

CABINET

Thursday,
15 September 2005
10.00 a.m.

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices, Spennymoor

AGENDA and REPORTS

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To notify the Chairman of any items included in the agenda in which you may have an interest.

3. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1st September 2005. (Pages 1 - 4)

KEY DECISIONS

CULTURE AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO

4. FIXED PLAY EQUIPMENT SAFETY AUDIT

Report of Director of Leisure Services. (Pages 5 - 18)

REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

**5. SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK -
SUBMISSION OF DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Report of Director of Neighbourhood Services. (Pages 19 - 106)

**6. SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - DRAFT
RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

Report of Director of Neighbourhood Services. (Pages 107 - 174)

OTHER DECISIONS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

**7. REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - POSITION AT 31ST JULY
2005**

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 175 - 190)

**8. CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2005/2006 - POSITION TO 31ST
JULY 2005**

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 191 - 198)

COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO

9. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SERVICE

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services. (Pages 199 - 204)

MINUTES

10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 12th July 2005. (Pages 205 - 208)

11. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

Members are respectfully requested to give the Chief Executive Officer notice of items they would wish to raise under the heading not later than 12 noon on the day preceding the meeting, in order that consultation may take place with the Chairman who will determine whether the item will be accepted.

N. Vaulks
Chief Executive Officer

Council Offices
SPENNYMOOR
7th September 2005

Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman)

Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Hodgson, M. Iveson, D.A. Newell,
K. Noble, J. Robinson J.P and W. Waters

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection in relation to this Agenda and associated papers should contact Miss S. Billingham, on Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240

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Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
1 September 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and

Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Hodgson,
M. Iveson, D.A. Newell, K. Noble and W. Waters

In Attendance: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, V. Crosby, A. Gray, D.M. Hancock,
B. Meek, G. Morgan, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, J.K. Piggott, A. Smith, J.M. Smith,
Mrs. I. Jackson Smith and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors J. Robinson J.P

CAB.47/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

CAB.48/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th July 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.49/05 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06 - LEISURE CENTRE ROOF WORKS - KEY DECISION

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval to undertake roof works at Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor Leisure Centres. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted that since 2002 both Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor Leisure Centre roofs had experienced water ingress. A survey of the leaking areas had found that the problems had been caused by deterioration of the existing roofing systems, which were between 20 and 30 years old, and condensation due to the lack of insulation.

It was reported that tenders had been invited to install new roofing systems and the lowest tender had been submitted by Duffell Roofing in the sum of £365,964 with £147,000 in respect of Spennymoor Leisure Centre and £213,964 for Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre being identified.

It was pointed out that consideration had been given to the feasibility of phasing the work at the Centres. It was established that the roof areas at Spennymoor Leisure Centre would not last another winter, however, work

to the Sports Hall roof at Newton Aycliffe could be delayed until April 2006. As part of the Capital Programme for 2005/6, £37,000 of the cost of the works to Spennymoor Leisure Centre roof could be met by deferring two capital schemes: the refurbishment of the pool hall area at Spennymoor Leisure Centre and the provision of playing pitches at Sedgefield. The remainder could be met from capital contingencies.

- RESOLVED :*
1. *That the lowest tender submitted by Duffell Roofing in the sum of £360,954 for both Centres be accepted.*
 2. *That the roof work at Spennymoor Leisure Centre be undertaken within the 2005/06 financial year at a cost of £147,000.*
 3. *That the agreed Capital Programme be altered with £37,000 ear-marked for the refurbishment of the pool hall at Spennymoor Leisure Centre and the provision of a playing pitch at Sedgefield being deferred until 2006/07.*
 4. *That £110,000 be allocated from capital contingencies to meet the balance of costs for the roof replacement at Spennymoor Leisure Centre.*
 5. *That the roof work required at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre, amounting to £213,964 be a first call against the 2006/07 Capital Programme.*

CAB.50/05 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME AND THE SINGLE HOUSING INVESTMENT PROGRAMME ROUND 2 - KEY DECISION

The Lead Member for Housing presented a report detailing the proposed private sector housing capital programme for 2005/06 and the changes to the bidding arrangements to the Regional Housing Board in respect of future funding. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted that the planned budget for 2005/06 was £1.6m, which was made up of three elements, Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, Single Housing Investment Programme "safety net" allocation and the discretionary 'coalfields' allocation. The 'safety net' element would be focused on the delivery of services to the elderly and vulnerable client groups, for example, fast track adaptations to support hospital discharges and replacement heating systems for elderly or vulnerable low income home owners.

The report also provided information of the Council's performance against the 2004/05 private sector housing budget.

- RESOLVED :*
- That the Private Sector Housing Capital Programme 2005/06 be approved and the changes to the Single Housing Investment Programme be noted.*

CAB.51/05 PROJECT MANAGEMENT REQUIREMENTS

The Lead Member for Performance Management presented a report seeking approval to establish two e-Government Project Manager posts for one year only, to enable the Council to move at a faster pace in the delivery of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Priority Service Outcomes. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that many of the Council's Priority Service Outcome (PSO) achievements to date had been delivered through the deployment of relatively quick fix solutions, however, further resources were required to progress the outstanding PSOs.

Members' attention was also drawn to paragraphs 3.12 – 3.14, which detailed the proposed governance framework for the Council.

- RESOLVED :*
- 1. That two posts of e-Government Project Manager, graded PO(K) be established for one year only, on a fixed term contractual basis.*
 - 2. That the proposed governance framework detailed in paragraphs 3.12 – 3.14 be approved.*

CAB.52/05 AREA FORUMS

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the following meetings :

- Area 4 Forum - 19th July, 2005
Area 5 Forum - 26th July, 2006

(For copies see file of Minutes).

- RESOLVED :* *That the reports be received.*

Published on 2nd September, 2005.

The key decisions contained in these Minutes will be implemented on Monday 12th September, 2005 five working days after the date of publication unless they are called in by five Members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call in procedure rules.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Gillian Garrigan, on Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240

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Item 4

KEY DECISION

REPORT TO CABINET
15 SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT OF
DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

Portfolio: Culture and Recreation

FIXED PLAY EQUIPMENT SAFETY AUDIT

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report reflects the findings of the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) Annual Audit of Fixed Play Areas commissioned by the Leisure Services Department as part of its independent quality check of play assets in the ownership of the Borough Council.
- 1.2 Cabinet were informed at its meeting on 14 July that this report was being assembled and that resources would be required to implement its findings.
- 1.3 The report contains an itemised schedule of work identified by the NPFA in order to meet current safety standards and performance indicators for local equipped areas of play (LEAP), shown at Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 As part of the allocation of £350,000 for play sites in 2006/07, Cabinet approve expenditure of £70,000 to re-site the play area in Tudhoe South, Spennymoor and £100,500 to complete repair work to a further 11 play sites scheduled in the report.
- 2.2 That, should Cabinet agree, the repair work to 12 sites, valued at £100,500, could be scheduled within the 2005/06 financial year.
- 2.3 That Cabinet approve the schedule for removal of play equipment from 6 of the 12 play sites identified in the report.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 All 21 play areas and 49 individual items of fixed play equipment under the ownership of Sedgefield Borough Council have received their annual inspection by the NPFA.
- 3.2 The NPFA Annual Inspections are undertaken to establish the overall level of safety of equipment, foundations and surfaces. The inspections also consider the effect of repairs or added components on the safety of equipment.
- 3.3 The inspectors have compiled a written report, which identifies action required against the relevant European safety standards (EN1176 and EN1177/PAS30

and PAS35). A 4-point risk assessment, Immediate, High, Moderate and Low is set for completion of work.

3.4 In addition to the safety inspection, the report scores each play area out of 89 in terms of its overall play value under the following three categories; site features, equipment features and play co-operation. The report also assesses the play areas and scores them against the eight performance indicators recommended by the Audit Commission required for a Local Equipped Areas for Play (LEAP), which are:

- Each site must be in area a minimum of 400m².
- All equipment and facilities must be have been assessed as safe for continued use by a competent playground inspector.
- All equipment with a fall height greater than 600mm must have appropriate impact absorbing surfacing.
- Each site must have a minimum of five different equipment items. Multi-component equipment may contribute a maximum of 3 items.
- Each site must have a small games area (maybe grassed) within the boundary of the playground.
- Each site must be entirely fenced with a self-closing gate.
- Each site must have signs excluding dogs.
- Each site must be overlooked by housing, pedestrian routes or other well used public facilities.

4. PROPOSED ACTION PLAN

4.1 An analysis of the report has been completed. None of the required actions were identified as an immediate risk. Ten were identified as a high risk and 153 were identified as moderate to low risk.

4.2 Remedial action required which can be completed under the regular maintenance regime is now underway and will be funded from the agreed repair and maintenance budget for fixed playgrounds.

4.3 However the analysis highlights 12 play areas which require more extensive work. This work will be procured using specialist contractors but falls outside the annual repair and maintenance budget for playground maintenance.

4.4 Listed at appendix 1 are the details for each play areas' specific requirements identified in the report and the proposals for their future taking into account public consultation.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION

5.1 The report to Cabinet on 14 July clearly stated that additional resources would be required to address the issues that the National Playing Fields Association were likely to identify in their audit of play equipment report.

5.2 Should all the actions required be implemented, including the relocation of the play area at Tudhoe South, Spennymoor, (subject to the outcome of detailed consultation), total investment to make significant improvements to the play areas within the ownership of the Borough Council, is approximately £170,500.

- 5.3 A site/cost breakdown is given at Appendix 2.
- 5.4 In view of the Council's current capital resource position, a more flexible approach to Capital Expenditure between financial years is being followed, as indicated in the Capital Spending Budgetary Control report. Subject to Cabinet approval, it would be possible therefore to bring forward £100,500 of the 2006/07 play site allocation into the current financial year. This would allow work to commence on the range of repairs identified in Appendix 2.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 All 21 sites in the ownership of the Borough Council are part of its Asset Management stock and as such require sustained investment.
- 6.2 During August, a consultation exercise was conducted around the neighbouring areas of each of the play sites identified in the report. Appendix 1 includes the outcome of that public consultation which is reflected in the proposed action required section.
- 6.3 The report proposes that equipment is removed from 6 sites, (details are contained at appendix 1.)
- 6.4 Technical reports including desk research together with primary research data has been gathered which supports the proposals for investment, informal play or conversion to other uses.

7. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1 Cabinet should be aware that by allocating the resources necessary to complete the repairs identified in the report, the monies remaining from the total of £700,000 will allow for investment in a further three areas where complete refurbishment is required, and not the 5 sites anticipated in 2006/07.
- 7.2 The Council's community strategy places emphasis on the four key components of working towards creating a healthy, attractive and prosperous borough with strong communities.
- 7.3 Investing in children's play contributes towards a healthy borough by creating leisure opportunities where children and young people have increasing places to play; an attractive borough with associated improvements to the environment by making play areas more aesthetically pleasing; and promoting safer neighbourhoods by giving children and young people positive play opportunities in designated locations.
- 7.4 The Council's Corporate Plan 2005/08 recognises the importance of increased physical activity in promoting good health, in the same way that it makes clear the need for a strategic approach to children and young people reflecting the governments "Every Child Matters" key outcomes. Youth Development is one of eight cross cutting priorities for the authority identified in the plan.

Contact Officer: Miss Joanne King
Telephone No: (01388) 816166 ext : 4539
Email Address: jking@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward(s)

Key Decision Validation: Affecting two or more wards
Expenditure over £100,000

Background Papers: National Playing Fields Association Reports July 2005
Report to Cabinet 14 July 2005

Examination by Statutory Officers:

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLAY SITE PROPOSALS**BESSEMER PARK - SPENNYMOOR**

Play Value Rating – 19 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 6 out of 8

Action Required

- Members of Cabinet will receive a land status report in the very near future written by officers in the Neighbourhood Services Department. Until due consideration has been given to the report findings, no action relating to the play site should be undertaken.

NORTH ROAD - SPENNYMOOR

Play Value Rating – 8 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 2 out of 8

Action Required

- It is proposed that as a result of its low play value and high anticipated costs the equipment is removed and the area re-instated to grass. This area would be available for informal play. The nearest play area with fixed equipment is Tudhoe South, Tudhoe.

Result of the Action

The area will be maintained for informal play.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 180 residents surrounding the play area. In total 35 responses were received (19%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	20	8	28
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	4	3	7
<i>Total</i>	24	11	35

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved.

TIMOTHY TERRACE, SPENNYMOOR

Play Value Rating – 12 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 6 out of 8

Action Required

- Provide public signing, litter bins and bench seating

Result of the Action

The play value rating will increase to 21 out of 89
Performance Indicators will increase to 7 out of 8.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 170 residents surrounding the play area. In total 29 responses were received (17%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	14	4	18
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	11	0	11
<i>Total</i>	25	4	29

Although on the whole residents agree with the proposed action, several residents did express concerns regarding anti-social behaviour occurring on an evening. In particular residents were not convinced that the seating was appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved excluding the seating.

TUDHOE SOUTH - SPENNYMOOR

Play Value Rating – 14 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 4 out of 8

Action Required

- The low play value of the equipment coupled with high anticipated costs to install, repair or replace the items identified in the inspection report but more significantly the location of the play site, points to removing the items of fixed play equipment from the present site and creating a new play area within the Tudhoe South area.

Result of the Action

The new play area will achieve appropriate play value and performance indicators. The proposed location will be subject to public consultation.

RECOMMENDATION:

That a suitable site should be identified for a new play area following public consultation and the existing site be cleared and reinstated.

WATER BOARD SITE - SPENNYMOOR

Play Value Rating – 9 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 4 out of 8

Action Required

- Provide public information signage and bench seating
- Replace gate with self-closing gate

Result of the Action

The play value rating will increase to 19 out of 89.
Performance Indicators will increase to 6 out of 8.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 360 residents surrounding the play area. In total 51 responses were received (14%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	37	4	41
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	9	1	10
<i>Total</i>	46	5	51

In addition to the results detailed above consultation conducted by the Eden Residents Association showed residents were against the installation of bench seating. This was due to the risk of encouraging older youths to congregate on an evening causing annoyance.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved excluding the seating.

EADE CLOSE (PROVISION FOR TEENAGERS) - NEWTON AYCLIFFE

Play Value Rating – 5 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 2 out of 8

Action Required

- As this play area provides for a youth shelter and an area for young people to play football and basketball, the action required is to undertake remedial work to the grass to deal with erosion.
- Provide suitable public signage, litterbins and bench seating.

Result of the Action

The play value rating will increase to 13 out of 89.
Performance Indicators will increase to 4 out of 8.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 170 residents surrounding the play area. In total 38 responses were received (22%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	21	1	22
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	16	0	16
<i>Total</i>	37	1	38

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved.

KIMBLESWORTH - NEWTON AYCLIFFE

Play Value Rating – 12 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 4 out of 8

Action Required

- Replace the safety surfacing within the site
- Provide public signage, litterbins and bench seating
- Provide metal fencing around the site inc. self-closing gates

Result of the Action

The play value rating will increase to 32 out of 89.

Performance Indicators will increase to 7 out of 8.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 368 residents surrounding the play area. In total 25 responses were received (7%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	12	6	18
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	7	0	7
<i>Total</i>	19	6	25

Although on the whole residents agree with the proposed action, several residents did express concerns regarding anti-social behaviour occurring on an evening. In particular residents were not convinced that seating was appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved excluding seats.

BALIOL - NEWTON AYCLIFFE

Play Value Rating – 15 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 5 out of 8

Action Required

- Replace the safety surfacing within the site
- Provide public signage, litterbins and bench seating

Result of the Action

The play value rating will increase to 32 out of 89.

Performance Indicators will increase to 6 out of 8.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 286 residents surrounding the play area. In total 41 responses were received (14%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	26	3	29
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	15	1	16
<i>Total</i>	41	4	45

In addition to the above responses a group of children and young people from the area gathered a petition of 100 names to support the improvements and also to request a set of five-a-side goals.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action required be approved and that, if practicable, a set of goals be provided.

TEESDALE - SHILDON

Play Value Rating – 13 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 4 out of 8

Action Required

- Replace the safety surfacing within the site
- Install metal fencing with self-closing gates
- Provide litterbins and bench seating

Result of the Action

The play value rating will increase to 30 out of 89.

Performance Indicators will increase to 6 out of 8.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 180 residents surrounding the play area. In total 33 responses were received (18%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	8	15	23
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	6	4	10
<i>Total</i>	14	19	33

All those who disagree with the proposed action agreed that the play area should be removed rather than improved. The reason stated for this preference was anti-social behaviour occurring late on an evening.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the play equipment be removed and the area re-instated providing for informal play opportunities in accordance with the consultation.

LAUREL - SHILDON

Play Value Rating – 5 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 3 out of 8

Action Required

- The low play value provided by the equipment coupled with the high anticipated costs to install and replace the items required together with the age of the equipment suggests a total removal of the equipment from the site and re-instate to grass. The closest play area with fixed play equipment, if this action is agreed, will be Locomotion or Teesdale.

Result of the Action

The site will be retained for informal play.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 235 residents surrounding the play area. In total 7 responses were received (3%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	3	2	5
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	1	1	2
<i>Total</i>	4	3	7

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved.

DALTON - SHILDON

Play Value Rating – 5 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 2 out of 8

Action Required

- The low play value provided by the equipment coupled with the high anticipated costs to install, repair or replace items on site together with the location of the site suggests total removal of the equipment and as a result of this action it is suggested to replant the site with appropriate shrubs as there is a long history with anti-social behaviour within the site. The nearest play area with fixed equipment is Locomotion.

Result of the Action

This site will be re-planted and be re-designated accordingly.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 130 residents surrounding the play area. In total 23 responses were received (18%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	12	6	18
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	3	2	5
<i>Total</i>	15	8	23

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved.

ALBERT STREET - CHILTON

Play Value Rating – 6 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 3 out of 8

Action Required

- The low play value provided by the equipment and the high anticipated costs to install the required items from the National Playing Fields Association report suggests that the Trim Trail which is the only item of equipment on site is removed and replaced with two sets of small-sided football goals. The remaining grassed area on this large site would be used for informal play. The nearest play area with fixed equipment is The Downs (Pentlands).

Result of the Action

The site will be used as an informal games area.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 200 residents surrounding the play area. In total 25 responses were received (13%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	16	1	17
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	8	0	8
<i>Total</i>	24	1	25

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved.

EDEN DRIVE - SEDGEFIELD

Play Value Rating – 29 out of 89

Number of Performance Indicators achieved – 7 out of 8

Action Required

- Replace a piece of play equipment and replace the safety surfacing within the site
- Provide “grass matting” around the Trim Trail which is located outside the specific site
- Provide public signage
- Provide metal fencing and self-closing gates around the site

Result of the Action

The play value rating will increase to 42 out of 89.
Performance Indicators will increase to 8 out of 8.

Consultation Outcome

A letter outlining the action required, as detailed above, and a comments slip was distributed to 190 residents surrounding the play area. In total 64 responses were received (34%). The results of these responses are detailed in the table below:

	<i>Agree with Action</i>	<i>Disagree with Action</i>	<i>Totals</i>
<i>Adult Residents</i>	46	2	48
<i>C+YP Residents</i>	16	0	16
<i>Total</i>	62	2	64

RECOMMENDATION:

That the required action be approved.

FIXED PLAY EQUIPMENT SAFETY AUDIT REPORT**Estimated Cost Plan**

<i>Play Area</i>	<i>Estimated Cost</i>
<i>North Road</i>	£ 3,000
<i>Timothy Terrace</i>	£ 1,500
<i>Tudhoe South</i>	£ 4,000
<i>Water Board Site</i>	£ 1,500
<i>Eade Close</i>	£ 2,500
<i>*Kimblesworth</i>	£ 15,000
<i>*Baliol</i>	£ 11,000
<i>*Tessdale</i>	£ 3,500
<i>Laural</i>	£ 3,500
<i>Dalton</i>	£ 3,500
<i>Albert Street</i>	£ 3,500
<i>*Eden Drive</i>	£ 48,000
<i>Total Repair Costs</i>	£100,500
<i>Provision of New Play Area – Tudhoe South</i>	£ 70,000
<i>Total Cost</i>	£170,500

**** Sites where replacement of safety surfacing is necessary.***

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Item 5

KEY DECISION

REPORT TO CABINET

15 September 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Portfolio: Regeneration

Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework – Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 represents a major reform of the planning system. The Government's objective is to produce a more flexible plan-making system; the Local Development Framework. The LDF will comprise of a Local Development Scheme which sets out the work programme; a Statement of Community Involvement; a range of Development Plan Documents; Supplementary Planning Documents; and, Annual Monitoring Reports. In terms of the preparation of documents, the Statement of Community Involvement is subject to public examination.
- 1.2 The Statement of Community Involvement explains how the Borough Council intends to engage those who have an interest in matters relating to development in their area and the preparation of documents. The Government sees the Statement of Community Involvement as very important in their aim of a more inclusive planning system. Whilst it has always been acknowledged as best practice, the Statement of Community Involvement will formally set out how Local Planning Authorities will engage their community in the planning system. The Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement will be published for a statutory six-week consultation period. It will be required to undergo a Public Examination, if any objections are received to suggest that the Statement fails the tests of soundness.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Management Team endorses the attached draft Statement of Community Involvement at Appendix 1 to Cabinet, prior to its public consultation.

