social, environmental, and economic factors). Councils must carry out SAs for all Local Development Documents.

APPENDIX 4: NEIGHBOUR CONSULTATION POLICY

PUBLICITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

A. NEIGHBOUR NOTIFICATION The following guidelines were confirmed by the Development Control Committee on 23rd March 2000:

(a) **Ground Floor Side Extensions**

- (i) affected neighbour
- (ii) dwellings facing onto the extension (including side windows) within 15 metres of the extension.

(b) **Ground Floor Extensions to Front and Rear**

- (i) neighbours on either side
- (ii) dwellings with windows facing onto the extension which are within 15 metres of the extension.

(c) **First Floor Extensions (any elevation)**

- (i) neighbours on either side
- (ii) dwellings with windows facing onto the extension which are within 20 metres of the extension.

(d) **Minor Commercial Alterations in Town and Village Centres** e.g. new shop fronts, fascia signs etc.

- (i) if there are commercial properties on the opposite side of the road, only notify adjoining neighbours
- (ii) if there are domestic properties opposite, notify those properties as well as either side.

(e) **Changes of Use to Private Hire/Taxi Offices, Hot Food Takeaways etc.**

- (i) at least 3 neighbours on either side, depending on the use of adjoining properties
- (ii) properties opposite and to the rear
- (iii) site notice
- (iv) advertising outside commercial areas or where parking may affect residential properties.

(f) **Erection of Dwellings on Infill Plots**

all adjoining properties and properties opposite and to rear.

(g) **Major and other Developments**

all adjoining properties and properties opposite and to rear, on the application's individual merits.

B. SITE NOTICES

1. These should be used liberally where a development is likely to be of general public interest, as well as where statutory advertising is required under the General Development Order.
2. Site Notices are required where there is no obvious neighbour e.g. in the open countryside, and to be posted on or close to the application site.
3. A special site notice is required for prior notification of agricultural and forestry buildings applications.

C. ADVERTISING

1. The following types of applications must be advertised :

<u>Code</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Reason</u>
CA	Conservation Areas (general). Any development materially affecting the character or appearance of a Conservation Area. Any application which may possibly be refused in a Conservation Area must be advertised under this section.	P (LB&CA) Act
CC	Conservation Area Consent	P (LB&CA) Act
D	Departures	Art. 12B, GDO
EA	Applications accompanied by an Environmental Assessment (not departures)	Art. 12B, GDO
ED	Applications accompanied by an Environmental Assessment which are departures	Art. 12B, GDO
HA	LBC applications to <u>alter</u> historic buildings	P (LB&CA) Act
HD	LBC to demolish all or part of an historic building	P (LB&CA) Act

R	Applications affecting rights of way	Art. 12B, GDO
S	Applications affecting the setting of a Listed Building	P (LB&CA) Act
MD	Applications for major developments are defined in the General Development Order i.e. 10 or more houses or housing on sites larger than 0.5 hectares; for other developments, where floor area exceeds 1000 sq. metres, or the site area exceeds 1 hectare	Art. 12B, GDO

2. If a development falls within more than one category, the advert should specify the various reasons why the application is being advertised e.g. development in a Conservation Area affecting a public right of way and constituting a departure from the Structure Plan. If, however, the application is for a major development and requires advertising for any other reason e.g. Conservation Area, Environmental Assessment etc., then only the more demanding publicity requirement need be specified.

In addition, the Local Planning Authority also has the discretionary power to advertise other applications because they are likely to be of considerable local interest or because they may have an adverse effect on the general character of the area. Paragraph 14 of Circular 32/92 sets out examples of where additional advertising may be necessary :

- a) effect on nearby property due to noise, smell, vibration, dust or other nuisance;
- b) attracting crowds, traffic and noise in a generally quiet area;
- c) causing activity and noise during unsocial hours;
- d) introducing significant change e.g. tall buildings;
- e) resulting in serious reduction or loss of light beyond adjacent properties;
- f) affecting the setting of an ancient monument or archaeological site;
- g) affecting trees subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

D. Applications of General Local Interest . Art. 12. G.D.O

3. Where relevant, applications are advertised in the Northern Echo (NE), and sometimes the Durham Advertiser (DA) and the Evening Chronicle (EC).
4. When validating, the Planning Officer will specify whether site notices (SN) are required, what type of advert (see above list) and which paper (EC, DA or NE). Advertisements will still appear on Thursdays.

Whilst adverts specify 14 days for commenting on applications, site notices must allow 21 days (as neighbour letters). It is therefore essential that site notices are displayed as soon as possible.

5. Duplicate applications : where submitted concurrently, only one application advert and site notice is required. Where submitted separately (i.e. on different dates), separate publicity will be required for each application.