3 THE SUBMISSION DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 3.1 Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 highlights that Planning must work as a partnership and engage with the community to deliver sustainable development in the right place at the right time. 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 to ideas about how that vision can be achieved and have the opportunity to participate in the process for drawing up specific plans or policies and to be involved in development proposals.
- 3.2 The consultation period on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement ran from 11 April to 23 May 2005. The Statement of Pre-Submission Consultation is included in Appendix 1. This document identifies how the document was formulated, who was consulted and the method of consultation, the availability of the document, the publicity undertaken, the level of responses and how the Borough Council has taken these comments into account. The vast majority of the responses received were either in support of the document or required minor factual amendments.
- 3.3 A number of changes have been made to the Submission Draft SCI, and these are summarised below:
- Clarification has been provided to define what constitutes “medium and large scale” developments;
 - In addition to details of Sustainability Appraisals, Strategic Environmental Assessments have been mentioned in Chapter 2;
 - Additional methods of disseminating information suggested by the responses during the consultation period have been included;
 - Clarification provided of which ‘other’ types of planning applications require a press notice;
 - Changes made to Appendix 2 to include additional consultation methods suggested by numerous responses during the consultation period;
 - New paragraph introduced at the start of Chapters 2 & 3 to outline the roles of the Forward Planning and Development Control Team respectively;
 - Clarity provided that the document will only apply to Planning Services and not any other Council services (not a corporate document); and
 - Greater clarification provided as to the documents intentions;

The Submission draft (Appendix 2) incorporates all of these amendments in various sections of the document.

- 3.4 The Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement will be published for a statutory period of six-weeks in accordance with Regulation 28 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004 and submitted to independent examination. The purpose of the examination is to consider the ‘soundness’ of the Statement of Community Involvement. The presumption will be that it is ‘sound’ unless it is shown to be otherwise as a result of evidence. The Planning Inspectorate’s preferred method of dealing with representations on the Statement of Community Involvement is by written representations. A public hearing will only take

place where one or more of those making representations wish to be heard. It is programmed that this examination will take place in December 2005. The Planning Inspectorate Costs in relation to this process is discussed in Section 4 of the report.

Soundness

- 3.5 Planning Policy Statement 12 sets out nine tests that a Statement of Community Involvement should meet if it is 'sound'. The Inspector will need to determine whether the:
- i) Local Planning Authority has complied with the minimum standards for consultation, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004;
 - ii) Local Planning Authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the Community Strategy;
 - iii) Statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;
 - iv) Statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
 - v) Methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents;
 - vi) Resources are available to manage community involvement effectively;
 - vii) Statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
 - viii) Authority has mechanism for reviewing the statement of community involvement, and;
 - ix) Statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.

Appendix 3 provides an overview of how the Submission Statement of Community Involvement meets the tests of 'soundness'.

- 3.6 Following the examination into the Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement, the Planning Inspectorate will report its findings to the Borough Council. Under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, these findings will be binding upon the Council and must be adopted.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct implications at this stage in the consultation process, though there might be additional impacts for staff resources during the consultation exercise to attend evening meetings.
- 4.2 The Borough Council is responsible for the payment of the Planning Inspectorate costs for the independent examination of the Statement of Community Involvement. In June 2005, the Planning Inspectorate provided indicative costs for all types of examination. If the Statement of Community Involvement were examined by written representations, the estimated costs would be approximately £2,300. Alternatively, if a formal hearing

were required, the estimated costs would be approximately £7,700. These costs would be met by the Local Development Plan budget.

5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The Statement of Pre-Submission Consultation is included in Appendix 1.
- 5.2 The current timetable for preparing the Statement of Community Involvement is as follows. The Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement will be consulted upon in September and October 2005. Following the consideration of the issues put forward during this consultation period, an independent examination will be required by way of either written representations or a formal hearing. This is programmed for December 2005. Final approval by the Secretary of State of the Statement of Community Involvement is expected in the spring of 2006.

6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 In terms of environmental sustainability, the Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement is not required to undergo Sustainability Appraisal. There are no risk management issues associated with the report.

7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None.

8 LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – The Statement of Pre-Submission Consultation

Appendix 2 – The Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement

Appendix 3 – An overview of how the tests of soundness are met

Contact Officers: Chris Myers
Telephone No: (01388) 816166 ext 4328
Email Address: cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward(s): All

Key Decision Validation: This is a Key Decision, as the decision made by Cabinet will be put forward to develop the policy framework.

Background Papers

Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development

Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks

Creating Local Development Frameworks: A Companion guide to PPS12

A Framework for assessing soundness and focussing representations on Development Plan Documents and Statements of Community Involvement, The Planning Inspectorate

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Sedgefield Borough Council

Local Development Framework:
Submitted Draft Statement of Community
Involvement

Statement of Pre-Submission Consultation

September 2005

Statement of Pre-Submission Consultation for Sedgefield Borough Council **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

1. Introduction

- 1.0.1 This statement has been prepared in accordance with Regulation 28¹. Its purpose is to set out how Sedgefield Borough Council involved the community in the preparation of the SCI. This statement sets out: who we initially consulted on our SCI (under Regulation 25); how they were consulted; a summary of the main issues that were raised during our consultations (during both the Regulation 25 information gathering, and first draft Regulation 26) and how these have been addressed in the submission draft SCI.
- 1.0.2 Preparatory work on the initial Draft SCI for Sedgefield commenced during 2004 at a time when new Government guidance on community involvement was continually being released. The document was prepared through a process bringing together officers within the Forward Planning and Development Control Teams, to utilise experience of previous consultation and community participation exercises, as well as establishing what is currently done by way of consultation and engagement.
- 1.0.3 Once adopted the SCI will form part of the Borough's Local Development Framework. Whilst it will not constitute a Development Plan Document, each Local Development Document prepared by the Borough Council will have to be accompanied by a statement of pre-submission consultation, showing compliance with the adopted SCI. Planning Services will also have to adhere to the standards and procedures it contains when determining planning applications, applications to prune or fell protected trees or on Enforcement issues.

2. Involving the Community in the SCI

- 2.0.1 In preparing the Draft SCI officers sought to rationalise the amount of consultation required by the Regulations. In this respect much of the consultation arrangements as required by Regulation 25 and 26 were combined.

2.1 Pre-submission Initial Consultation (Regulation 25)

- 2.1.1 An initial draft SCI was circulated to officers within Sedgefield Borough's Planning Services. This draft was also discussed at the 'County Development Plans Monitoring Group'. This group, which meets regularly throughout each year, consists of officers from the County Council and District Councils in County Durham. Planning departments at other

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Councils (not within County Durham) that border the Borough of Sedgefield, were also in receipt of this draft for comments.

2.1.2 Much of the feedback to consultation and discussions undertaken through Regulation 25 was received on quite an informal basis. As a result of this initial informal involvement there were numerous changes made to the draft SCI.

2.2 Pre-Submission Public Participation on the Draft SCI (Regulation 26)

2.2.1 The Draft SCI was endorsed by Management Team, and by Borough Council Members at Cabinet during February and March 2005 and subsequently approved for public consultation. This consultation exercise took place between Monday 11th April and Monday 23rd May 2005.

2.2.2 More than 180 copies of the document were sent to statutory consultees, other local authorities (both within County Durham, and those which border Sedgefield), Town and Parish Councils (those within Sedgefield Borough, and those bordering Sedgefield from other administrative boundaries), Resident's Associations and Borough Councillors.

2.3 Letters

2.3.1 Various interest groups and other organisations whose contact details were held on our consultation database were sent letters notifying them that the SCI was out for a statutory six-week consultation period inviting their comments upon this draft. The letters also specified details where the document could be viewed and how comments relating to the document should be submitted to the Council. A detailed list of these consultees is attached at **Appendix 1**. At the time, the Borough Council believed these groups and organisations were inclusive of all the specific and general consultation bodies as specified by Regulation 25(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and those that are relevant to planning at a local level.

2.4 Availability at Council Offices and Buildings

2.4.1 During the statutory 6-week consultation period, copies of the draft Statement of Community Involvement and comments forms were available:

- o At the main Borough Council Offices (Green Lane);
- o In all libraries in the Borough.

2.5 Availability on the Council Website

2.5.1 The draft Statement along with the comment form for downloading were available on the Council's website (www.sedgefield.gov.uk). The subsequent Local Development Framework web pages provided more background information on the draft SCI and further advertised its consultation.

2.6 Publicity – Advertisement in the Local Press

2.6.1 The draft Statement of Community Involvement was advertised by way of a legal notice placed in the following newspaper circulating within the North East (**Appendix 3**):

Newspaper	Date Notice Published
The Northern Echo	11 th April 2005

2.6.2 A press release was also issued through the Borough Council's Communications Team and featured in local newspapers and Council publications to further advertise the consultation (**Appendix 4**).

2.7 Presentations

2.7.1 Concurrent to the statutory consultation, an invitation was extended to each of the Town/Parish Councils located within the Borough offering the opportunity for members of the Forward Planning Team to give a presentation on the SCI at the next Town/Parish meeting. The majority of these took up the offer and a number of presentations were given during the statutory period.

2.7.2 In April 2005 a presentation on the SCI was made to the Equality and Diversity Group. Attendees at the seminars included District Councillors and officers from different departmental Council service.

2.8 Pre-Submission Responses (Regulation 27)

2.8.1 As previously highlighted, the statutory six-week pre-submission draft consultation period ran from 11th April until the 23rd May 2005. This consultation (under Regulation 26) generated 121 comments from 36 respondents. A summary of these representations and main issues, in addition to how these issues have been addressed within this document is attached at **Appendix 2**.

2.9 Submission Stage Consultation (Regulation 28)

2.9.1 This consultation is to be undertaken when the SCI is formally submitted to the Secretary of State (SoS). The consultation will run from the 12th September until 24th October 2005 and consist of a letter (and copies of the submission document to all Statutory Consultees) sent to all of those bodies listed in the SCI (including those added as a result of the Regulation 26 consultation) inviting representations on the 'Submission SCI'. In addition to traditional paper representation forms available at deposit locations, email details have again been provided on the Council's website for those who wish to communicate electronically. The Submission Stage consultation will be publicised by a notice in the same newspaper used for the Regulation 26 consultation. A further press release will also be issued at this time. The Submission draft Statement of

Community Involvement will be available on the Council's website and at deposit locations. In addition, an article has been drafted for the latest edition of Inform Magazine (the Council's free magazine that is posted to the majority of households in the Borough).

- 2.9.2 Following this stage of consultation the SCI will be subjected to an independent public examination. During the independent public examination (anticipated December 2005) a Government appointed Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate will test the document for soundness as prescribed within "*Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks*". The Inspector will then prepare a report outlining the findings of the examination and make any recommendations for change if these are considered necessary. These recommendations will be binding and the Local Planning Authority will therefore be obliged to amend the SCI in line with the recommendations prior to formally adopting the document.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Consultees

Environment Agency	Ferryhill Town Council	Mr G. Hagger – Kier Land Ltd	Chilton Library
Highways Agency	Great Aycliffe Town Council	Mr Malcolm Walker – Peacock and Smith	Cornforth Library
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for UK	Sedgefield Town Council	Mr Justin Hancock – H.J. Banks Ltd	Ferryhill Library
English Nature	Shildon Town Council	Mr Christopher Padgett	Newton Aycliffe Library
The Strategic Rail Authority	Spennymoor Town Council	BAC Bulk Haulage Ltd	Sedgefield Library
Strategic Health Authority	Chilton Town Council	Mr Alistair Carr – Anvil Homes Ltd	Shildon Library
Home Office	Bishop Middleham Parish Council	Jay Everett – Storeys: SSP	Spennymoor Library
Department for Education & Skills	Cornforth Parish Council	Mr J T McCaskie	Trimdon Library
The Countryside Agency	Eldon Parish Council	Mr Jonathan M Burroughs – Bidwells	Etherley Parish Council
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	Fishburn Parish Council	Mr Ian Cyhanko – Barton Willmore Planning Partnership	Coatham Mundeville Parish Council
Department for Transport	Trimdon Parish Council	Mr D Martin – Acorn Residential Estates	Brafferton Parish Council
Department of Health	Windlestone Parish Council	Paul Medcalfe – Bellway Homes Ltd	Great Stainton Parish Council
Department of Trade & Industry	Middridge Parish Council	Paul Stock – North Country Homes Group Ltd	Heighington Parish Council
Ministry of Defence	Bradbury Parish Meeting	Miss Katie Lazzam – Malcolm Judd and Partners	Grindon Parish Council
Department of Work & Pensions	Mordon Parish Meeting	Mrs Sandra Thompson – Signet Planning	Stillington & Whitton Parish Council
The Department of Constitutional Affairs	Castles Residents Association	Claire Davy – Dickinson Dees	Elwick Parish Council
Department for Culture, Media & Sport	Chilton West Residents Association	Charles Robinson – CDS	Councillor David Newell
Office of Government Commerce	Lakes Residents Association	Katie Adderley – The British Wind Energy Association	Councillor Benjamin Ord
Age Concern	Williamfield Residents Association	Bryan Huntley – Halcrow Group Limited	Councillor Ms Marie Predski
Airport Operators	New Shildon Residents Association	Graham Bradley – Woodland Trust	Councillor Brian F. Avery
British Chemical Distributors & Traders Association	Ferryhill Station Residents Association	Robert Taylor – Plot of Gold Ltd	Councillor Mrs Agnes Armstrong
British Geological Survey	Linden Residents Association	John Robinson – Sedgefield Arts Recreation	Councillor Vincent Crosby
Chambers of Commerce	Dean Bank Residents Association	Mr M Smethurst	Councillor Brian Hall
Church Commissioners	Sunnydale Residents Association	Durham Wildlife Trust	Councillor Kevin Thompson

Civil Aviation Authority	Eden Residents Association	Forestry Commission	Councillor David Hancock
The Coal Authority	MARG	Dev Plan UK Ltd	Councillor David Brown
Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment	Dales Residents Association	Teesdale District Council	Councillor Barbara Clare
Commission for New Towns & English Partnerships	Burnhill Residents Association	Wear Valley District Council	Councillor Kathleen Conroy
Commission for Racial Equality	St Paul's Residents Association	Derwentside District Council	Councillor June Croft
Crown Estate Office	Lower Trimdon Residents Association	Durham City Council	Councillor Michael Dalton
Diocesan Board of Finance	R H Brown	Chester-le-Street District Council	Councillor Gareth Howe
Disability Rights Commission	Mrs J S Thompson – Merrington Grange Farm	Easington District Council	Councillor Ronald Patchett
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee	Mr W Moorfoot	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	Councillor Christine Sproat
The National Grid Company	Alexander Sharp	Hartlepool Borough Council	Councillor James Wayman JP
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Louise Nicholson – Yuill Homes	Darlington Borough Council	Councillor Angela Fleming
Friends of the Earth	Mrs Powles	Tees Valley JSU	Councillor Martin Jones
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Ms Angela Turner	Councillor Andrew Smith	Councillor George Scott
The Wildlife Trusts	John Lavender – Plan Arch Design	Councillor W.M. Blenkinsopp	Councillor John Smith
Fire & Rescue Services	Rob Smith – Peacock and Smith	Councillor Malcolm Iveson	Councillor Enid Paylor
The Forestry Commission	John Potts Ltd	Councillor John Piggott	Councillor Keith Henderson
Freight Transport Association	John Calvert – Inventures	Councillor John Burton	Councillor John Robinson
Gypsy Council	David Rixson – Vincent and Gorbng	Councillor Andrew Gray	Councillor Mrs Joan Gray
Health and Safety Executive	M M Dawson	Councillor George Morgan	Councillor Terence Ward
Help the Aged	David Salkeld – Camtec Properties Ltd	Councillor Robert Stuart Fleming	Councillor William Waters
Housing Corporation	Tony Scorer – EDF Energy	Councillor Thomas Frank Forrest	Councillor J.G. Huntingdon
Learning & Skills Council	Dan Grierson – TNEI Services Ltd	Councillor Mrs Barbara Graham	Councillor Mrs Ina Jackson Smith
Local Agenda 21	Ted Jackson – Tilly Bailey & Irvine Solicitors	Councillor George Coulson Gray	Councillor Mrs Lorraine Smith
Civic Societies	Ian Lyle – England & Lyle	Councillor Alan Hodgson	Mr Phil Horan – TechniCAD Services
National Playing Fields Association	Mrs J Montgomery – Brimble, Lea & Partners	Councillor Mrs Lucy Howvels	Alan Etherington

Network Rail	D J Halstead – The Planning Inspectorate	Councillor John Patrick Moran	Dr H J Stafford
Passenger Transport Authorities	Julie Hesmondhalgh – Blackett, Hart & Pratt Solicitors	Councillor Kester Noble	C. A Gray – Stonegrave Aggregates Ltd
Police Architectural Liaison Officers	Ranger Transport Services	Councillor Mrs Christine Potts	Andrew Hutton – Smiths Gore
Rail Freight Group	Chris Outtersides – GVA Grimley	Councillor Brian Meek	A. Mawston
Road Haulage Association	Mr A Moss – Ward Hadaway Solicitors	Councillor James Eric Higgin	Adrian Morgan Hopper
Sport England	Richard Hardy – Compassion in World Farming	Councillor John Khan	Karen Read – Robert Muckle Solicitors
The House Builders Federation	Laura Rheiter – RTPi	Commission for Racial Equality North of England	Malcolm Havercroft – Ordnance Survey
Traveller Law Reform Coalition	Peter Cumming – Carlton Land & Estates	Disability Alliance	Mrs V Horner – Heighington Parish Council
Women's National Commissions	Graeme Blenkinsopp – Wisemove Estate Agents	Business in the Community	Judi Scholey – Development Planning Partnership
One North East	Peter Nicol	CAVOS	Mrs E Sowerby
North East Assembly	Mr John Allison	CEN - Community Empowerment Network	Sgt Bob Porter – Ethnic Liaison Group
Regional Sports Board	R. A Beckwith Moore – Trimdon Estates Ltd	Sedgefield Primary Care Trust	Mr Sampson
Durham Constabulary (South Area)	Chris Harrison – Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners	Voluntary Organisations' Network North East	David Kerford – Section 55
Sedgefield NHS Primary Care Trust	Georgian Group	Durham Architectural & Archaeological Society	Dave Anderson – Hall Construction Services Ltd
Durham County Council	Victorian Society	Ancient Monuments Society	Mobile Operators Association
Durham County Council	Twentieth Century Society	Council for British Archaeology	English Nature
Sedgefield Borough Business Service	Garden History Society	Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	Countryside Agency
Durham County Council	British Gas	Northumbrian Water	The National Trust
Government Office for the North East	Transco	English Heritage	

Appendix 2 – Comments Received and Officer Response

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
DSC10001/01S	Valerie Adams	Darlington Borough Council	General	-	Document is generally comprehensive, clear and easy to read.		Comment noted.	No change
DSC10001/02	Valerie Adams	Darlington Borough Council	4	4.3	"medium and large scale" means in terms of industrial & commercial development, and residential development It would be useful if there is some commitment to consult adjacent parish councils where new policies are proposed that could affect land adjacent to these parishes.		Agree.	Definitions provided in revised draft based on the North East Assembly's classification of major development.
DSC10001/03	Valerie Adams	Darlington Borough Council	General	-	It would be useful if there is some commitment to consult adjacent parish councils where new policies are proposed that could affect land adjacent to these parishes.		Agree.	Neighbouring Town and Parish Councils will be consulted on proposals occurring within Sedgfield Borough but close to their administrative area.
DSC10002/01S	Terry Holden	Sedgfield Borough Council	2	2.6(i)	Internal consultation with officers from other sections.		Noted.	Add to key group.
DSC10003/01	Rodger Lowe	Sedgfield Borough Council	3	3.6.2	Should read "works to trees covered by a TPO and works to trees within a Conservation Area"		Noted.	Changes made to text as requested.
DSC10003/02	Rodger Lowe	Sedgfield Borough Council	3.7	3.7.1	Should read "Under the Town and Country Planning (Trees) Regulations 1999 the LPA must determine notices regarding works... If the notice is not determined...required to keep a public register of notices. The notice details may be posted in a	public place close to the proposed work site...placing a provisional TPO on the tree(s). Insert additional text. Written replies are provided to all to representations, with an invitation to speak on the matter for up to 5 mins at DC Committee.	Noted.	Make changes to relevant paragraphs as requested.
DSC10003/03	Rodger Lowe	Sedgfield Borough Council	3.7	3.7.2	New paragraph should read "Under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 6 weeks notice must be given to the LPA if a landowner wishes to remove native hedgerows. The Parish Council must be consulted about the proposal and their representations taken into account.	The LPA may serve a Hedgerow Retention Notice if the hedgerow is judged to be 'important', as defined by the Regulations.	Noted.	Insert additional paragraph as requested.
DSC10004/01	Dr H J Stafford		General	-	Seek deletion of Green Wedge designation around property		Comments not relevant to SCI. Will look at issue when bringing forward other LDDs.	No change

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
DSC10005/01		Equal Opportunities Commission	General	-	Do not wish to be consulted again on any document produced for the LDF.		Noted.	Address has been deleted from consultation database.
DSC10006/01S	Sam Kipling	Environment Agency	General	-	Documents addresses of the issues of importance in the Borough. The document is clear and easy to understand.		Comments noted.	No change
DSC10006/02S	Sam Kipling	Environment Agency	General	-	There should be some mention of Strategic Environmental Assessment, as well as Sustainability Appraisal.		Agree	Amend text in paragraph 1.6.1 to address Strategic Environmental Assessment
DSC10007/01S	Jill Stephenson	Network Rail	General	-	No comments to make at this stage but wish to be fully consulted on future documents		Comment noted.	No change
DSC10008/01S	Vince Crosby	Sedgefield Borough Council	-	-			No specific comments made in their support of document.	No change
DSC10009/01	Paul Belmont	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	2.3	2.3.2	It may be worth considering including a representative from the Sedgefield Business Forum or the LSP Economy Policy EP on the Advisory Panel in order to achieve private sector representation.		Agree.	The issue of an Advisory Panel will be discussed with the Cabinet. The outcome of this discussion will need to be agreed with the Council to take issue forward. Propose no change but keep situation under review.
DSC10009/02	Paul Belmont	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	2.7	2.7.4	The Economic Development Section produce a quarterly 'Business in Focus' magazine which could be used to disseminate industrial/business developments and consultations.		Comments noted.	'Business in Focus' added as a possible consultation method to disseminate information.
DSC10009/03	Paul Belmont	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	Appendix 2	Businesses	Appendix 2 - under the 'business' section, it may be worth considering Business in Focus magazine as a method of dissemination and Sedgefield Business Forum steering group and the Economy Group at the LSP as 'business community' consultees.		Agree.	Add these methods as a process to involve businesses in the Borough. WHERE?
DSC10010/01	Graham Ramsden	British Waterways	-	-	Do not wish to be consulted again on any document produced for the LDF.		Noted.	Address has been deleted from consultation database.
DSC10011/01	Raymond Cole	National Playing Fields	-	-	The NPFA would like to be involved in the preparation of Local Development Documents (i.e. the	NPFA will circulate a set of model policies which will provide the essence of the	Comments noted.	No change

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
DSC10012/01	Julie Thorne	12 Eidon Close	-	-	core strategy and generic development control policies).	NPPA's representation at the 'preferred options' stage. At the 'submission' stage the NPFA will check the document.	Comments not relevant to SCI. Will look at issue when bringing forward other LDDs. Comments forwarded to Development Control for their formal response.	No change
DSC10013/01S	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	General	-	English Heritage fully endorses the need for a full understanding of the constraints and assets, and their vulnerability to change, as a means of arriving at soundly based planning decisions.	The involvement of the local community is crucial to this process.	Agree.	No change
DSC10013/02	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	3.0	3.0.1	The time permitted for a response from statutory consultees is set at 21 days from the date of notification. The English Heritage Charter, however, states that it should be 21 days from the date of receipt.		Regulations state that it is 21 days from the date of notification, but in addition to this, suggestion will present procedural difficulties at the LPA will not be able to definitively say when a letter was received without contacting each consultee.	No Change
DSC10013/03	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	3.1	3.1.2	Press notices are also required for other types of application - departures from the development plan, proposals affecting the setting of a listed building or the character or appearance of a conservation area, affecting a public right of way	or where the application is accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment. Circular 15/92 applies.	Agree	Text in revised document amended to highlight that these other types of applications also require a press notice.
DSC10013/04	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	3.2	3.2.3	Where changes to planning applications are 'significant', the authority should give serious consideration to insisting on a fresh application, rather than dealing with them as amendments.		Nothing stated in the Regulations to enable LPA to insist that this is the case, however it is the action that we would encourage the applicant to take as part of the negotiations.	No Change
DSC10013/05	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	3.4	3.4.1	Rather than having to request a copy of the decision notice each time a response is made to a consultation, an assumption should be made that one is required and a		Not all Statutory Consultees do require a decision notice. Development Control Section therefore requests that Statutory Consultees	No Change.

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
					copy sent automatically.		who do, attach a closing paragraph to their submission letter to LPA confirming that to be the case.	
DSC10013/06	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	3.6	3.6.2	Reference should be to 'Conservation Area Consent'		Make change.	Amend 7th bullet point to say "Listed Building and Conservation Area Consent"
DSC10013/07	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	Appendix 1	-	It is important to include in the list of consultees the Amenity Bodies outlined in PPG15 (Planning and the Historic Environment) as they have both a statutory and non-statutory role to play.		Contact Details for Amenity Bodies added to our Database and they will be consulted on LDF preparation and Applications where appropriate. Specific names not listed in Appendix 1 as if organisations merge or disband document will need to change often.	No Change
DSC10013/08	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	Appendix 3	-	The Dev Control Charter deals with the question of amendments to planning applications. The charter should make it clear that obviously poor schemes will be refused where amendments would be so significant as to amount to a totally different proposal.		Provided that members of the affected community are aware that a scheme has been significantly changed, this is not considered to be a problem. This is why we re-consult.	No Change
DSC10013/09	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	General	-	It is vital to include key partners in pre-application discussions, especially where they may have a statutory role later in the process.	EH are anxious to carry out more of this work to ensure that any difficulties or constraints can be identified at the earliest possible opportunity and solutions explored.	Noted. Where relevant, potential developers will be given contact details by the Planning Officer when identifying who to consult at pre-application stage.	No change
DSC10013/10	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	General	-	The Council should make it clear that it will not process an application until all relevant information and details are received from the applicant. At present EH are forwarded wholly incomplete details on which they are required to comment.		Agree with Ethos, however comments relate to a different protocol, as not specifically concerned with community involvement in planning. Development Control endeavours to ensure Statutory Consultees are not asked to comment without sufficient details.	

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
DSCi0013/11	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	General	-	EH supports the move to e-government, but would welcome large documents, especially those with tables and plans, to be sent as hard copy. Such documents can be difficult to navigate electronically and printing can be wasteful.		Agree that printing can be wasteful and it is for that reason that SBC supports the move to e-government and greater efficiency. Comments seem to be contradictory as still want hard copies but want printing costs to be borne by the LPA.	No Change.
DSCi0013/12	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	General	-	The Council should prepare development briefs or design statements for sites which are expected to come forward through the planning process.		Agree. It is anticipated that when the Major Allocations DPD is adopted in 2008, development briefs will be prepared for each individual site contained in the document.	No change
DSCi0013/13	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	General	-	The Council does not have a list of buildings of local importance. The value of producing one cannot be overstated. Such an exercise can foster much in the way of community engagement in environmental matters.	Should the Council decide to undertake this work the method of public involvement should be set out in the SCI.	The Council is considering whether to produce such a document. Any consultation on the production of this document will be led by the SCI.	No Change
DSCi0013/14	Alan Hunter	English Heritage	General	-	In order to satisfy the new Best Value Performance Indicators there is a Council requirement to prepare/review conservation area character appraisals.	It is important that the SCI includes the necessary public consultation process to ensure that the statements and management plans fully engage local communities.	Conservation Area Appraisals will be SPDs, and will involve the community as per consultation methods set out in Appendix 2.	No change
DSCi0014/01	John Hedley	Architecture Liaison Officer	3 & 4	3.0.1 & 4.1.1	Supports principles of PPS1 and considers it important that the Police Architectural Liaison Officer is consulted at the earliest stage of development to enable his expertise to be incorporated within the design.	This will also ensure that the design meets with the requirements of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act 1998. Subsequent need to be upgraded from 'other consultees' to a higher level of consultation.	Council as LPA does not have delegated powers to change the status of a consultee. However PALO is present at the Council's One Stop Shop and subsequently is 'consulted' on every planning application, albeit not as a statutory consultee.	No Change.
DSCi0015/01	Marie Higgins	Sport England	General	-	Ideally the draft SCI would detail Sport England's entire role within the Planning System, but pragmatically it is recognised that the document	in both the Development Plan preparation and on planning applications.	Whilst supportive of Sport England's involvement in the planning process, it would be difficult to go to the level	No change

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DSC10015/02S	Marie Higgins	Sport England	General	-	needs to be kept at a manageable length. Compromise to use SE as an example of a Statutory Consultee involved The draft SCI is basically sound in that it identifies Sport England in Appendix 1 as an 'Other Consultee' in the preparation of local development documents.		of detail requested by Sport England for all consultees without the document becoming exceptionally long and unwieldy. Noted.	No change
DSC10015/03	Marie Higgins	Sport England	General	-	SE provided a supplementary sheet outlining their role in the planning system and the occasions and criteria for when they should be consulted.		Supplementary sheet will provide a useful resource to both Forward Planning and Development Control as it provides in depth details of the proposals and documents Sport England would like to be involved in.	No change but photocopy document for Development Control and Forward Planning use.
DSC10016/01	Sylvia Dodsworth	SBC	Appendix 5	2 & 9	Reference to Director of Planning and Technical Services need to be amended.		Agree.	Change to Director of Neighbourhood Services
DSC10016/02	Sylvia Dodsworth	SBC	General	-	The Tenant Participation Section currently works with 18 Resident Groups across the Borough as well as the Tenants Housing Services Group and Sedgfield Residents Association. Contact details available for community consultation.		Noted. The contact details of the 18 Resident Groups, Tenants Housing Services Group and Sedgfield Residents Association will be added to consultation database held by the Forward Planning Team, and contacted on proposal affecting them.	No change
DSC10017/01	Phil Ball	SBC	2	2.2.1	The information regarding the availability of other formats of the SCI should be featured on the front page of the document rather than only in section 2.2.1.		Agree that information regarding the availability of the SCI should feature on the front page, however still appropriate for paragraph in Section 2 to remain as this clarifies the availability of Local Development Documents during production of Local Development Framework.	Revised document amended accordingly.
DSC10017/02	Phil Ball	SBC	General	-	Can formal representations on the SCI be made in other formats apart from writing?		We request that comments be made in writing because if detailed comments are	No change

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DSC10018/01	Graham Darby	SBC	General	-	A Plain English version of the document would be useful.		made in other formats they are open to officer interpretation and possibly result in a person's comments being misrepresented. Written representations reduce this margin of error	Seek to produce Plain English summary version of the SCI once it has been formally adopted.
DSC10019/01	Mr. L Oliver	Trimdon Parish Council	General	-	The Parish Council considers its preferred method of consultation to be for a public meeting to be held in each of the villages (Trimdon Village, Trimdon Colliery, Trimdon Grange) followed by a further meeting with the Parish Council.		Comments noted. SBC has limited staff resources. Will need to assess how to make the most effective use of these resources when undertaking consultation with the community	No change
DSC10020/01	John Parkinson	Mordon Parish Council	General	-	The submission of Planning Applications seems to work well. However, retrospective applications and their final resolutions do not seem to get the critical attention they require.		This is a specific planning issue and not primarily about public involvement in planning.	No change
DSC10020/02	John Parkinson	Mordon Parish Council	General	-	Renewable Energy does not cause a great deal of concern to ourselves, but the removal of the test tower at Grindon seems to indicate wind power will not be coming here.	The broader issue of Nuclear Power Generation as the only really viable option for the future is not one to be discussed here.	This is a specific planning issue and not primarily about public involvement in planning.	No change
DSC10020/03	John Parkinson	Mordon Parish Council	General	-	Transport and Accessibility is a major concern in rural areas and one that Sedgefield Borough has not addressed for us and is of major concern to the aging population.		This is a specific planning issue and not primarily about public involvement in planning.	No change
DSC10020/04	John Parkinson	Mordon Parish Council	General	-	Residential Extensions appears to work quite well, although the appeal process is pathetic with no body to talk to in the event of queries. Planning guidelines need to be much more readily accessible to the general public.		This is a specific planning issue and not primarily about public involvement in planning.	No change
DSC10020/05	John Parkinson	Mordon Parish Council	General	-	Landscape Character is a very subjective field, and can cause many problems if not handled	Safeguarding Railway Lines is a very pertinent subject with regard to the	This is a specific planning issue and not primarily about public involvement in	No change

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					sensitively. For instance the recent behaviour of the Environment Agency regarding the flooding of Mordon Carrs is a case in point.	above.	planning.	
DSCi0020/06	John Parkinson	Mordon Parish Council	General	-	Car Parking is a thorny issue as we have a registered village green on which no car parking is (technically) allowed. However there are some locations where the car must be left outside the premises.		This is a specific planning issue and not primarily about public involvement in planning.	No change
DSCi0020/07	John Parkinson	Mordon Parish Council	General	-	In the village of Bradbury car parking is causing major problems as people are leaving cars on the road during the day, which results in dangerous overtaking. We have tried for years to get a 30 MPH limit in our village. Please see what you can do.		This is a specific planning issue and not primarily about public involvement in planning.	No change
DSCi0020/08	John Parkinson	Mordon Parish Council	General	-	Enforcement of planning rules has caused us problems in the past. It is vital that you as the authority enforce the rules you have implemented and do not just hope the problem will go away.		This is a specific planning issue and not primarily about public involvement in planning.	No change
DSCi0021/01S	David Rixson	Vincent and Gorbng	General	-	Our Company's details should remain on your consultation list for all relevant stages of Local Development Framework.		Noted.	No change
DSCi0022/01	Andrew Quain	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	2	2.2.1	Information or a link could be placed on the SBBS website.		Agree.	Request change to SBBS website.
DSCi0022/02	Andrew Quain	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	2	2.3.2	Include representatives of the Sedgefield Business Forum; LSP Economy Policy Group; Town Centre Forums and Chambers of Trade.		Advisory Panel needs to be manageable. Would be inappropriate to over-balance members of group to promote economic interests over social and environmental.	The issue of an Advisory Panel will be discussed with the Cabinet. The outcome of this discussion will need to be agreed with the Council to take issue forward. Propose no change but keep situation under review.
DSCi0022/03	Andrew Quain	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	2	2.7.4	Information could be circulated via Business in Focus; placed on the SBBS website; via the Sedgefield Business Forum and LSP Economy Policy Group.		Agree.	Document amended accordingly. Need to liaise with Economic Development to ensure that this mechanism of consultation is fully explored.

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DSCi0022/04	Andrew Quain	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	2	2.7.11	Include links to the SBBS website.		Agree.	Document amended accordingly.
DSCi0022/05	Andrew Quain	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	2	2.7.15	Include Sedgefield and LSP Economy Policy Group. Could also include the Town Centre Forums and Chambers of Trade.		The existing networks listed in this paragraph are only examples and not intended to provide an exhaustive definitive list. However, will add these additional groups to emphasise additional forums which can be tapped in to for greater involvement.	Amend document accordingly.
DSCi0022/06	Andrew Quain	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	3	3.2.1	Could also refer to other SBC Service Areas i.e. Economic Development.		Agree that other SBC departments are important consultees to aid in determination of applications. However, this is an internal issue and does not require any changes.	No change
DSCi0022/07	Andrew Quain	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	4	4.3.1	Would it be appropriate to include a reference to Section 106 Agreements? It provides an opportunity for SBC to work with developers on sustainability issues i.e. transport; car parking; materials used in building construction etc.	It can also be used to improve the quality of landscaping; employment of local residents etc.	Agree. It is the Borough's intention to ensure that the community is consulted on all s106 expenditure. The Authority will shortly be appointing consultants to undertake an Open Space Needs Assessment of all formal/informal areas of open space throughout the Borough. Part of the remit of this study is likely to require the consultants to utilise suitable consultation methods to enable engagement with the community to identifying current shortfalls/over provision of open space, and also what improvements the community would like to see provided by the spending of \$106 monies.	No Change.
DSCi0022/08	Andrew Quain	Sedgefield Borough Business Service	Appendix 1		Other consultees could include: SBBS; Sedgefield Business Forum; LSP Economy Policy group; County Durham Economic Partnership;		These Organisations are included in Appendix 1 as they fall within the 'General Consultation Bodies' whose	No Change.

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DSCi0022/09	Andrew Quain	Sedgfield Borough Business Service	Appendix 2		County Durham Development Company; Federation of Small Businesses; Chambers of Trade; Town Centre Forums. The Consultation Method Index for both businesses and developers could also include: SBBS website; Business in Focus Newsletter; press releases; Sedgfield Business Forum; LSP Economy Policy Group; Town Centre Forums and Chambers of Trade.		Agree.	Appendix 2 amended to include consultation methods suggested.
DSCi0023/01S	Pat Graham	Teesdale District Council	General	-	We would welcome the strategy and would ask to register as a community consultee with consultation documents sent to the above address.		Support of document noted.	No change
DSCi0024/01S	John Robinson	Sedgfield Arts Regeneration Community Association	General	-			Noted.	Organisation added to 'General Consultation Bodies' listed in Appendix 1, and contact details added to consultation database. Will be notified of all document issued for consultation.
DSCi0025/01	David Salkeld	Camtec Properties (Newton Aycliffe) Ltd	2.7	2.7.7	This description of Masterplanning is very one-dimensional. It seems public sector oriented. The market for land does not operate in this way. Camtec as landowners have appointed their professional team. It comprises recognised planning, landscape,	engineering and other consultants. Camtec is however fully prepared to have community involvement by publicising development options. To this end it has undertaken a community questionnaire of residents near to Woodham Burn.	Masterplanning is given as an example of a community involvement method which could be used. It will not be the most appropriate method for every proposal which requires public involvement.	No change.
DSCi0025/02	David Salkeld	Camtec Properties (Newton Aycliffe) Ltd	2	2.3.2	The appointment of the advisory panel should be made as a result of the issues arising out of Issues Paper #2 published in June 2005. For example, this will establish the flooding of Woodham Burn and its proposed solution as a major issue.	Ward councillors, a member of Great Aycliffe Parish Council, neighbours on Cheltenham Way and the developer could be invited to form a caucus to feed into the SCI.	Comments relate to specific planning issues concerning a particular site in the Borough, and are not primarily about the overall strategy of public involvement in planning.	No change
DSCi0025/03S	David Salkeld	Camtec Properties (Newton Aycliffe) Ltd	4	4.4.1	Camtec supports open house events as a means of engaging with the community. This will stop rumours about developer's intentions and set out the plans for the site. It will also	to reflect community concerns. Camtec proposes to hold an open house event following its questionnaire survey and	Comments noted.	No change

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DSC10025/04S	David Salkeld	Camtec Properties (Newton Aycliffe) Ltd	4	4.3.1	by means of a follow up, indicate the changes made to a scheme to a scheme Camtec believes its proposals for Woodham Burn to be a large-medium scale development with opportunities for community benefit as stated in this section.	before the Development Plan Documents are published in 2006.	Comments relate to specific planning issues concerning a particular site in the Borough, and are not primarily about the overall strategy of public involvement in planning.	No change
DSC10025/05S	David Salkeld	Camtec Properties (Newton Aycliffe) Ltd	4	4.1.1	Camtec has taken on board the need for pre-application discussions (and pre-representation to LDF discussions). It has consulted with the community by its questionnaire at an early stage.		Comments relate to specific planning issues concerning a particular site in the Borough, and are not primarily about the overall strategy of public involvement in planning.	No change
DSC10025/06S	David Salkeld	Camtec Properties (Newton Aycliffe) Ltd	2	2.7.8	Camtec welcomes the planning focus meetings. It has had many officer meetings about the Woodham Burn site which lacked focus from members or from the community. There is however, a danger that the urban capacity study, flood study undertaken by the	Council and Open Space Audit may sieve out sites before members and the community have had them brought to their attention.	Comments relate to specific planning issues concerning a particular site in the Borough, and are not primarily about the overall strategy of public involvement in planning.	No change
DSC10025/07S	David Salkeld	Camtec Properties (Newton Aycliffe) Ltd	2	2.6.1	Camtec welcomes the groups targeted for consultation to include developers/land owners such as themselves who are key stakeholders in the Borough.		Comments noted.	No change
DSC10026/01	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	General	-	The SCI needs to set out a clearer and more positive vision for how the community will be involved in the development of the LDDs, akin to that set out for planning applications. This is too vague in the draft.		Agree	Introduce new paragraph at start of Chapter 2 to address this issue.
DSC10026/02	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	General	-	Unclear whether the document aims to increase community involvement in planning or simply list the channels that will be available. If the former, then could say more on promotion.		Comments noted	Introductory paragraph to Chapter 2 will address issue.
DSC10026/03	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	General	-	The language of the document is very technical and so would be intimidating to its intended audience.		SCI is a technical document. It is suggested that a Plain English summary version of the SCI once it has	Seek to produce Plain English summary version of the SCI once it has

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DSC10026/04	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	Test of Soundness	-	Also there is some repetition, grammatical and spelling errors which should be addressed to promote clarity. Is Crystal Marking an option? Does document set out how SCI links with other community involvement initiatives? No - P.10/2.1 suggests that a separate document will be produced. Is this appropriate? Strategy and Regeneration, as lead on Community Strategy and community engagement.	should be involved in the development of this content, which should be within SCI. Document needs to make clear (front cover) that it is the SCI for Planning and not all Council services. This will avoid confusion with other documents.	Comments noted. However, a separate document will be produced by Planning Services showing how the LDF will provide the spatial interpretation of the Community Strategy.	Amend front cover to clarify role of SCI.
DSC10026/05	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	Test of Soundness	-	Does the SCI identify which local community groups and other bodies need to be consulted? Mostly - provides generic list but does not include bodies specific to Sedgfield Borough by name. This would assist in making the document more meaningful to local	Appendix 1 not divided (as suggested at P7/1.3) into statutory, non-statutory and community consultees.	Government guidance states that whilst Statement's should include a 'long-list' of the types of groups the authority proposes to involve, it should not include specific names as this would change too quickly.	No Change.
DSC10026/06	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	Test of Soundness	-	Does the SCI demonstrate how local people can be involved in a timely and accessible manner? Yes - but quite vague, listing methods and suggesting how they might be used rather than how it will happen in an integrated way.	Flow charts or a worked example might assist in presenting this information in an easily digestible manner.	The Local Development Scheme provides a comprehensive list of the documents that are being prioritised for production. Appendix 2 provides a guide for the methods of consultation that will be used when consulting upon these documents	Clarify issue in new introductory paragraph to Chapter 2.
DSC10026/07S	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	Test of Soundness	-	Does the SCI show that the methods to be used to involve people, community groups and other bodies are suitable for the different stages in the preparation of SBC's Local Development Documents? Yes - in main body and at Appendix 2. Does the SCI show that Sedgfield Borough Council can resource and manage the process effectively? No - provides assurance but not evidence (e.g. indication of extent of	Does the merged row at the top of columns 3/4 in Appendix 2 need to be stretched to cover column 2?	Noted.	Amend Appendix 2 accordingly
DSC10026/08	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	Test of Soundness	-		resourced from the current establishment).	The Local Development Scheme provides this guidance. Each individual consultation exercise will be tailored to ensure effective	Amend text in paragraph 1.8 to address issue.

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DSCi0026/09	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	Test of Soundness	-	consultation to be undertaken, working hours required and whether this can be Does the SCI show how the results of the community involvement are to be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents? Yes - but does not set out how validity of comments will be judged and under what	circumstances they might be acted upon. Need to ensure that all consultations make clear at the outset what can be changed through community involvement. This is particularly important in planning, where there is limited flexibility.	consultation in light of available staff resources. Issue is addressed in paragraph 2.10.1 of the Submission Draft SCI.	No change
DSCi0026/10	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	Test of Soundness	-	Does the SCI set out the mechanism for reviewing procedures? No - sets out timescales but not mechanisms.		Issue is addressed in Local Development Scheme and paragraph 1.9 of the Submission Draft SCI.	No change
DSCi0026/11S	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	Test of Soundness	-	Does the SCI clearly describe the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications? Yes - clear and positive, the strongest element of the draft Statement. Clarify meaning of 'minority group member'.		Noted.	No change
DSCi0026/12	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	2	2.3.2			The requirement and composition will be discussed with Cabinet.	The issue of an Advisory Panel will be discussed with the Cabinet. The outcome of this discussion will need to be agreed with the Council to take issue forward. Propose no change but keep situation under review.
DSCi0026/13	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	2	2.5.1	Clarify how Parish Plans will be taken into account (where they exist).		Will need to liaise with Council on the production of such documents. Parish Plans will have to be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal, should the Town/Parish Council wish to see the document viewed as SPD.	Parish Plans would need to be identified in Local Development Scheme, not SCI. No change.
DSCi0026/14	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	2	2.7.11	Ensure e-consultations undertaken in line with developing corporate		Comments noted. Need to ensure that SCI is	No change

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DSC10026/15	Paul Stephens	SBC - Regeneration	2	2.7.15	approach and also make use of recently purchased e-survey software. LSP Panels/Community Forums - does this mean LSP Policy Groups and Area Forums?		undertaken within corporate approach Yes. Change text in paragraph	Amend paragraph 2.7.15
DSC10027/01	Karin Johnson	Sustainable Communities Team, SBC	1	1.7	The consultation methods to be used at each stage of the LDF are quite extensive when considered against the limited resources that may be available to the Forward Planning Team. Will Action Plans be drawn up in advance in order to identify each method of	consultation; associated timescales; lead officers responsible and other officers involved in delivering the consultation methods? Such actions plans would help to identify early on; the need for the involvement of other officers; where extra resources....	Comments noted. SBC has limited staff resources. Will need to assess how to make the most effective use of these resources when undertaking consultation with the community	No change
DSC10027/01cont	Karin Johnson	Sustainable Communities Team, SBC	1	1.7	..are required and/or where timescales need to be adjusted so as to ensure that as many of the appropriate consultation methods stated are planned for and applied in a timely and effective manner. If action planning is to take place, it should be	expressed in the SCI to satisfy the test of soundness. Such action planning would help to secure assistance from other staff within NS's and across the Council by allowing Managers to be informed in advance and staff work programmes to be altered.	Comments noted. SBC has limited staff resources. Will need to assess how to make the most effective use of these resources when undertaking consultation with the community	No change
DSC10027/02	Karin Johnson	Sustainable Communities Team, SBC	2	2.7.15	The soon to be established 'Environment Hub' is a key group within the LSP network that Planning Officers may wish to engage in.		Comments noted. Once group is established, Planning Officers will attend meetings to extend knowledge of LDF preparation.	No change
DSC10027/03	Karin Johnson	Sustainable Communities Team, SBC	Appendix 1	-	Sustainable Communities Team can provide details of further local environmental groups. Local Agenda 21 should be replaced with Sustainable Communities Team as LA21 strategy is obsolete as was subsumed into Community Strategy in accordance with the Local	Government Act 2000.	Noted. The contact details of the further local environmental groups will be added to consultation database held by the Forward Planning Team, and contacted on proposal affecting them. Changes made to revised draft to acknowledge obsolete role of LA21.	

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DSC10027/04	Karin Johnson	Sustainable Communities Team, SBC	General	-	The document should be printed on minimum 75% Post Consumer Waste and TCF/NAPM approved recycled paper. This should be clearly stated on the back cover.		Comments noted. Feasibility of this will be discussed with printers responsible for producing revised document to establish whether use of this paper will have an impact on the publishing costs.	No change
DSC10027/05	Karin Johnson	Sustainable Communities Team, SBC	General	-	Typographical errors throughout the document have been highlighted to the Forward Planning Team.		Comments noted.	Changes made to revised document.
DSC10028/01	Ken Pritchard	Bishop Middleham Parish Council	General	-	In producing the LDF, the issues affecting Bishop Middleham will attract interest from the Parish Council. It is hoped therefore, that in the spirit of true consultation, valid points offered for serious consideration will be accommodated. In cases where	the Borough Council is unable to accept a parish point of view, a written explanation should be supplied detailing why it has not been possible to incorporate a parish perspective in the final version of the LDF. If this arises, is appeal possible?	Comments noted. As explained in paragraph 2.9.1, we will provide a response to all consultation responses. If Parish Council comments are not taken forward, issues could be addressed through the public examination	No change
DSC10028/02	Ken Pritchard	Bishop Middleham Parish Council	Development Control	-	In terms of Dev Cont, the Parish considers it important that correspondence is acknowledged in good time, thus obviating the need to press for a written response. When it is not possible to accommodate objections (or support) for a particular planning	application, it is important that Dev Cont colleagues respond with a written explanation. This would help to relieve some of the tension at parish level should it seem that carefully considered responses to a consultation exercise have been disregarded.	All representations made receive a written response confirming their views have been received. Where a decision taken does not agree with the comments made by a Parish, the Council will explain why in a letter	No change
DSC10029/01	Alan Etherington		General	-	I have noted the comments contained in the draft Statement of Community Involvement. May I inform you that I have agreed a Land Purchase Option with Alexander Developments (North East) Ltd. Formal representation at the submission stage will be made	through their own appointed Planning Consultants on my behalf. As part of the strategy for public consultations I will be happy to be involved and follow the council's formal procedures in these matters.	Comments relate to specific planning issues concerning a particular site in the Borough, and are not primarily about the overall strategy of public involvement in planning.	Agreement to follow the consultation procedures set out in SCI is noted.
DSC10030/01	Ian Radley - Planning Manager	Highways Agency	General	-	The HA would wish to ensure that notwithstanding the need for speed in processing applications, we would need to be consulted on any		Comments noted. Highways Agency will continue to be consulted on any proposals/schemes which	No change

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DSC10030/02	Ian Radley - Planning Manager	Highways Agency	General	-	documentation/proposal which could have direct or indirect implications for the trunk road network. It would be helpful if all representation made could be listed in the actual document concerned, not solely within the Community Involvement and Responses Statement.		will have either a direct or indirect impact on the trunk road network. There are practical problems with this suggestion. If comments are included within a planning document, they can then themselves become the subject of objections. The existing arrangements ensure policy is considered separately from process.	No change
DSC10030/03	Ian Radley - Planning Manager	Highways Agency	General	-	It is not clear whether the Agency will be included in the pre-application discussions for applications benefiting from community involvement. Could a mechanism for involvement be established? As it would be advantageous to reduce lengthy representations	at the application stage.	Noted. Where relevant, potential developers will be given contact details by the Planning Officer when identifying who to consult at pre-application stage.	No change
DSC10030/04	Ian Radley - Planning Manager	Highways Agency	General	-	The Agency would ask for clarification on how representations made by them with regard to any draft LDD or pre-application will be responded to.		All comments received on LDDs and DC issues are acknowledged in writing. Where relevant, the comments are taken into consideration. In relation to DC, comments will be assessed and used in determination process	No change. Issue is addressed in paragraph 2.9.1
DSC10030/05	Ian Radley - Planning Manager	Highways Agency	General	-	The Agency would suggest that the 'pre-application consultation guidelines' be worded more strongly, requesting that it is carried out, and that you provide more specific details on what types of development would benefit from community involvement.	Also clearer advice on how what and where such consultations is carried out, and how the results are recorded. It would also be of assistance if this information could be used as supporting information for the planning application.	Agree. However whilst the SCI encourages pre-application discussions and early community consultation on significant applications, the LA cannot refuse to validate an application because of the failure to consult prior to submission.	No change
DSC10031/01	Gareth Hunter	GO-NE	General	-	The submission SCI should briefly explain the consultation steps undertaken to comply with Regulations 25 and 26.		The Submitted SCI will be accompanied by an additional 'Statement of Pre-Submission Consultation'	Provide wording in the Submitted SCI to address issue.

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
DSC10031/02	Gareth Hunter	GO-NE	General	-	In terms of the document's presentation, I would suggest the following may be useful in the build up to a submission SCI. Page 1, 7 and of the draft point to future timescales for SCI production and the relationship with DPDs. Perhaps greater explanation	of the LDS in identifying key dates and milestones would be helpful.	document explaining the consultation undertaken during the production of the SCI (to comply with the Regulations 28 of the Town & Country Planning Regulations 2004). Comments noted.	Introductory paragraph to Chapter 2 will address issue.
DSC10031/03	Gareth Hunter	GO-NE	General	-	Consider making greater use of diagrams and illustrations within the document where they serve to aid rather than confuse understanding of any process, for example, the SCI diagram within PPS12 (Creating LDFs) albeit with some additional explanation of	the approach taken by Sedgefield. Perhaps also the SCI contents page could be made more navigable by grouping items under generic sub-headings.	Comments noted	Submitted SCI will address issue
DSC10032/01	Andy Coulthard	Regeneration - SBC	General	-	My initial concern is that it is a very difficult read - very wordy, technical in places and with no graphics or photographs to break it up.		Comments noted. Greater care taken with revised document to ensure that use of acronyms is kept to a minimum, and photographs have been inserted to make document more appealing to its intended audience.	Seek to produce Plain English summary version of the SCI once it has been formally adopted.
DSC10032/02	Andy Coulthard	Regeneration - SBC	General	-	From a young persons perspective, it was difficult to grasp the reason for the document. Is it to show the different methods of which the community could be consulted? Is it trying to say this is how we are going to communicate in the future?	Or is it a document for documents sake?	Comments noted.	Revised document contains greater clarification as to the documents intentions.
DSC10032/03	Andy Coulthard	Regeneration - SBC	General	-	There is very little, if any reference made to involving young people and as a very large percentage of the Borough are young people (25%) this should be addressed more. I talked to them about the development of planning within	contexts of planning and they agreed that this would be a positive step and should be mentioned more within this document.	Issue is being specifically addressed through the joint appointment with other districts of a Community Outreach worker.	No change

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
DSCi0032/04	Andy Coulthard	Regeneration - SBC	General	-	schools and the various Looking at the cover I thought it was a corporate document for SBC and not for Planning.		Comments noted.	Revised document clarifies that the SCI is not a corporate document for SBC, but rather a Planning document which sets out the methods and reasoning for public involvement in planning. Provide link to ODPM guide in introduction.
DSCi0032/05	Andy Coulthard	Regeneration - SBC	General	-	What is planning? This would make a good introduction and would help people gauge how important planning is in their every day lives. Is this a national template which you have used? Needs o be made more localised. include examples and references to more local community contacts etc.		Comments noted.	No change.
DSCi0032/06	Andy Coulthard	Regeneration - SBC	General	-	Possible use of flow diagrams could break up the wording. Pictures and graphics tend to explain so much more and make it easier to understand.		Comments noted. Local groups can form/disband quickly. It is important therefore that the SCI is generic in this respect.	Will use graphics to explain process in Submitted SCI
DSCi0032/07	Andy Coulthard	Regeneration - SBC	General	-	Why not develop a summary or even produce a statement of intent.		Comments noted	Seek to produce Plain English summary version of the SCI once it has been formally adopted.
DSCi0032/08	Andy Coulthard	Regeneration - SBC	General	-	Company monitors all development plans in England & Wales on behalf of National Grid Transco. We would prefer to be involved at the outset of establishing a policy that can be used by the authority to guide development. Therefore, we can be of		Agree	No change
DSCi0033/01	Miss Katie Lazzam	Malcolm Judd & Partners	General	-	Regarding access to information on P10, how do you intend to cater for people who require information in different formats (i.e. different languages. Braille, audio, large font etc). It would seem sensible to put a	assistance to you in providing informal comments in confidence during your policy development. We have a wealth of experience in this area and would be able to provide examples of policies used in development plans elsewhere in country.	Comments noted. Will notify as part of other LDD consultation exercises.	
DSCi0034/01	Paul Frank	County Durham & Tees Valley Strategic Health Auth	2.2	2.2.1			Comments noted.	Revised document contains details of the alternative languages the statement is available in.

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
DSCi0035/01	Harry Robinson	Eldon Parish Council	General	-	Eldon Parish Council considers the whole new planning process to be too complex and unlikely to be understood by the majority of the general public.	and large font etc. Other than that, overall the statement appears comprehensive.	Comments noted, although not specifically related to public participation in planning.	Seek to produce Plain English summary version of the SCI once it has been formally adopted.
DSCi0035/02	Harry Robinson	Eldon Parish Council	General	-	EPC appreciates that the new system is being imposed by central government and that Sedgfield Borough Council has no choice but to conform. The draft SCI is reasonable but EPC feels it is unlikely to advance the involvement of 'communities' in the	planning process. More 'negotiation' with 'communities' and less 'consultation' is needed. The latter pays lip service to the concept of 'community' involvement but in the event 'community' views tend to be ignored, especially in delegated decisions.	The Parish Council has raised the issue previously with ODPM. ODPM has clarified that the Borough Council is the appropriate body to decide upon planning issues.	No change
DSCi0035/03	Harry Robinson	Eldon Parish Council	General	-	EPC's interest is mainly with the role Parish Councils will play in the new system and it feels an opportunity has been missed to make Parish Councils 'negotiators' instead of 'consultees'. In this sense the new system is just the same as the old.	As elected representatives of residents at a grassroots level Parish Councilors know their areas more intimately than Borough Councilors or Planning Officials and should have a formal role in the planning system. Otherwise PC has little point.	The Parish Council has raised the issue previously with ODPM. ODPM has clarified that the Borough Council is the appropriate body to decide upon planning issues.	No change
DSCi0035/04	Harry Robinson	Eldon Parish Council	General	-	The failure to properly involve Parishes is especially evident in 'Chapter 3: Community Involvement on Development Control Matters'; 'Appendix 3: SBC Development Control Service Charter'; Appendix 4: SBC Planning Enforcement Charter'; and in	'Appendix 5: SBC - Public Speaking at Development Control Committee'.	The Parish Council has raised the issue previously with ODPM. ODPM has clarified that the Borough Council is the appropriate body to decide upon planning issues.	No change
DSCi0035/05	Harry Robinson	Eldon Parish Council	3	-	The present & proposed 'consultation' approach is probably satisfactory for strategic planning applications which affect the wider SBC or Regional area, and where the committee would decide the	importance and affect residents of only one parish, should give the parish council the opportunity to be involved in that delegated decision	The Parish Council has raised the issue previously with ODPM. ODPM has clarified that the Borough Council is the appropriate body to decide upon	No change

REFERENCE NUMBER	NAME	ORGANISATION	SECTION	PARAGRAPH	COMMENTS	FURTHER COMMENTS	SBC RESPONSE	SBC CHANGES
DSCi0035/06	Harry Robinson	Eldon Parish Council	Appendix 3	-	Parish Councils could be involved as 'negotiators' if and as necessary in just the same way as developers. This involvement could be coordinated with the content of 'Chapter 4: Recommended Community Involvement to be Undertaken by Developers and Agents'.	and take part in negotiations with the applicant and planning officials.	The Parish Council has raised the issue previously with ODPM. ODPM has clarified that the Borough Council is the appropriate body to decide upon planning issues.	No change
DSCi0035/07	Harry Robinson	Eldon Parish Council	Appendix 4	-	EPC considers that this Charter is too vague and open to 'not in the public interest' and 'lack of resources' being used as excuses for inaction, as happens at the moment. EPC also feels that Parish Councils, if and when they wish, could usefully have a	role as 'negotiators' in this area too, being in a better position to judge the deleterious effects on their residents of unauthorised development and developers' failures to abide by planning conditions.	The Parish Council has raised the issue previously with ODPM. ODPM has clarified that the Borough Council is the appropriate body to decide upon planning issues.	No change
DSCi0035/08	Harry Robinson	Eldon Parish Council	Appendix 5	-	Parish Councils in the current system have no more rights than their residents at these committee meetings, unless a Parish Councillor also happens to be a SBC member, and even then that member is hidden by the onerous 'interest' rules. Appendix 5	fails to address this problem and EPC would like to see a Parish Councillor allowed to represent a Parish's views at committee meetings if that Parish so wished, especially on delegated items affecting only that Parish which are referred to committee.	The Parish Council has raised the issue previously with ODPM. ODPM has clarified that the Borough Council is the appropriate body to decide upon planning issues.	No change
DSCi0036/01	Jenny Loring - Conservation Officer	English Nature	4	4.1	English Nature should be consulted at the earliest stage where protected species or designated nature conservation sites might be affected directly or indirectly by a developer.		Comments noted.	No change.

Appendix 3 – Statutory Advertisement in Local Press

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Notice of Deposit of the Draft Statement of Community Involvement

Sedgefield Borough Council has prepared its Draft Statement of Community Involvement. The Draft Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council will engage with the community with respect to planning matters. When this Statement of Community Involvement is adopted, it will form part of the Local Development Framework for the area of Sedgefield Borough Council. The Local Development Framework forms the basis for decisions on land use planning affecting that area.

Copies of the Draft Statement of Community Involvement are available for public inspection, free of charge, from 11 April to 27 May 2005, at:

Sedgefield Borough Council Offices, Spennymoor	On Mondays -	8.30 am - 5.00
	Thursdays	pm
	Fridays	8.30 am - 4.30 pm

The Draft Statement of Community Involvement is also available on the Council's website at www.sedgefield.gov.uk

Objections to, and representations in respect of, the Draft Statement of Community Involvement should be sent in writing to the Forward Planning Team, Neighbourhood Services, Sedgefield Borough Council, Council Offices, Spennymoor, DL16 6JQ before 5.00pm on 27 May 2005. Objections and representations should specify the matters to which they relate and grounds on which they are made.

Further information is available from Forward Planning Team, on telephone 01388 816166 or via the website www.sedgefield.gov.uk

**Dennis Hall
Solicitor to the Council
Council Offices, Spennymoor**

11 April 2005

Appendix 4 - Press Release

Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework: Draft Statement of Community Involvement

The Borough Council is seeking views from its community on its Draft Statement of Community Involvement. This document explains how the Council intends to engage with those who have an interest in planning issues affecting their community.

It is very important for the Council to work in partnership with the community to deliver sustainable development in the right place at the right time. Communities should be able to contribute their ideas to plan making and be involved in development proposals. The Draft Statement of Community Involvement sets out the proposed methods through which the community will be able to contribute to the process.

The Draft Statement of Community Involvement is to be placed on deposit, during the six-week period between 11 April and 23 May 2005 when representations, either objecting to or in support of the Statement, can be made. Any representation made should specify the matters to which they relate and grounds on which they are made.

Should you wish to make any representation, would you please complete a representation form and return it to the Forward Planning Team, Planning and Technical Services, Sedgefield Borough Council, Council Offices, Spennymoor, DL16 6JQ by 5pm on Monday 23 May 2005. Copies of the Draft Statement of Community Involvement and representation forms are available for inspections from the Borough Council Offices, or via the Council's website.

Should you require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact Chris Myers, Neil Culkin or Tom Bennett at the Borough Council.

Sedgefield Borough Council

Local Development Framework:
Submitted Draft Statement of Community
Involvement

September 2005

**THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE A LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT
AND WILL FORM PART OF THE COUNCIL LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
FRAMEWORK**

This document is a revision of a draft Statement of Community Involvement consulted on in April – May 2005. It has been changed to reflect comments we have received.

Sedgefield Borough Council telephone number: **01388 816166**

We can reproduce this document in other formats such as large print, audio tape, CD-ROM or in the following languages:

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 **Lãngüagê Liñè**

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 **Lãngüagê Liñè**

If you would like to make any comments on this submission document, please use one of the following methods:

- Completing the form at the back of this document (Appendix 6) and returning it to:
 - Forward Planning Team
 - Neighbourhood Services
 - Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Council Offices
 - SPENNYMOOR
 - Co. Durham
 - DL16 6JQ; or
- Sending comments by Fax: (01388) 824200; or
- Sending comments via e-mail to: cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all Local Planning Authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The SCI must set out the Local Planning Authority's policy for involving the community in the preparation and revision of all Local Development Documents, and in development control decisions within its local area.

An initial draft of the SCI for Sedgefield Borough Council has already been subjected to a six-week period of public consultation (Spring 2005). This version of the SCI ("the Submission draft") will be subjected to a further period of public consultation prior to independent public examination. During the independent public examination (anticipated Winter 2005) a Government appointed Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate will test the document for soundness as prescribed within "*Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks*". The criteria for testing the soundness of the SCI are set out below. The Inspector will then prepare a report outlining the findings of the examination and make any recommendations for change if these are considered necessary. These recommendations will be binding and the Borough Council will therefore be obliged to amend the SCI in line with the recommendations prior to formally adopting the document.

The Sedgefield Borough Council Submission SCI will be in the public realm for a further six-week period, during which time representations can be made using one of the methods highlighted above. Any person or organisation who has an interest in matters relating to the development of Sedgefield Borough area are welcome to make representations on the submitted SCI. All comments must be received by **15th November 2005** on the response form provided. Unfortunately we will not be able to accept late representations.

It would be helpful if responses from representative groups could give a summary of the people and organisations they represent.

If you require any assistance or would like to discuss any aspects of the production of a Local Development Framework please contact one of the following:

- Chris Myers (cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk)
(Forward Planning Manager)
- Thomas Bennett (tbennett@sedgefield.gov.uk)
(Planning Policy Officer)

Sedgefield Borough Council requests that all those who wish to make representations on the statement of community involvement state:

- Whether the representation is in support of the statement of community involvement or seeking to change it;
- Whether the statement of community involvement fails the test of soundness and if so how;
- If change is sought, exactly what change is required;
- How they would like their representation dealt with.

The criteria the Planning Inspector will apply to test the soundness of the statement of community involvement are as follows:

- Does the SCI show that Sedgefield Borough Council is meeting legal requirements;
- Does the SCI set out Sedgefield Borough Council's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives, e.g. Sedgefield Borough Council's Community Strategy;
- Does the SCI identify which local community groups and other bodies need to be consulted;
- Does the SCI demonstrate how local people, community groups and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
- Does the SCI show that the methods to be used to involve people, community groups and other bodies are suitable for the different stages in the preparation of Sedgefield Borough Council's Local Development Documents;
- Does the SCI show that Sedgefield Borough Council can resource and manage the process effectively¹;
- Does the SCI show how the results of the community involvement are to be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
- Set out the mechanism for reviewing the procedures in the SCI; and
- Does the statement clearly describe the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.

¹ The resource and management arrangements for the SCI can be found in the Local Development Scheme

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL – STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

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FORWARD

One of key objectives of the new Planning system, established through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 is to strengthen communities and the involvement of interested parties in the planning system. Under the new system, the Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which sets out how the Council intends to involve interested parties and the local community in the planning process.

This submission draft SCI has been published to provide the opportunity for interested parties to comment. Before the Borough can formally adopt the SCI, it must proceed through an independent examination. Once the SCI has been adopted, it will set out how the Council will consult with the community on the planning system. The adopted SCI will help to ensure a transparent and open planning process, which enjoys the support of the community and involves local people in planning the future of their communities.

Councillor Kester Noble
Regeneration Portfolio Holder

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why involve the community in Planning

- 1.1.1 The Government is committed to a planning system in England that is flexible and responsive to the interests and demands of today's society. Key to the Government's objective of creating sustainable communities is the need to provide opportunities for local people to actively participate in decisions that affect their local area.
- 1.1.2 To find out about the Planning in the UK, the Government has produced a plain English guide on their ODPM website. A link to this document is provided: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_planning/documents/page/odpm_plan_031449.hcsp
- 1.1.3 Planning Policy Statement 1 highlights that Planning must work as a partnership and engage with the community to deliver sustainable development in the right place at the right time. 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 to ideas about how that vision can be achieved and have the opportunity to participate in the process for drawing up specific plans or policies and to be involved in development proposals.
- 1.1.4 This document details the way in which Sedgefield Borough Council proposes to ensure that the most appropriate methods of public engagement are applied when considering issues relating to its statutory planning functions. This includes the preparation of the Local Development Framework (replacing Local Plan) and the determination of Development Control planning applications.
- 1.1.5 The Sedgefield Borough community is made up of many different interest groups, who are affected by different issues, values or religion. Whilst some of these groups are well represented, many are less equipped to engage with the process. An inclusive group is required to ensure that different groups have the opportunity and are not disadvantaged in the process. Government guidance 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 participate in developing proposals and options, rather than simply commenting when they are fixed;
 - Consultation of formal proposals; and,
 - Feedback.
- 1.1.6 It is not sufficient to provide information only, or 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. Community involvement should occur at a point when the public recognise that they have the potential to make a difference and, crucially, to experience a

sense of ownership of local policy decisions. The Sedgefield Borough Council process for involving the community is clear so that people know when they will be able to participate, and the ground rules for doing so. Community involvement should extend beyond those who are familiar with the planning system so that difficult to reach groups are included in the process. The Government believes the benefits of community involvement in planning are as follows:

- 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, 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.

1.2 Purpose and benefits of statement of community involvement

1.2.1 The Government's planning objectives are intended to produce a planning system, which is more responsive, flexible, pro-active and less time consuming. The new requirements are intended to build on the existing opportunities for community involvement. Sedgefield Borough Council intend to take forward these Government objectives, with the overall aim that people (irrespective of age, sex, ability, ethnicity or background, or disability), business, the voluntary sector and others have the opportunity to make their views known and have their say in how their community is planned and developed.

1.2.2 Government guidance highlights that community involvement in planning should not be a reactive, tick-box, process. It should enable the local community to say what sort of place they want to live in at a stage when this can make a difference. Sedgefield Borough Council believes that this SCI puts in place an accessible system with clear informal and formal approaches to participation, which reaches out to groups that have not, historically, easily engaged with planning. Information about plans and policies affecting the Borough will be made readily available, in a form that is easy to understand and encourages participation. Inclusive community engagement means that both stakeholders and developers acquire a clearer understanding of each other's concerns and intentions. Stakeholders are able to voice their opinions and contribute their views to issues that affect them and at the same time, developers can gain from a broader input. Including interested parties at an early stage can identify problems before they arise and prevent problems caused by misunderstandings.

1.3 Which sectors of the community to involve in Planning

1.3.1 The Borough's SCI is tailored to meet the specific needs and characteristics of the area and engage with representatives of all groups and individuals that are interested in the planning for their area. In particular, the Borough Council promotes race equality and does not discriminate against disabled people who

wish to participate in the planning system. The people and organisations we intend to consult can be divided into three sections:

1.3.1.1 *Statutory consultees*

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

1.3.1.2 *Non-statutory consultees*

This group includes people who represent organisations whose support of or opposition to a development would be significant, or who have particular expertise. Examples include Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) or Friends of the Earth (FoE) and are listed in **Appendix 1**.

1.3.1.3 *Community stakeholders*

This group includes individuals or organisations that are interested because they either live in the community affected by a proposal, or they represent a housing association, club or church group in the area. These include CAVOS (Community and Voluntary Organisations Sedgefield) and CEN (Community Empowerment Network) and again are listed in **Appendix 1**.

1.4 How we intend to consult, communicate and involve these groups in the planning process

1.4.1 The SCI sets out the various methods that the Borough Council will use to enable people to contribute to the planning process, in regard to both Development Control and Forward Planning. These methods will be customised to suit specific circumstances to enable the process to be as productive as possible.

1.5 Summary of the types of Local Development Documents the Council will seek community involvement before their production

1.5.1 The Sedgefield Borough Council Local Development Framework will comprise a range of Local Development Documents consisting of Development Plan Documents (subject to public examination) and Supplementary Planning Documents (not subject to public examination).

The key Development Planning Documents that will be produced include:

- Local Development Scheme – The Local Development Scheme sets out what Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents will form part of the Local Development Framework and also specify their nature and extent;
- Core Strategy – This key document will set out the Council's vision for its area and the primary policies to achieve that vision;
- Major Allocations – Sites proposed for development to meet the Council's vision and core strategy will be identified within this document;
- Proposal Map – The Proposals Map will illustrate policies in the Local Development Documents on an Ordnance Survey base. It will also show factual information such as environmental designations. Inset map will show areas of greater detail; and
- Development Control Policies – These will be contained within a separate development plan document, and will cover matters such as

the protection of the natural and built environment, highway safety and design.

1.5.2 The Supplementary Planning Documents that may be produced include:

- Conservation Areas;
- Residential Extensions;
- Planning Briefs for Major Allocations; and
- Residential Design Guide;

1.5.3 Although Supplementary Planning Documents are not subject to independent examination and will not form part of the statutory development plan, they will be subject to community involvement.

1.5.4 The preparation, examination and review of each Local Development Document need not run concurrently. They should be shorter, simpler, and quicker to adopt and therefore more reactive to changing circumstances than the previous Local Plan. The Council will provide the community with opportunities to get involved in the preparation of these Local Development Documents. In general terms, more community involvement will take place in the preparation of Development Plan Documents than Supplementary Planning Documents.

1.6 Sustainability Appraisal

1.6.1 A Sustainability Appraisal is a mandatory and integral part of the process of preparing a Local Development Framework. All Local Development Documents are to be subject to a sustainability appraisal. Sustainability appraisal is integral to document preparation as a means of assessing their potential social, environmental and economic effects. The sustainability appraisal report will set out the likely significant effects of each draft Local Development Document and, where appropriate, what amendments will be required. The Council's Sustainable Communities Team, which is based within Neighbourhood Services, will be responsible for carrying out the Sustainability Appraisals.

1.7 Strategic Environmental Assessment

1.7.1 Local Planning Authorities must comply with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC which requires a high level, strategic assessment of Local Development Documents and other programmes that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

1.7.2 To ensure that legislative requirements are met, the Forward Planning Team will consult on the scope of the appraisals to be undertaken and publish Sustainability Appraisal reports concurrently with Environmental Reports (as required by the SEA Directive) at both the pre-submission and submission stages of Development Plan Document preparation. This will allow full and appropriate consideration to be given to the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of policies and proposals.

1.7.3 Prior to the publication of Key Issues, Alternative Options and Preferred Option documents, the Forward Planning Team will consult with statutory bodies and

the wider community (as appropriate) to consider the background, content, detail, methodology and monitoring required to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) for each Development Plan Document.

1.7.4 The Forward Planning Team will produce, publish and consult on draft and final Sustainability Appraisal Reports (incorporating the Environmental Reports produced in accordance with the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive) at both the pre-submission and submission stages of Development Plan Document preparation.

1.8 Resources and management of the process

1.8.1 The majority of the work involved in undertaking community involvement will be the responsibility of the Council's Forward Planning Team. Assistance from other staff within Neighbourhood Services and other Council departments may also be required. The results of community involvement and key decisions relating to the Local Development Framework process will be taken by the Council's Cabinet. Each individual consultation exercise will be tailored to ensure effective consultation in light of available staff and financial resources at that time.

1.9 Review of the SCI

1.9.1 The consultation procedures used by the Council detailed in this SCI will be kept under review. Where the procedures prove to be unsuccessful or where revised procedures are needed to meet new circumstances, a formal review of the SCI and re-submission to the Secretary of State will be undertaken. The Council will actively monitor the success of community involvement techniques by assessing:

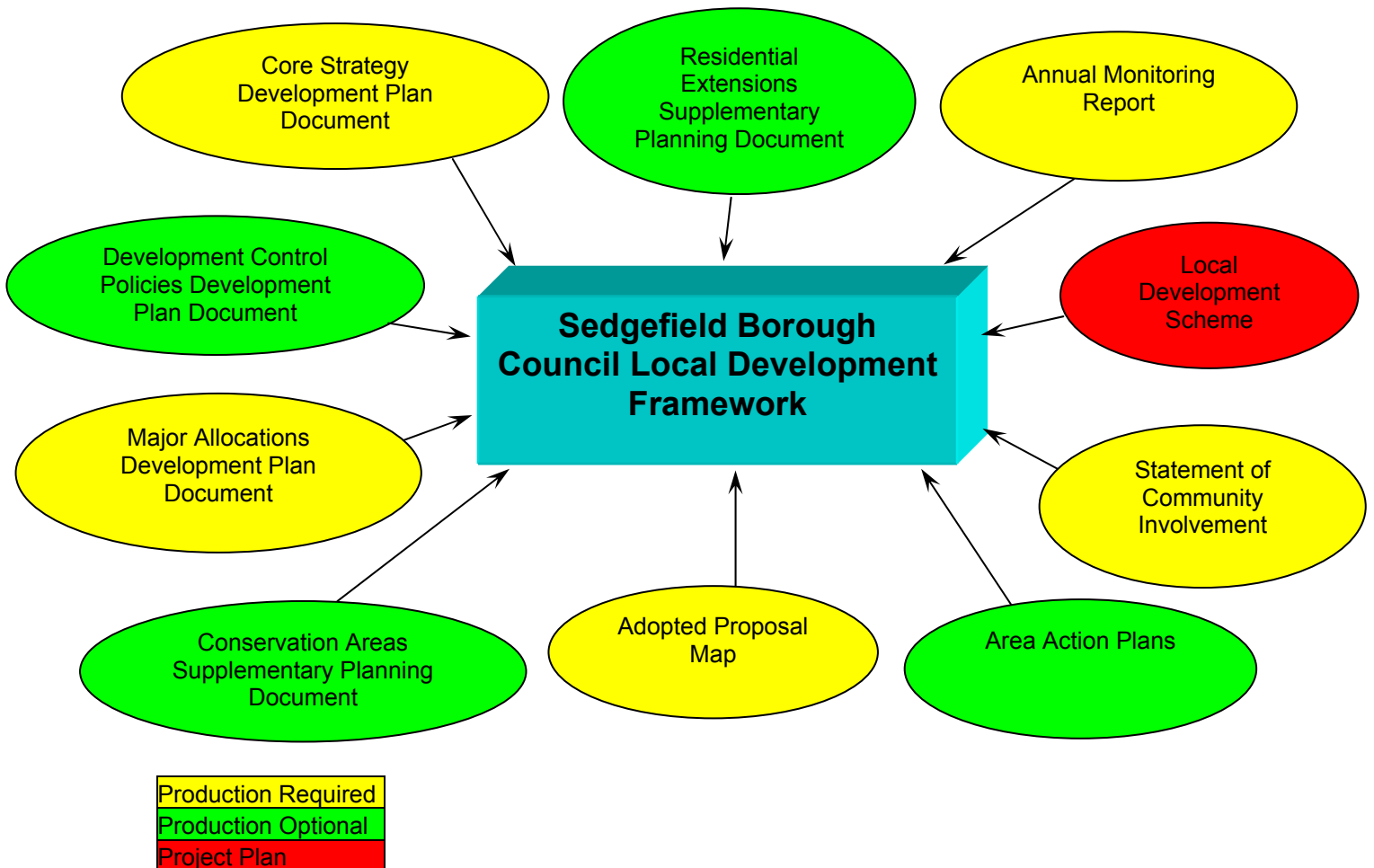
- How successfully the community and other stakeholders are able to find and comment on information regarding the Local Development Framework documents;
- The level of involvement of 'hard to reach' groups; and
- Respondents' satisfaction with the Council's overall consultation standards.

1.9.2 The Council has to produce an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) as part of the Local Development Framework process and this will include information on what stage documents have reached in their preparation. Furthermore, we intend to formally review the SCI every three years to correspond with the beginning of the early community engagement stage for the next round of Local Development Documents.

CHAPTER 2: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT DURING PRODUCTION OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

2.1 Forward Planning Team

2.1.1 The Planning Service provides a strategic vision for the co-ordination of land use with the principles of sustainable development embedded throughout. The Forward Planning Team is responsible for producing the portfolio of documents that will comprise the Local Development Framework (see illustration below). The documents that will comprise the Local Development Framework will provide policies to guide where and when development takes place in the Borough, set out how the Borough will engage with its Community in bringing forward these documents and establish monitoring arrangements to review the effectiveness of the policies produced. The timetable for the development of the Local Development Framework is set out in the Local Development Scheme, which provides the works programme for the next three years. This Local Development Scheme can viewed on our website at www.sedgefield.gov.uk. The Forward Planning Team also is responsible for design, conservation and landscape planning matters.



2.1.2 Sedgefield Borough Council as Local Planning Authority want to improve the way we involve different sectors of the community in making planning policy, and want to encourage more people to get involved. This section details who

we consider to be the appropriate target audience for community involvement, and the consultation methods which the Forward Planning Team proposes to use to ensure that the appropriate level of public engagement takes place and aids the production of the Local Development Framework. We are committed to identifying new methods of involving the community more effectively in the planning system at a local level and seek to ensure that all people with an interest in planning understand how they can contribute to and affect the outcomes of developing the Borough.

2.2 How Statement of Community Involvement links with the Community Strategy

2.2.1 The Community Strategy for Sedgefield was adopted and formally published by the Local Strategic Partnership in July 2004. A separate document identifying the links between the community strategy and the Local Development Framework will be produced.

2.3 Access to Information

2.3.1 Information relating to the drafting of the Local Development Documents will be available to the community through a number of methods:

- Information will be made available in both paper and electronic formats via email and both the Sedgefield Borough Council and Sedgefield Borough Business Services website;
- Copies of all documents will be made available to view at Council buildings;
- Upon request, the information will be available in Braille, large print or translated into another language;
- The Forward Planning Team will offer advice and assistance over the telephone; and
- The local community can request at a reasonable cost that information be sent to them by post.

2.4 Advisory Panel

2.4.1 The Local Development Framework forms part of the Borough Council's Policy Framework and it is important that the Local Development Framework preparation process is lead by the Council's Cabinet. However, it is equally important that all Council Members as well as other stakeholder partners have an opportunity to influence the Local Development Framework. Such engagement is also a prerequisite of Government to ensure that the Local Development Framework reflects local community aspirations and needs.

2.4.2 To help with this process, an Advisory Panel will guide the preparation of the Local Development Framework, whom will in turn advise Cabinet in the development of the Local Development Framework. It has been agreed that this Panel will comprise of:

- the Regeneration Portfolio Holder;
- the Chair of Development Control Committee;
- a minority group Member;
- the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3;
- two representatives nominated on behalf of all the Borough's Town and Parish Councils; and,

- three representatives from the Local Strategic Partnership's Community Empowerment Network (CEN).

2.5 Councillor Involvement

2.5.1 To keep all Council Members informed of about the preparation of the Local Development Framework, a progress report will be taken on a regular basis to the Development Control Committee.

2.6 Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings

2.6.1 Town and Parish Councils and Parish Meetings will be kept fully informed of progress throughout the review process and made aware of opportunities for their input and arrangements for local public participation. Planning Officers will engage with these groups on a regular basis to discuss emerging planning issues and seek their views as to how they would like them to be addressed in the Local Development Framework.

2.6.2 It is also important that there is commitment to consulting adjacent Town/Parish Councils where development or new policies are proposed that are likely to affect land at or near Sedgefield's Borough boundary.

2.7 Target Groups

2.7.1 Sedgefield Borough Council understands that a wide variety of groups should be targeted for consultation. The key groups are listed below:

- General public – Hard to reach groups
- Councillors
- Town/Parish Councils (including those bordering the Borough boundary and located within the administrative area of a different Council)
- Ward members
- Businesses
- Developers / Agents / Landowners
- Central, regional and local government
- Statutory bodies and groups
- Interested parties (for example, CPRE, RSPB)
- The Media
- Local Community Groups / Organisations (for example, CAVOS, CEN)
- Interest Groups (Residents Associations)
- Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities
- Internal consultation with Officers from other sections

2.8 Consultation methods Sedgefield Borough Council could use during each stage of the production of the Local Development Documents to engage the Target Groups

2.8.1 *Draft documents*

All draft Local Development Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents will be available for inspection at Sedgefield Borough Council buildings and Local Libraries during the set consultation period. The document will provide details of how and when people can make representations.

2.8.2 *Letters to statutory bodies*

Sedgefield Borough Council will identify and maintain a database of all statutory consultees who will be consulted in writing when key documents are released in draft form.

2.8.3 *Briefing workshops*

Briefing workshops are simple, easy to organise working sessions held to establish a project agenda or brief. 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.

Briefing workshops are useful at the start of a project or action planning event and can act as a public launch. Potential users of the project will be invited to attend a workshop to discuss either a range of subjects or just a single issue. Similar workshops may be helpful on different topics (for example housing, jobs or areas of open spaces).

These will be held in accessible locations and may need to be held over a number of days and varying times to ensure all sections of the community have an opportunity to attend.

2.8.4 *Newspaper Supplement – Inform Magazine/Paper/‘Business in Focus’ Magazine*

Newspaper supplements are one of the most effective ways of spreading planning and development ideas to large numbers of people and generating public debate. They are particularly useful for presenting proposals from action planning events. The Borough Council’s free publication ‘Inform’ that is sent to every household in the Borough, and the ‘Business in Focus’ magazine will be used to disseminate information about the Local Development Framework process, emerging issues and consultation events.

2.8.5 *Planning for Real*

“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 engage in. A large 3 dimensional model of a neighbourhood is constructed, preferably by local people, using cardboard cut outs for buildings pasted onto a base plan fixed to polystyrene or cardboard. This could be used specifically to address areas where major change is proposed (for example, housing renewal areas). It may be appropriate for the Council to attend special events organised by the community with the aid of external facilitators with expertise in the “Planning for Real” field. The use of an external facilitator will increase the credibility of the conclusions of a “Planning for Real” exercise.

2.8.6 *Review Session*

Review sessions are a useful way of monitoring progress and maintaining momentum. They can be held weeks, months, or even years after an action

planning event or other community planning initiative. All those involved in previous activity are invited back to a session, lasting up to one day. Invitations can also be sent to those who may wish to become involved in the future. A programme is designed to review progress, evaluate earlier initiatives and determine the next steps. A report of the session is written up and circulated.

2.8.7 *Masterplanning*

Masterplanning combines a series of workshops, exhibitions and seminars to generate professionally produced urban design proposals that can be influenced by local opinion. They are a good way of generating significant public debate and providing an impetus for implementation.

An overall design concept is agreed by the organisers (such as vacant sites or rundown estates). Teams of professionals are selected by open competition to prepare improvement schemes for each of the selected sites. The chosen teams facilitate design workshops with local residents, prepare proposals and present them in an interactive exhibition. A final, highly publicised seminar is held to debate the results and generate momentum for the scheme's implementation.

2.8.8 *Planning Focus Meeting*

The planning focus meeting includes one or more meetings between the development industry and Local Planning Authorities. It provides a forum for the development industry to introduce projects and explain their various components and considerations. Planning focus meetings are valuable because they deal at an early stage with matters that might otherwise delay the assessment process. They help clarify the main policies, criteria and guidelines that will be used by the Local Planning Authority in assessing and determining projects. Their purpose is to establish a sound basis that ensures projects are adequately described and their implications are properly identified and addressed. The Local Planning Authority will be able to suggest the areas and groups the developer needs to engage with regarding their proposal before formal submission of their scheme (**Further guidance is contained in Chapter 4**).

2.8.9 *Focus Groups*

Made up of local people to discuss planning issues. Focus groups can help authorities to gain more understanding of public concerns.

2.8.10 *Public Meetings - area, town and village meetings*

Public meetings can help Local Planning Authorities to present information and proposals within a framework that enables immediate discussion and feedback. These will be particularly relevant to core strategies, area action plans and planning applications. These meetings represent an open and inclusive way for people to engage in robust debate on the key issues. Public meetings will 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.

2.8.11 *Web-based consultation – bulletin board/discussion groups*

The Internet provides quick and efficient opportunities for interested stakeholders to engage in the planning process. The Internet offers the following potential uses:

- o Timely, accurate information on site plans, opportunities, constraints, commissioned studies;
- o A platform on which organisations can respond to issues known to be of community concern;
- o A way for organisations to invite stakeholders to comment on the specific proposals and a means of receiving feedback; and
- o An interactive medium allowing discussion and debate.

All formal consultations undertaken by the Borough on the production of the Local Development Framework will be published on the Borough website at www.sedgefield.gov.uk, and a link to these documents will be located on the Sedgefield Borough Business Services website. Members of the public will be able to make representations on this web page or alternatively comments can be emailed to either:

- o cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk; or
- o tbennett@sedgefield.gov.uk.

This presents people with the opportunity to respond on-line, and provides the Local Planning Authority with a facility to provide feedback to consultation exercises.

2.8.12 *Press and public relations*

The Council will inform the community of key consultation dates during the production of the Local Development Framework by releasing appropriate press releases.

2.8.13 *Community Forums*

The Council will use the Area Forums that are already established in the Borough to widen the community involvement in the Local Development Framework process. These Forums will be used as a channel to inform the local community of the stage reached in the review process, to provide opportunities for their input and participation and to explain key issues affecting local areas.

2.8.14 *Public Exhibitions*

As part of the formal consultation exercises for the Local Development Framework preparation, it is proposed that a series of exhibitions or roadshows are held throughout the Borough. These will be held at accessible venues throughout the Borough. Planning Officers will be available to answer community questions.

2.8.15 *Existing networks*

There are a range of existing meetings and forums, which can be tapped into, including Sedgefield and Local Strategic Partnerships Economy Policy Group, Town Centre Forums, Chambers of Trade, Parish Councils/Area Forums, CEN, and CAVOS. There are a number of Forums covering particular sections of the community which can be used to engage 'hard to reach' groups.

2.9 Opportunities for Public Participation

- 2.9.1 The principle opportunities for public participation in the plan making process will be at each key stage reached in the production of documents that comprise the Local Development Framework. The proposed dates of each key consultation stage are set out in the Borough's Local Development Scheme.
- 2.9.2 At each key consultation stage, consultation will be carried out over a statutory six-week period. During these periods, the Council will consider only duly made representations received in writing or by e-mail.

The details of when and how the key target groups will be consulted are shown within Appendix 2 (Consultation Method Matrix for the Local Development Framework).

2.10 Response to Community Participation – Reporting Back

- 2.10.1 At the end of each consultation period, Officers will prepare a summary of written representations received. This summary will be made publicly available in both paper and electronic form. At the same time, the Council will make publicly available how the community has been involved. In due course, the Council will provide a response to all the responses received during the statutory consultation exercises. Again, these will be made publicly available in paper and electronic form. Revised Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents will be produced after consideration of representations made to the Council on both draft documents and at different community involvement exercises.

2.11 Planning Aid

- 2.11.1 The Government is providing financial support to Planning Aid in its programme of providing advice and assistance to community groups. Planning Aid is an independent 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.

2.11.2 Planning Aid can help the community to:

- Comment on planning applications;
- Get involved in the preparation of Development Plans;
- Draw up your own community plan; and,
- Apply for planning permission or appeal against the refusal of permission.

- 2.11.3 Planning Aid is an independent organisation which is not part of the Local Planning Authority. It is a separate service that complements the advice given by Local Planning Authorities.

- 2.11.4 The RTPI Northern Branch Planning Aid covers the areas of Tees Valley, County Durham, Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne and Wear. Chartered

members of the RTPI, co-ordinated by the Branch's Planning Aid staff, give advice on a wholly voluntary basis. Contact details are as follows:

Planning Aid North
Joint Professional Centre for Planning and Landscape
3rd Floor, Claremont Tower
University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Claremont Road
Newcastle upon Tyne,
NE1 7RU
Tel: 0191 222 5776
Fax: 0191 2225669
Email address: ntco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
Website address: www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
Planning Advice Helpline: 0870 850 9803

2.11.5 If you qualify for Planning Aid you will be given advice over the telephone or you will be allocated a volunteer. Planning Aid is aimed at community groups and individuals who cannot afford to employ a planning consultant. Planning Aid does not means test but it does apply a set of criteria to help determine whether someone qualifies for Planning Aid help. If your local Planning Aid service decides that you do not qualify for Planning Aid you will be sent a leaflet with details of planning consultants in your area.

2.11.6 If your enquiry is straightforward it may be possible to give you an answer straight away. If it is more complicated it will be passed to a volunteer who will contact you separately. The volunteer will advise you over the telephone, in writing or by a meeting, depending on the circumstances.

CHAPTER 3: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON DEVELOPMENT CONTROL MATTERS

3.1 Development Control Team

3.1.1 Development Control is a statutory function of Local Government; this means that relevant provisions relating to such control, including the legal rights of citizens are set out in various Acts of Parliament and related statutory instruments. Development Control is a key part of the Planning System, being the process by which society, represented by locally elected councils, regulates changes in the use and appearance of the local environment. The work of the team is therefore primarily focused on carrying out statutory duties placed on the Council by Government for the benefit of society in general.

The Development Control team is responsible for:

- o Processing and determining planning applications including Listed Building Applications, hazardous substances applications and advertisement applications;
- o Advising on planning issues including a comprehensive pre-application advisory service;
- o Carrying out planning consultation;
- o Dealing with planning appeals; and
- o Dealing with alleged breaches of planning control (Enforcement).

3.1.2 Community involvement involves notifying and engaging both the wider community and the individual. With regard to development control matters, there needs to be a balance between considering the cost, speed of decision making and providing 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 and subsequently not all bodies are consulted on each application. Statutory consultees are given a period of 21 days in which to respond to consultation. As a result of these consultations, the responses may require the Case Officer to contact the applicant to request more information or to seek amendments. All correspondence received on a particular planning application will be placed on the application case file (which remains in the public domain) and can be viewed (at the Green Lane offices) by any member of the public requesting to do so.

3.2 Involvement of the Community when a Planning Application is first received

3.2.1 All planning applications and past decisions are recorded in a statutory planning register, which is available for inspection during normal office hours. The Council recognises that these arrangements may not be convenient for everyone, and therefore to involve the wider community, the Council's website, available at www.sedgefield.gov.uk, is being updated and enhanced to make the planning register more accessible. At present a list of all planning applications and decisions is published weekly on the Council's website and in the future the statutory planning register will be accessible on line.

3.2.2 Finding out what members of the public think about new development is a fundamental part of the Council's Development Control Service and provides every planning application with a level of publicity that is commensurate with

the size and nature of the proposal. In many instances the Council goes beyond what is legally required under Article 8 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995. For example, the Council frequently extends the consultation beyond adjoining owners or occupiers and undertakes consultation in relation to Reserved Matters applications (i.e. approval of details following the granting of outline permission) despite the fact that this is not a statutory requirement.

3.2.3 Occupiers of premises most likely to be affected by a proposal are notified individually by letter that an application has been received, and they are made aware that they can inspect the application at the Council offices and make any written comments within 21 days. For more major applications (including departures from the development plan, proposals affecting the setting of a listed building or the character or appearance of a conservation area, proposals affecting a public right of way or those accompanied by an Environmental Impact Assessment) a site notice and/or publicity in the form of a press notice will be placed in a local paper.

3.2.4 For applications in isolated locations, where there are no neighbouring properties, a site notice will be displayed and in some cases a press notice will be placed in a local newspaper advertising the application in question. The case officer, on request, may visit at home those people who are unable to visit the office, such as disabled or elderly people or parents with young children, to explain the planning process.

3.3 Involvement of the Community during the processing of a planning application

3.3.1 The development control planning officers often undertake a considerable amount of negotiation on a large number of planning applications, particularly the complex ones. This will often result in planning applications being amended. This is a vital procedure of the development control process, guiding development from potentially being unacceptable towards an acceptable form. Sedgfield Borough Council encourages its planning officers to actively engage in negotiations with developers and their professional advisors.

3.3.2 There is no statutory requirement to re-notify neighbours on amendments and it is at discretion of the Council whether to re-notify neighbours. The Council does not re-notify neighbours on minor amendments (unless a letter of objection was received on the original submission and/or the proposed amendment may resolve the objection), as it is not considered appropriate and this process significantly delays consideration of an application. Circumstances where the Council is unlikely to re-notify neighbours include amendments relating to minor alterations to the design of extensions or houses, where the amendment results in a proposal of a more acceptable scale or where the alteration has no material change in the appearance and/or form of the proposal that was applied for and consulted on. The Council will re-notify neighbours where a letter of objection has been received and where the amendments are significant resulting in the character and impact of a proposal being changed.

3.3.3 In essence, the question of re-notification will be for the individual case officer to decide, taking into account what amendments have already been made, and whether further alterations are still required to transform the application into an acceptable scheme. If it is necessary to re-consult, the development control case officer will normally stipulate a reduced consultation period, usually no more than 14 days. For significant alterations to plans the relevant consultees will be re-consulted.

3.4 Involvement of the Community when an application goes to committee

3.4.1 Any comments received from a Parish or Town Council about a planning application within 21 days of the consultation letter will be reported to the Development Control Committee. A copy of the committee agenda is sent to the Parish or Town Council. All neighbours who make representation to the Council regarding a planning application will be made aware of the date/time/location of the committee meeting, the officer recommendation and are offered the opportunity to register to speak at the meeting. Essentially you can speak at the Committee meeting:

- If you are the objector and have concerns over a current planning application;
- If you are the applicant speaking in response to an objector;
- If you are the agent of someone who has submitted a planning application;
- If you are the applicant and have requested to speak at Committee as your application is recommended for refusal.

3.4.2 The agenda for the Committee meeting can be accessed from the Sedgefield Borough Council website prior to the meeting. **(For more detailed information see Appendix 5 – Public Speaking at Development Control Committee).**

3.5 Involvement of the Community after a decision is taken on a planning application

3.5.1 A letter is sent to any Parish or Town Council who made representations on a planning application and any statutory consultee that objected to a planning application or requested a copy of the decision notice, advising them of the decision that has been reached. This letter is sent for applications that are determined at committee, and also by officers under delegated powers.

3.5.2 All neighbours who made representation on a planning application are advised in writing of the decision on the planning application.

3.6 Involvement of the Community if an appeal is received on a planning application

3.6.1 Government legislation stipulates that only applicants have the right to appeal a local authorities planning decision. There are no third party rights to appeal a decision.

3.6.2 When an appeal is received, the relevant Parish or Town Council, those neighbours originally consulted on the application and any objectors are notified in writing of the appeal, and told how to make representations to the Planning Inspectorate. This could either be in writing if it is a written representations

appeal, or they could be made in person if the appeal is to be heard by the way of an informal hearing or public inquiry. Additionally, it should be noted that any letter of representation made in response to the original application would automatically be forwarded to the Planning Inspectorate. For informal hearings/public inquiries the Council displays a site notice publicising the date/time and location of the hearing/inquiry. We have on occasions placed a notice in the press for a major public inquiry.

- 3.6.3 Community involvement for the following applications will be treated in previously described way:
- Householder;
 - Full Detailed applications (for example, Industrial, commercial, major residential developments);
 - Applications for Change of Use;
 - Outline applications;
 - Reserved Matter applications;
 - Works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order and works to trees within a Conservation Area;
 - Listed Building and Conservation Area Consent;
 - Amendment, Variation, Removal of a Condition;
 - Advertisements; and
 - Prior approval for telecommunications and agricultural development.

The following applications are subject to different consultation procedures. They are as follows:

3.7 Demolitions

- 3.7.1 There is no statutory requirement to consult on these types of applications. No public consultation or publicity is required for a determination if prior approval is required. It is for the developer to post site notices before making an application. In some cases it may be necessary to consult with other departments in the Council.

3.8 Lawful Development Certificates

- 3.8.1 No public consultation or publicity is required as these applications do not relate to the planning merits of the development. The Council will, however, contact neighbouring residents to gather information where appropriate.

3.9 Involvement of the Community on Enforcement Issues

- 3.9.1 All enforcement complaints will be registered and given a file reference number and dealt with by the Council's Enforcement Officer. All cases will, as far as possible, be dealt with in confidence. Complaints are treated confidentially and no public consultation is currently undertaken on enforcement cases. **(For more detailed information of procedures please see Appendix 4 – Sedgefield Borough Council Planning Enforcement Charter)**

**CHAPTER 4: RECOMMENDED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT
TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY DEVELOPERS AND AGENTS
(ADVICE BY SEDGFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL)**

4.1 When should a developer start to consider Community Involvement?

4.1.1 Sedgfield Borough Council encourages developers to undertake pre-application discussions and early community consultation on significant applications as early as possible in the design of their scheme. Consultation discussions before a formal application is made can help to avoid unnecessary objections being made at a later stage.

4.2 What are the benefits to the developer of a Community Involvement Exercise?

4.2.1 A genuine exercise can:

- Provide an ideal opportunity for the developer to explain their proposal, prior to the general public formulating 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;
- Avoid appeals and call-in procedures.

4.3 What type of development would benefit from a Community Involvement Exercise?

4.3.1 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 may include an increase in jobs or more local facilities for the community to use and enjoy. Therefore Sedgfield Borough Council believes that the following proposal types would benefit from the involvement of the community to some degree. These include:

- Medium and large scale industrial and commercial development (Development with a floor area of 1000sqm or more, or a site area of 1 hectare or more);
- Medium and large scale residential development (10 or more homes or consideration of the principle of residential development on a site of at least 0.5 hectares);
- New education or institutional buildings;
- Major infrastructure projects such as roads, pipelines or overhead power lines;
- Smaller developments on sensitive sites;
- Changes of use of buildings or land for purposes which are likely to be controversial;
- Developments where opportunities for community benefits may be available;
- Waste processing schemes;
- A development which needs an environmental assessment;

- A significant development that conflicts with the policies in our development plan or with more up-to-date government planning policy;
 - Medium and large scale wind turbine farms; and
 - A development which proposes closing or altering a public right of way.
- 4.3.2 Small-scale proposals such as house extensions or advertisements will not normally require a Community Involvement Exercise.
- 4.4 Example of a method to involve the community – Open house event
- 4.4.1 Open house events allow those promoting development initiatives to present to a wider public and secure reactions in an informal manner. They are less structured than a workshop and more informal than a traditional exhibition. Open house events can be organised at any stage of the design and development process by any of the parties. They can last from a few hours to several weeks. It is recommended 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. The material collected on this day should be analysed afterwards and used to further develop the initiative.
- 4.5 Additional advice from Sedgefield Borough Council Planning Department
- 4.5.1 The Planning Officers at Sedgefield Borough 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.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Details of who are the Consultees.

The Council will hold a database of bodies, organisations 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 NorthEast)
- 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:
 - I. Strategic Health Authority;
 - II. Person to whom a licence has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986;
 - III. Sewage undertaker; and
 - IV. 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 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

- 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 (Sedgefield Borough Council will where appropriate consult with the following agencies and organisations 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 authorities
- Campaign to Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
- CAVOS (Community and Voluntary Organisations Sedgefield)
- CEN (Community Empowerment Network)
- 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:
 - I. Council for the Protection of Rural England
 - II. Friends of the Earth
 - III. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; and
 - IV. Wildlife Trusts;
- 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
- Sustainable Communities Team including:
 - I. Civic Societies
 - II. Community Groups
 - III. Local Transport Authorities
 - IV. Local Transport Operators; and
 - V. Local Race Equality Councils and other local equality groups;
- Local Strategic Partnership Economy Group
- National Playing Fields Association
- Network Rail
- Passenger Transport Authorities
- Passenger Transport Executives
- Police Architectural Liaison Officers/Crime Prevention Design Advisors;
- Port Operators
- 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)
- Sedgefield Business Forum Steering Group
- Sport England
- The House Builders Federation
- Transport for London
- Traveller Law Reform Coalition
- Water Companies; and
- Women's National Commission

Appendix 2 – Consultation Method Matrix for the Local Development Framework

TYPE OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT

	Development Plan Documents			Supplementary Planning Documents	
	(Core Strategy, Generic Development Control Policies, Proposals Map)	Site specific allocations & policies	Area Action Plan Development Plan Documents	Site Specific (Conservation Areas, Planning Briefs)	Topic (Residential Extensions; SUD's; Commuted Sums; and Renewable Energy etc)
General Public	Council Website; Public Exhibitions; Community Forums; Briefing workshops; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Planning for Real; Press Release; Masterplanning.	Council Website; Public Exhibitions; Community Forums; Briefing Workshops; Inform Magazine / Paper; Focus Group; Draft documents; Planning for Real; Press Release; Masterplanning.	Council Website; Public Exhibitions; Draft documents; Briefing Workshops.	Council Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Press Release; Draft documents.	Council Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Press Release; Draft documents.
Hard to reach groups	Council Website; Public Exhibitions; Community Forums; Briefing workshops; Focus Group; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Masterplanning; Press Release; Planning for Real.	Council Website; Public Exhibitions; Community Forums; Briefing Workshops; Inform Magazine / Paper; Focus Group; Draft documents; Masterplanning; Press Release; Planning for Real.	Council Website; Public Exhibition; Focus Group; Draft documents; Briefing Workshops.	Council Website; Focus Group; Inform Magazine / Paper; Press Release; Draft documents.	Council Website; Focus Group; Inform Magazine / Paper; Press Release; Draft documents.
Councillors	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Development Control Committee; Workshop/ seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Development Control Committee; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Development Control Committee.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Development Control Committee.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Development Control Committee.

TARGET GROUPS

	Development Plan Documents			Supplementary Planning Documents	
	(Core Strategy, Generic Development Control Policies, Proposals Map)	Site specific allocations & policies	Area Action Plan Development Plan Documents	Site Specific (Conservation Areas, Planning Briefs)	Topic (Residential Extensions; SUD's; Commuted Sums; and Renewable Energy etc)
Ward members	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Public Exhibition; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Public Exhibition; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Public Exhibition; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.
Town/Parish Councils	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.
Neighbouring Town/Parish Council within different Council's administrative boundary	Email; Council Website; Draft documents.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents.	Email; Council Website; Draft documents.
Businesses	Council Website; SBBS Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Business in Focus Magazine; Press Release; Sedgefield Business Forum; LSP Economy Policy Group; Town Centre Forums; Chambers of Trade; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; SBBS Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Business in Focus Magazine; Press Release; Sedgefield Business Forum; LSP Economy Policy Group; Town Centre Forums; Chambers of Trade; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; SBBS Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Business in Focus Magazine; Press Release; Sedgefield Business Forum; LSP Economy Policy Group; Town Centre Forums; Chambers of Trade; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; SBBS Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Business in Focus Magazine; Press Release; Sedgefield Business Forum; LSP Economy Policy Group; Town Centre Forums; Chambers of Trade; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; SBBS Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Business in Focus Magazine; Press Release; Sedgefield Business Forum; LSP Economy Policy Group; Town Centre Forums; Chambers of Trade; Workshop / seminar.

	Development Plan Documents			Supplementary Planning Documents	
	(Core Strategy, Generic Development Control Policies, Proposals Map)	Site specific allocations & policies	Area Action Plan Development Plan Documents	Site Specific (Conservation Areas, Planning Briefs)	Topic (Residential Extensions; SUD's; Commuted Sums; and Renewable Energy etc)
Developers / Landowners / Agents	Council Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Inform Magazine / Paper; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.
Central, regional & local government	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.
Statutory bodies & groups	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.	Draft documents; Meetings / informal discussions.
Interest groups (Residents Associations)	Council Website; Public Exhibition; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Public Exhibition; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Public Exhibition; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.
Local community groups / organisations	Council Website; Public Exhibition; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Public Exhibition; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Public Exhibition; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.	Council Website; Draft documents; Workshop / seminar.
Neighbouring Local Planning Authorities	Meetings / Informal discussions; Draft documents.	Meetings / Informal discussions; Draft documents.	Meetings / Informal discussions; Draft documents.	Meetings / Informal discussions; Draft documents.	Meetings / Informal discussions; Draft documents.

Appendix 3 – Sedgfield Borough Council Development Control Service Charter

The Development Control Team aims to provide a helpful and courteous service with minimum delay, which is fair and of the highest standard within the constraints of the resources available.

The purpose of the Development Control Service Charter is to explain, as simply as possible, how planning applications are dealt with and other development control related matters handled and the standards of service that can be expected by customers of the service, whoever they may be.

The following deals with the various stages in the processing of a planning application and sets out the standards which the Charter is a guide for users of the service, especially the general public and is therefore worded accordingly.

Pre-Application Discussions: Asking for Information and Advice

Discussions are welcomed before an application is submitted so as to encourage high quality applications and to ensure that they can be dealt with as efficiently as possible. To assist applicants and their agents the Council operates a multi-disciplinary One Stop Shop, which is designed to provide a single point of contact within the Council. The One Stop Shop meets once a week to discuss enquiries and to highlight any concerns, objections or comments. The meeting is not open to members of the public but where a large proposal is proposed applicants and their agents will be given the opportunity to make a brief presentation.

The advice given will be accurate and objective, but will be without prejudice to the formal consideration of an application. Information, where appropriate, will be given about relevant planning policies and previous decisions and about the Council's requirements for common types of development. An explanation of how an application is submitted and considered, how the decision is made, people's right of access to information and documentation and the standards of development quality the Council expects will be given at this stage.

Copies of the Council's planning policies and other relevant documents will be made available if necessary as will general leaflets or design guidelines to assist in this process. Council procedures, Committee dates and Membership can also be made known. Advice will also be offered on any other approvals or consents which may be necessary, such as Building Regulations approval.

Submitting a Planning Application

It is the applicant's responsibility to make sure that the application is submitted correctly. (An applicant may engage an agent to act on his or her behalf, For the purpose of this Charter both shall be referred to as the applicant.) However, if needed, help or advice will be available for completing the applications forms. The applicant will be told what fee is payable.

Each valid application will be registered and its receipt acknowledged within 3 working days.

The acknowledgement letter to confirm registration of the application will explain the rights of the applicant with regard to the statutory eight-week period (16 week period if accompanied by an environmental assessment) for determination. The case officer dealing with the application will be identified on the acknowledgement.

If the application is incomplete or invalid the applicant will be notified within 3 working days with an explanation of how this deficiency can be remedied. If the application is for a proposal which is permitted development, or for which planning permission is not otherwise required, it will be returned within 3 working days and the fee refunded.

Dealing with an Application

The case officer will make an early visit to the site, usually within 7 days of receiving the made-up application file. If access to the site is required, but not freely available, a suitable appointment will be made where necessary in order to gain entry.

If the need for further information arises while the application is being dealt with, the applicant will be notified of that need and the reason for it.

If the submitted proposal is unacceptable but amendments could be made to overcome its deficiencies, suitable revisions will be suggested to the applicant.

This request will normally be made within 21 days of the receipt of the application in order that amendments can be submitted and a decision made within the eight-week statutory period. Applicants will be informed about the progress of the application. Where officers are minded to refuse a planning application the applicant or the applicant's agent will be notified in advance of a formal decision being made. This will enable an applicant to decide whether to withdraw the application or to allow the application to be determined thereby enabling an appeal to be lodged with the Planning Inspectorate. Where an application is refused, officers will provide advice on the appeal procedures.

Notifying the Public

The Statutory Register, which lists all current planning applications and past decisions will be available for public inspection during normal office hours.

The Council's Publicity Code of Practice will be made available to members of the Public.

An officer will usually be available during office hours to provide information and advice. Information about planning applications received will be provided weekly. Those people notified about a specific planning application will be advised how they can make comments on it and will be allowed a minimum of

21 days in which to do so. The notification will also give advice on speaking at committee. Advice will be given on the type of comments which can be taken into account. If material revisions, i.e. significant changes are to be made to the application, interested parties will always be re-notified and allowed a further 7 to 14 days for comment depending upon the extent of the revisions.

The case officer, on request, may visit at home those people who are unable to visit the office, such as disabled or elderly people or parents with young children, to explain the planning proposals.

Appendix 4 – Sedgefield Borough Council Planning Enforcement Charter

- ◆ The Council recognises the importance of establishing effective controls over unauthorised development and reasonable resources will be committed to ensure effective implementation and maintenance of planning enforcement control.
- ◆ We will acknowledge all complaints in writing within 3 working days giving the name and telephone extension number of the Enforcement Officer to whom all further correspondence should be addressed.
- ◆ All complaints will be registered and given a file reference number and allocated to the Planning Enforcement Officer.
- ◆ All complaints will, as far as possible, be dealt with in confidence.
- ◆ The case officer will make an initial visit to the site within a maximum of 10 working days (Subject to the Priority Checklist) to establish whether or not there has been a breach of planning control.
- ◆ Complaints will be prioritised by those cases involving:
 1. Immediate and unacceptable harm to the residential amenity of more than one household.
 2. Road safety, and other public safety issues.
 3. Adverse effects on the character of Conservation Areas, the fabric and setting of Listed Buildings, scheduled monuments, historic parks & gardens, battlefields and sites of nature conservation interest.
 4. The potential loss of mature trees or hedgerows which are important for their visual amenity.
 5. Severely degraded environment in a prominent location.
 6. Development proposals where conditions designed to protect the amenity of the area have either been breached or not been discharged.
 7. Impacts on the amenity of one household.
 8. Possible breach, having low impact on the residential amenity of one or more household.
- ◆ Where a complaint relates to alleged unauthorised use of land or buildings a minimum of 3 site investigations will be made within 25 working days.
- ◆ We will reach an initial conclusion and tell the complainant of the decision which has been made in writing within a maximum of 25 working days.
- ◆ Where a case requires further consideration, investigation, research or seeking a legal opinion the complainant will be advised of any significant developments. Complainants may also be provided with monitoring sheets where appropriate.

- ◆ We will notify complainants of the authority's decision to take formal action within 7 working days of the decision being made.
- ◆ Where a complaint results in the submission of a retrospective planning application all complainants will be notified within 7 working days of its receipt and the standards set out in the Development Control Service Charter will apply.
- ◆ Action will not normally be taken against minor or technical breaches of planning control, which cause no harm to residential amenity or highway safety.
- ◆ Information will be shared with other Council departments and other bodies where appropriate to ensure that a 'joined up approach' to planning enforcement is secured.
- ◆ All new complaints will be reported to the Council's Development Committee on a monthly basis and an update will be produced bi-annually.
- ◆ We will notify all complainants of the decision to close a file within seven working days of the decision being made.
- ◆ Temporary Stop Notices will only used when it is considered that there is a particularly urgent or serious case requiring the cessation of an unauthorised activity that has implications for public safety or related issues.
- ◆ Anonymous complaints will only be investigated where resources allow. In cases that are investigated these would not be given such a high priority (in accordance with the priority checklist) as a complaint that has been received with a completed complaint form that provides further information regarding the alleged breach.

Appendix 5 - Sedgfield Borough Council – Public Speaking at Development Control Committee

Do you want to have your say?

About Development Control Committee Meetings

Sedgfield Borough Council recognises the need to be open and accessible and has introduced public speaking at its Development Control Committee meetings to enable applicants, their agents and members of the public to make their views known to the Committee. The procedures have been designed to ensure that the Council satisfies the requirements of the Human Rights Act which came into force on 2nd October 2000 and seeks to ensure that everyone is entitled to a fair and public hearing.

Who can speak at Development Control Committee?

You can speak at the Committee meeting:

- o If you have concerns over a current planning applications;
- o If you have submitted a planning application yourself;
- o If you are the agent of someone who has submitted a planning application.

What do I do if other people share my views on an application?

If you know of others who share your views, e.g. neighbours, you should try to nominate a spokesperson to represent the group to save repeating the same concerns. Ideally, you should try to arrange this prior to the Committee Meeting.

How can I find out when the Committee meetings are?

If you have made written representation to the Council you will be sent a letter setting out the date and venue of the Committee Meeting which will be considering the planning application that you are interested in. Alternatively, detail can be obtained from the Schedule of meetings located under Development Control Committee or by telephoning the Council Democratic Services on extension 4237 or you may wish to contact the planning officer. Meetings are normally held in the Council Chamber in the Council Offices, Green Lane, Spennymoor and are held approximately once every month. You should report to the Main Reception on arrival at the Council Offices.

How do I let the Council know I wish to speak?

To help ensure the Committee Meetings run smoothly, it would be helpful to let the Council know in advance that you wish to speak.

Please contact the Planning Case Officer at least two working days before the date of the Committee Meeting, indicating the issues that you intend to raise. This may be done by phone, fax, e-mail or letter.

If you turn up to speak without letting the Council know beforehand, you will still be entitled to speak, but may have to wait until your item is reached and officers may not be in a position to fully respond to your concerns.

Go to 'What are the procedures at Committee?' to find out at what point in the proceedings you will be invited to speak.

What can I speak about?

You should limit your comments to planning matters only. These are the only matters that the Council is allowed to consider in making decisions on planning applications.

As a guide you should at least tell the Committee:

- o Whether you object to, or support the application;
- o What particular aspects of the planning application you object to or support and why

Comments must not contain anything of defamatory or discriminatory nature.

How long should I speak for?

Normally not more than 5 minutes. It will be up to the Committee Chairperson to decide whether you can speak for longer, should you wish to do so.

The Committee members may also wish to ask you questions following your speech.

Remember that you may not be the only person speaking about a particular planning application, and that the application that you are interested in will not be the only one being considered at that Committee Meeting. The Committee will be much more likely to understand a short, ordered speech than a long, rambling one.

What are the procedures at Committee?

In order to ensure that Committee Meetings are conducted in a fair and open manner the following procedure has been adopted:

1. The planning officer will present his report outlining the main issues.
2. Committee members, where necessary, will ask questions of the planning officer.
3. Objectors and/or supporters will then be invited to speak by the Committee Chairperson.
4. Committee members will then be able to ask objectors and/or supporters questions.
5. The applicant or his/her agent will then speak.
6. Committee members will be given the opportunity to ask the applicant or his agent questions.
7. The Committee will then debate the matter. They will not hear any additional representations or comments, but may seek to check their understanding of the matters raised with the Borough Solicitor or Planning Officers.
8. When the Chair considers that there has been sufficient debate he/she will call for a decision.
9. Occasionally, the Development Control Committee may postpone making a decision on an application in order to make a site visit to clarify a particular issue.

Will I be able to make further representations if a site visit is agreed?

Where a site visit is agreed:

- o Objectors and/or supporters and the applicant or their agent will be notified of the date and time of the site visit.
- o Representations from objectors, supporters and applicants or their agents will not normally be allowed at the site visit unless Chairperson considers that factual information would help the Committee understand a particular issue.
- o Committee members will not make a decision on site but will return to the Council
- o Offices where the procedure for public speaking as outlined above will be adopted.

Does Committee determine all applications?

No. Under present arrangements the Head of Planning Services is able to determine small-scale proposals, such as house extensions, small industrial extensions and advertisements. These applications are known as delegated applications and are not normally considered by Committee. However, under the current scheme of delegation Members of the Council may request that an application which they consider raises significant issues, is presented to the Council's Development Control Committee.

Is there anything else I need to know?

- o You are present at the meeting as an observer, until such time as the Chairperson of the Development Control Committee invites you to speak.
- o Committees are open to the public. There may also be representatives from the local press present.
- o You are free to join or leave the meeting whenever you wish. Please try to do so quietly, so as not to disturb the rest of the meeting.


How will I find out what decision was made?

Once a decision is made all objectors and supporters will be notified in writing of the decision. Where an application is approved the letter will give full details of the conditions, which have been imposed, and in the case of a refusal, the reasons for refusal.

Where can I get more information and advice?

You can either contact the case officer by post, e-mail or by telephone at the following address:

Director of Neighbourhood Services
 Council Offices
 Spennymoor
 County Durham
 DL16 6JQ
 Tel. No. 01388 816166
 Email: development-control@sedgefield.gov.uk

<p>Appendix 6 - Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)</p> <p>Submission stage representation form</p>	
<p>Office Use only:</p>	<p>Ref. No.:</p> <p>Date received:</p> <p>Date acknowledged:</p>

Comments can be submitted by posting this form to the Forward Planning Team, or by completing via the website

Personal details

Title.....

First Name

Last Name

Job Title

Organisation (if applicable).....

Address

.....

.....

.....

.....

Post Code

Tel.....

Fax.....

Email.....

Agents details (if applicable)

Title.....

First Name

Last Name.....

Job Title

Organisation

Address

.....

.....

.....

.....

Post Code

Tel.....

Fax.....

Email.....

Nature of representation

Please select one of the following:

Are you either: Supporting part of the SCI;

If so to which part of the SCI does your representation relate:

Section.....

Paragraph.....

 Or: Objecting to part of the SCI;

If so to which part of the SCI does your representation relate:

Section.....

Paragraph.....

 Or: Objecting to the omission of a section or text

<p>If so where should the new section or text go in the SCI (please be as precise as possible):</p>

Reason for objection

If you are objecting to the SCI please specify on which of the following tests of soundness you consider that this part of the SCI fails (see accompanying guidance notes):

- it complies with the minimum requirements for consultations as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
- its strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives (e.g. the community strategy)
- it identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted
- it identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner

- the methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents
- resources are available to manage community involvement effectively
- it shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents
- it sets out a mechanism for reviewing the SCI
- it clearly describes the policy for consultation on planning applications

Changes to the SCI

Please give details of what change(s) you would like to see to the SCI and why, having regard to the tests of soundness listed above (please be as precise as possible):

(Continue on a separate sheet if necessary)

Can your representation be considered by written representations or do you consider it necessary to attend the Examination

Either:

- Written Representations
- Attend Examination, if so please outline why you consider this to be necessary:

The Inspector will determine the most appropriate procedure to adopt to hear those who have indicated that they wish to attend the Examination.

Signature **Date**.....

Please return form to:
Forward Planning Team
Neighbourhood Services
Sedgefield Borough Council
Council Offices
Spennymoor
Co. Durham
DL16 6JQ

Comments must be received on or before ^{*th} November 2005

Sedgefield Borough Council

Local Development Framework:
Submitted Draft Statement of Community
Involvement

Assessment for Soundness

September 2005

Test of Soundness Matrix

Test of Soundness Indicator	How Sedgefield Borough has complied with Indicator
Local Planning Authority has complied with the minimum standards for consultation, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004	<p>Sedgefield Borough Council has complied with the minimum standards set out in the Regulations, because:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Copies of the Pre-Submission Draft SCI were made available for inspection during normal office hours at main Council Offices located at Green Lane, Spennymoor; o The Pre-Submission Draft SCI was published on the Council's website at www.sedgefield.gov.uk; o The Pre-Submission Draft SCI was sent to all consultees advocated by PPS12, and also to each of the specific consultation bodies that Sedgefield Borough felt that the proposed subject matter of the SCI affected the body; and o A press notice was published in a local newspaper informing that the Pre-Submission Draft SCI was available for inspection, and the places and times when the inspection could take place.
Local Planning Authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the Community Strategy	A separate document will be produced by Planning Services showing how the LDF will provide the spatial interpretation of the Community Strategy.
Statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted	Appendix 1 of the Submission Draft SCI identifies these local community groups and other bodies that have been consulted on the pre-submission draft SCI, and will be consulted on future Local Development Documents produced by Planning Services.
Statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner	<p>Chapter 2 of the Submission Draft SCI addresses this issue by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Detailing how the community will have access to information relating to Local Development Documents; o Describing what consultation methods could be used during each stage of the production of the Local Development Documents to engage the Target Groups; and o How comments made at a consultation exercise will be used.

Test of Soundness Indicator	How Sedgefield Borough has complied with Indicator
Methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents	Appendix 2 of the Submission Draft SCI details a Consultation Method Matrix for the Local Development Framework, showing what consultations methods will be employed to consult with different target groups with the Borough, on the various Local Development Documents that Sedgefield Borough will produce.
Resources are available to manage community involvement effectively	Paragraph 1.8 of the Submission Draft SCI sets out the resources available to manage community involvement effectively, and details that this will be influenced by variables such as staff resources, and the budget of the Forward Planning Team at the time of the community involvement exercise.
Statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents	Issue is addressed in paragraph 2.10.1 of the Submission Draft SCI.
Authority has mechanism for reviewing the statement of community involvement	Issue is addressed in paragraph 1.9 of the Submission Draft SCI.
Statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications	Chapter 3 of the Submission Draft SCI clearly describes this issue.

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Item 6

KEY DECISION

REPORT TO CABINET

15 September 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Portfolio: Regeneration

Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework – Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 represents a major reform of the planning system. The Government's objective is to produce a more flexible plan-making system; the Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework will comprise of a Local Development Scheme which sets out the work programme; a Statement of Community Involvement; a range of Development Plan Documents; Supplementary Planning Documents; and, Annual Monitoring Reports.
- 1.2 The Local Development Scheme identifies that the Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document will come forward in September 2005. Planning applications for householder development has risen from 49% in 2002/03 to 68% in 2004/05. There is clear evidence that the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4, adopted in 2000, has become out-of-date and requires urgent review. This Supplementary Planning Document provides detailed guidance on the extension to residential properties in the Borough and replaces existing Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4. In terms of the preparation of documents, the Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document is not subject to public examination.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Management Team endorses the attached Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document at Appendix 1 to Cabinet, prior to its public consultation.

3 THE DRAFT RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 3.1 Sedgefield Borough has experienced a significant increase in householder extension applications over the last few years. Residents are seeking improvements to their current dwelling rather than moving up the property ladder. This has been attributed to the effect of rising house prices on the Borough housing market e.g. average house prices in Sedgefield Borough rose 57% over the last three years (source: Land Registry).

- 3.2 In 2004, the Borough Council commissioned final year students from the University of Newcastle to identify national best practice in this area and make recommendations to help the Borough develop a revised Supplementary Planning Document. Officers within Planning and Technical Services have subsequently refined this work to suit local circumstances.

The Supplementary Planning Document

- 3.3 All matters covered in the Supplementary Planning Document must relate to policies in a Development Plan Document or a 'saved' policy in the Local Plan. The latter applies in this case, namely Policies H15 and H16 of the Borough Local Plan. The Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document provides detailed advice and guidance on the following issues:

- General Design Principles;
- Porches;
- Forward Extensions;
- Side Extensions;
- Rear Extensions;
- Rural Extensions;
- Conservatories;
- Dormer Windows and Roof Extensions;
- Garages and Outbuildings;
- Walls and Fences; and,
- Other Material Considerations

The Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document is attached in Appendix 1.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.4 To comply with Planning Policy Statement 12 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004, a Sustainability Appraisal must accompany the draft document. The Sustainability Appraisal has followed the guidance laid down in the ODPM document '*Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks*' (Consultation Paper 2004) and the '*Interim Advice Note on Frequently Asked Questions*' (ODPM 2005), and as such complies with the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment 2001/42/EC. The Appraisal also draws heavily upon the work already undertaken in carrying out the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Development Framework Key Issues Paper (published for consultation in July 2005, entitled *Local Development Framework: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report*).
- 3.5 The appraisal makes four recommendations to amend the Draft document. These are:
- Encouraging sustainable construction and energy efficiency;
 - Consider the negative effects on wildlife of the loss of gardens/open space;
 - Review the policy on retaining trees and hedges to accommodate the replacement of trees/hedges with minimal biodiversity and amenity value with the planting of species with greater wildlife value

- Raising the awareness of incorrect plumbing, in conjunction with the Environment Agency

The Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document takes account of these recommendations. The Sustainability Appraisal is attached as Appendix 2.

Consultation

- 3.6 The Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document will be published for a statutory period of six-weeks in accordance with Regulations 17 and 18 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004. The Supplementary Planning Document is not subject to independent examination. To enable the Borough Council to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document, the Borough must consider all the responses to the consultation exercise and how they are addressing these in the document we intend to adopt. It is identified in the Local Development Scheme that the Supplementary Planning Document will be adopted by April 2006.

Consultation Statement

- 3.7 Planning Policy Statement 12 and Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004 requires the Borough Council to prepare a consultation statement on how the Authority has complied with the Statement of Community Involvement. This statement is included in Appendix 3.

Soundness

- 3.8 Planning Policy Statement 12 sets out nine tests that a Development Plan Document should meet if it is 'sound'. The underlying principles of 'soundness' are applicable to the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents. An assessment of how the Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document meets these tests of 'soundness' is included in Appendix 4.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct implications at this stage in the consultation process, though there might be additional impacts for staff resources during the consultation exercise to attend evening meetings.

5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 The Consultation Statement is included in Appendix 3.

6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 In terms of environmental sustainability, the Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document has undergone Sustainability Appraisal. The Sustainability Appraisal is included in Appendix 2. There are no risk management issues associated with the report.

7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8 LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document

Appendix 2 – Sustainability Appraisal

Appendix 3 – Statement of Consultation

Appendix 4 – An assessment against the tests of soundness

Contact Officers: Chris Myers
Telephone No: (01388) 816166 ext 4328
Email Address: cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward(s): All

Key Decision Validation: This is a Key Decision, as the decision made by Cabinet will be put forward to develop the policy framework.

Background Papers

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks

Creating Local Development Frameworks: A Companion guide to PPS12

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Sedgefield Borough Council

Local Development Framework:
Residential Extensions Supplementary
Planning Document

September 2005

Sedgefield Borough Council telephone number: **01388 816166**

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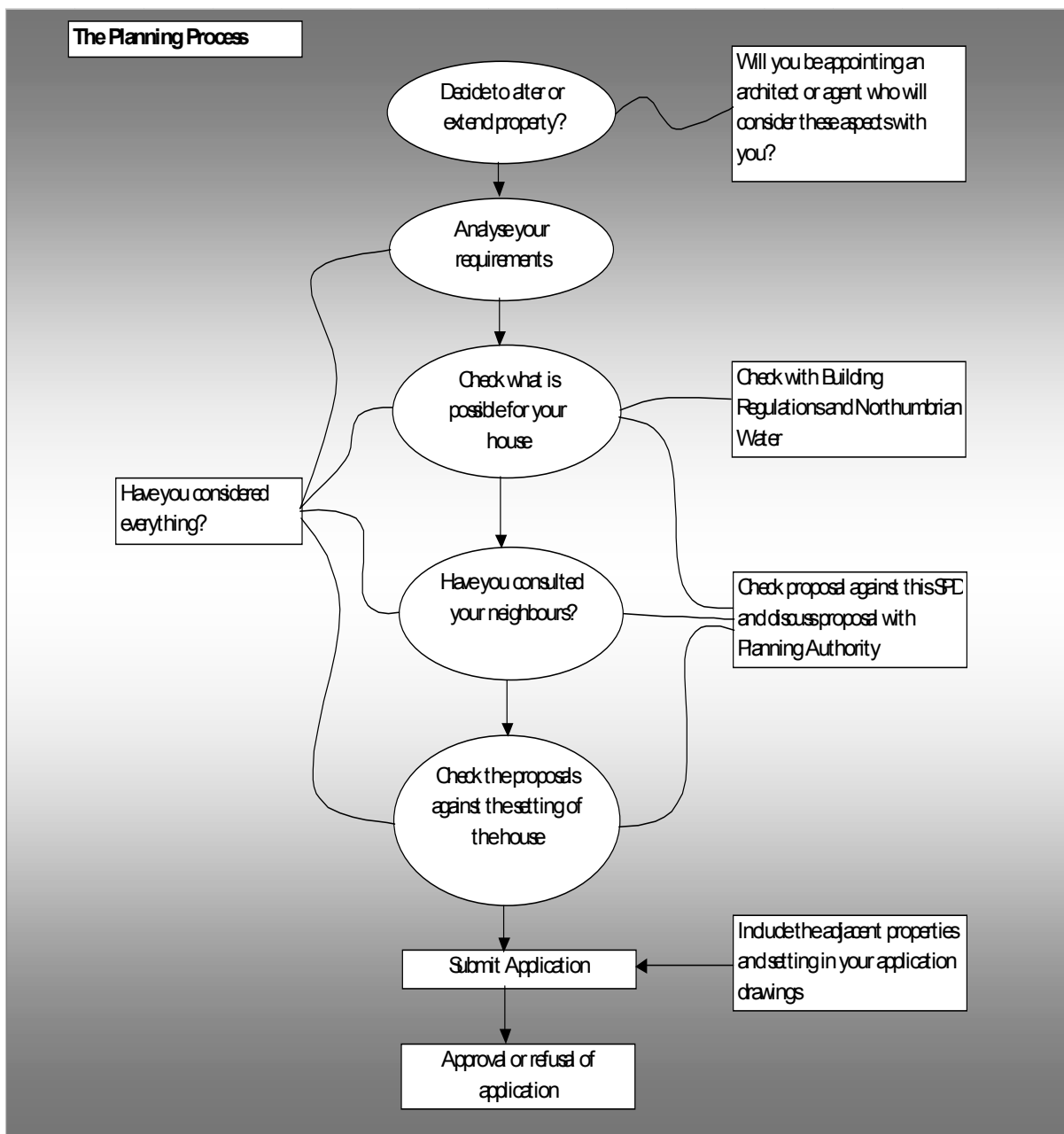
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Introduction

- 1.1 The Council recognise that occupiers of dwellings may wish to extend their homes to provide accommodation that suits their own needs. Sedgefield Borough Council believe that the guidance set out below will help to ensure that the impact of such developments on neighbouring residents is minimised and that the design and appearance of extensions makes a positive contribution to the local environment.
- 1.2 The diagram below illustrates some of the issues that should be considered:



- 1.3 It must be borne in mind that because of site constraints, some residential properties may be incapable of being extended.
- 1.4 If you would like informal advice before submitting your planning application, you can submit an informal enquiry for consideration at the weekly One Stop Shop using the contact details on page 24. The purpose of the One Stop Shop is to provide free informal advice to whether the scheme you intend to submit requires permission, and to suggest any changes to the proposed scheme.
- 1.5 If a planning application is required then the appropriate forms can be obtained either by writing to the Council; from our reception; by calling the number in the contacts section; or from our website. For details of all see page 24 of this SPD.

Personal Circumstances and Equality

- 1.6 Personal circumstances, such as a disability, or the specific requirements of minority groups, may make it difficult to provide certain facilities within the standards set out. Sedgefield Borough Council will interpret these standards flexibility in such circumstances, but proposals that significantly deviate from them are still unlikely to be considered acceptable. Standards may be relaxed where an extension would provide essential facilities that are lacking from a residential property, such as a bathroom.

Policy Background

- 2.1 Policies H15 and H16 and SPG Note 4 of the Borough Local Plan provide the existing Policy Framework for residential extensions. Policy H15 requires proposals to be of a scale and design compatible with the host property and does not detract from the area's appearance or amenity of nearby residents. Policy H16 seeks to limit front extensions so that they do not project forward of the building line.
- 2.2 The Local Development Framework will replace the Local Plan once it has been developed. Given the growing number of planning applications for residential extensions, the Borough has decided that one of the first Local Development Documents to be produced will deal specifically with this issue. This Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be linked to the 'saved' Local Plan Policies H15 and H16 until they are formally replaced by the Development Control Policies, Development Plan Document (DPD).

General Design Guidelines

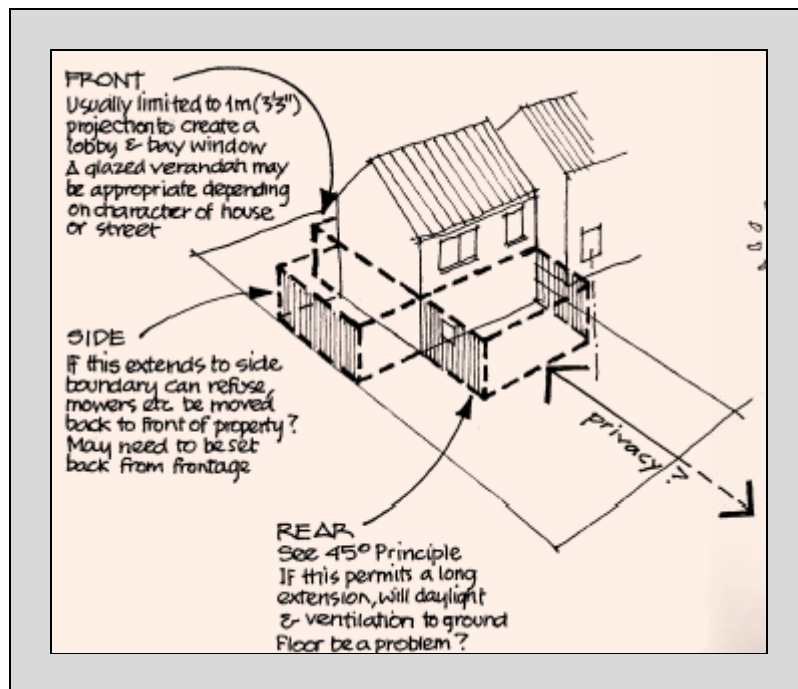
- 3.1 In considering planning applications the Borough Council will take account of the guidance contained in this document, together with the relevant saved policies set out in the Borough Local Plan and any relevant regional and national guidance.

Planning Issues

- 3.2 The main considerations for any proposal submitted to the Council will be its design, and how it affects the privacy, outlook, daylight of adjacent properties, the impact on the general streetscene, and character of the area. Specialist advice from the County Highways Authority and Northumbrian Water Ltd will also be taken into account when determining the application.
- 3.3 A proposal that is poorly designed in relation to its host dwelling or that utilises materials or window features which are not in keeping with the general streetscene or character of the local area would constitute inappropriate development and be refused permission.

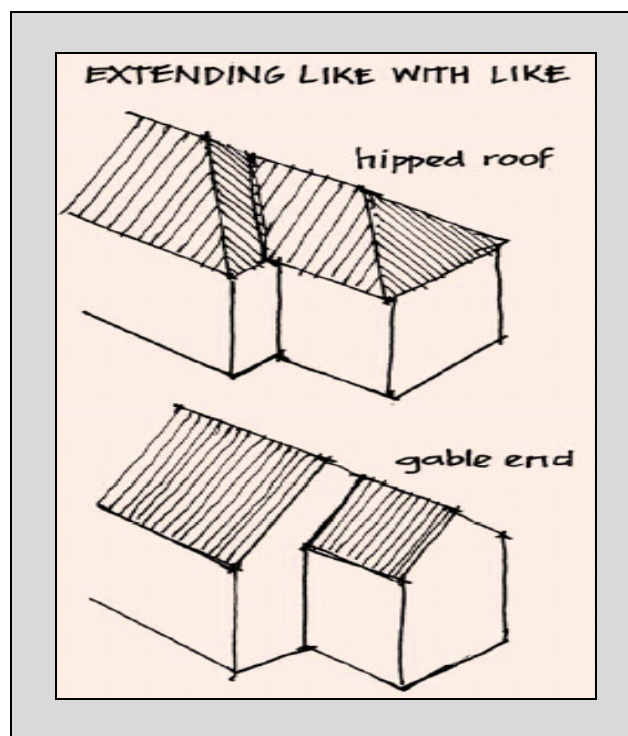
Issues to Consider

- 3.4 The decision to extend your home is an important one that will involve a large financial investment. You need to carefully consider the type and size of extension that will best meet your requirements.
- 3.5 Some developments can be carried out without the benefit of planning permission and the rules regarding this are contained within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's booklet 'Planning: A Guide for Householders', and are also available on the Council Website.
- 3.6 The diagram highlights some of the general issues to consider in any Application:



Character & Appearance

- 3.7 When considering the design of your extension you should take into account whether the design will adhere to the character and appearance of both the existing dwelling and that of its surrounding streetscape. It is important that the extension is sub-ordinate to the host dwelling. The Council seeks to impose a maximum limit of a 50% increase in the volume of the proposed extension upon the original host dwelling. Incremental extensions to dwellings will be limited to this maximum threshold.
- 3.8 Roof design is an important part in the issue of character and appearance. Roofing design should match that of the existing dwelling. Mixing gable and hipped roofs should be avoided as they create unbalanced confused designs, which detract from the appearance of the property and the surrounding area.
- 3.9 Additional windows should be of an appropriate size, shape, style and colour that respect the overall design of both the extension and its host dwelling.
- 3.10 If your extension does not fit in the character and appearance of the house to be extended and the locality in which it is situated, then the Council could refuse the application. Examples of which are illustrated below:



- 3.11 When deciding upon the design for any extension, it is important to consider the impact the development you are proposing will have on

the 'sense of place' in which it is located. A strong sense of place can be easily created by:

- Using considerate building materials;
- Drawing on the varied and different housing types of the surrounding streetscape; and
- Respecting the massing, roof shapes, orientation and the building line of the neighbouring dwellings.

Overshadowing, Over Dominance, Loss of Amenity

- 3.12 It is important that the amenity of adjacent properties are protected in relation to the over dominance, loss of privacy and loss of daylight, of proposed extensions.

Site Level Changes

- 3.13 Changes in levels between dwellings can increase or decrease the effect that an extension may have upon an adjacent property. Differences in site levels will be taken into account in all cases when making a decision.

Trees

- 3.14 It is important that any extension proposed seeks to retain any trees within the property. Trees have an important function in relation to the amenity of the streetscene. There will be limited occasions where some trees may need to be removed as part of an extension. Where this is the case, prior to the submission of the planning application, applicants should liaise with the Local Planning Authority to replace these trees with trees with species of wide biodiversity value.
- 3.15 Some trees may have the additional protection of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or be located within a Conservation Area. Any development, which adversely affects any trees or hedgerows, may well be referred to the Tree Officer for specialist advice. They will give their views as to whether any trees or hedges are of public value and should be protected. If a TPO or Conservation Area designation protects any tree affected by your proposal, then any adverse impact upon the tree will be carefully considered in determining the application.

Sustainability Issues

- 3.16 It is important that any extension seeks to maximise the use of sustainable construction methods and maximises energy efficiency. Further guidance can be found in the Regional Building in Sustainability Guide at [Building in Sustainability Guide](#). Furthermore, it is important that any plumbing within the extensions approved, is fitted correctly to

minimise inefficient water usage. Further guidance on this issue is provided by the Environment Agency.

3.17 The development of extensions in domestic garden space can bring built development closer to areas of wildlife, particularly in smaller communities. It is important that applicants consider the potential negative effects on wildlife as a result of the loss of garden space.

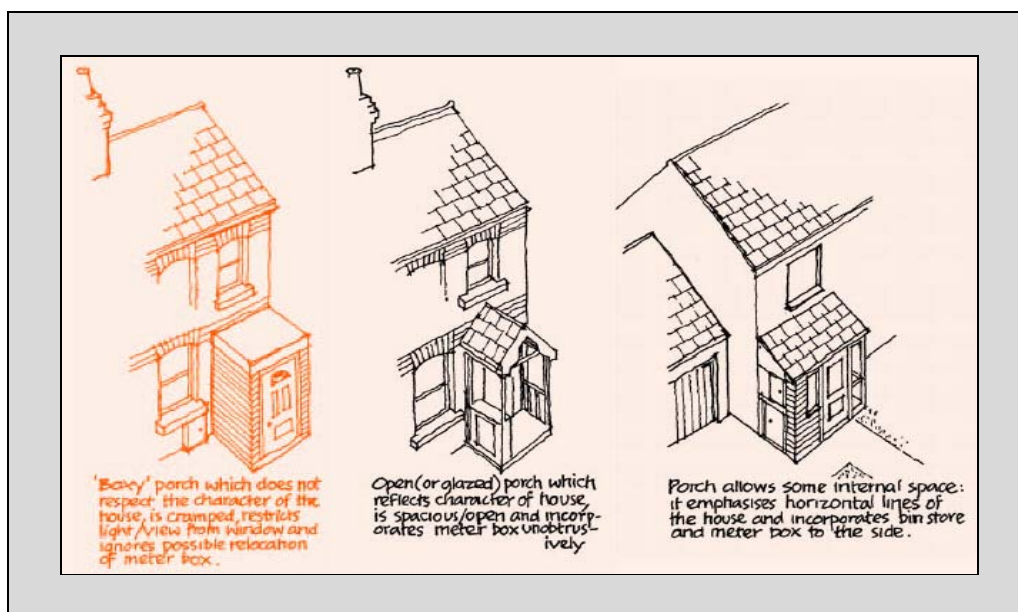
3.18 The following sections of this SPD deal with the various types of household extensions. The relevant sections are as follows:

- Porches
- Front Extensions
- Side Extensions
- Rear Extensions
- Rural Extensions
- Conservatories
- Roof Alterations
- Garages/Outbuildings
- Walls, Fences & Gates
- Other Considerations & Consents

3.19 The text should be used to guide the general design and construction of the extensions. They are not intended to inhibit imaginative architecture nor innovative design.

Porches¹

- 4.1 The design and appearance of the front elevation of houses, as well as the distance between properties in the street or road are important elements in defining the character of the local streetscene. It is important that a new porch reflects the design and character of your property and should therefore be made to appear to be part of your original property, and not as an obvious addition. On semi-detached and terraced properties, it is particularly important to consider the symmetry and design of neighbouring porches. Details such as materials, arrangement of windows and roof pitch should complement the original building's design, age and scale.
- 4.2 A porch of poor design and quality that bears no relation to the symmetry of neighbouring properties or terrace can be collectively damaging to the appearance of the street scene.
- 4.3 The diagram below illustrates how not to extend your porch (red) and successful approaches to achieving a successful outcome (black):



- 4.4 Applications for porches will need to:

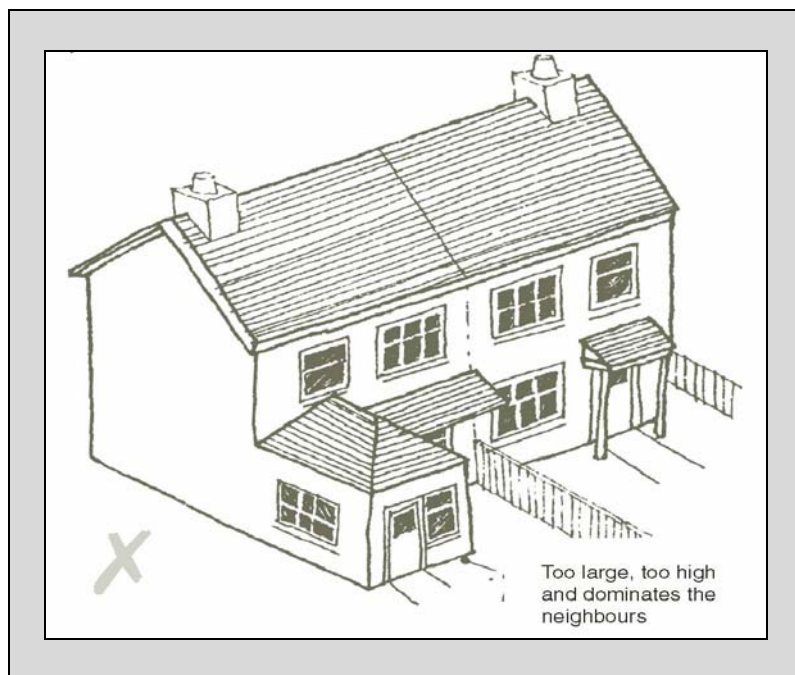
- Reflect and complement the design of the host dwelling, especially in style, proportion and materials;
- Be of a scale which does not dominate the elevation where it is sited, or indeed the existing curtilage of the property; and
- Be in keeping with the character and appearance of the area.

It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

¹ For more information on whether your side extension requires planning permission refer to the Central Government publication *Planning: A Guide for Householders – Section A*

Forward Extensions

- 5.1 The design and appearance of the front elevation of houses, as well as the distance between properties in the street or road are important elements in defining the character of the local streetscene. In order to protect this character it is a necessity to strictly control the siting and design of all extensions to the front of dwellings.
- 5.2 Front extensions are the most difficult of all extensions to design satisfactorily. Therefore, they will only come forward in exceptional circumstances. For example, terraced properties usually have a unity of design based upon a repetition of design details, which set up a rhythm that a front extension would interrupt. This is to the detriment and character of the street.
- 5.3 In the case of semi-detached houses, each one of a pair is normally designed as a mirror image of the other. A front extension will be likely to have a disruptive effect upon this, unless it is small enough to be absorbed within the design of the pair of houses and the streetscene as a whole. This is particularly the case where dwellings are arranged on a fixed building line and also applies to closely spaced detached houses of similar design.
- 5.4 This diagram depicts an example of what we're aiming to avoid:



5.5 Applications for forward extensions will need to:

- Justify exceptional circumstances;
- Enhance the character and appearance of the dwelling and locality and does not unbalance a pair of semi-detached dwellings or a row of terraced dwellings;
- Have no resultant problems of unreasonable overshadowing, over dominance, loss of privacy, and, loss of daylight to adjacent properties;
- Not result in the unacceptable loss of off street parking facilities;
- Not project forward of the common building line;
- Not have a flat roof; and
- Have no adverse effect on trees.

It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

Side Extensions²

- 6.1 Side extensions are highly visible in the street-scene and can have a significant impact upon the character of a housing area. It is essential, therefore, that they are well designed to avoid having a negative impact upon their surroundings.
- 6.2 The character of a housing area derives not only from the design of individual dwellings but also from their layout and spatial relationships. The gaps between houses provide a sense of spaciousness and, in the worst cases, their inappropriate infilling or interruption results in a fundamental change in an area's character.
- 6.3 This phenomenon commonly occurs in areas of semi-detached housing, where large side extensions completely fill gaps between dwellings to create a terracing effect. Detached housing usually offers less potential for the terracing effect, provided extensions are allowed only to one side of the dwellings.
- 6.4 To avoid the terracing effect, two-storey extensions to the side of dwellings should maintain a minimum distance of 1 metre to the side boundary and should be set back at first floor from the main front elevation of the host dwelling by a similar amount. The ground floor element should be set back by at least 200mm to create a visual break and avoid an otherwise continuous frontage, and the roof ridgeline should be lower to reduce the visual bulk of the development and make it appear subordinate to the host dwelling.
- 6.5 Where a first floor side extension is proposed over an existing ground floor extension that lies on, or within 1 metre of the side boundary, it will not be acceptable to extend over its full width and it must also maintain a minimum distance of 1 metre to the side boundary. In such circumstances, the first floor element will be required to be set back by a distance equivalent to 25% of the depth of the host dwelling from the main front elevation to further minimise its visual impact.
- 6.6 If the existing ground floor extension projects forward of the main front elevation of the dwelling, it will be acceptable to extend at first floor in accordance with the above criteria, subject to the removal of the projecting ground floor part of the existing extension.
- 6.7 Single storey side extensions should also follow the '1 metre to side boundary' rule for similar reasons, and in order to make future first floor development easier to achieve.
- 6.8 In all cases, appropriately designed pitched or hipped roofs should be used to match the roof design of the host dwelling, with the ridge lines

² For more information on whether your side extension requires planning permission refer to the Central Government publication *Planning: A Guide for Householders – Section A*

of extensions set lower to assist in making extensions appear subordinate. Flat roofs are not considered acceptable on side extensions.

- 6.9 Side extensions should not be so large that they upset the balance of the pair of semi-detached dwellings. For this reason, extensions that extend the width of dwellings by more than 50% will not normally be allowed.
- 6.10 On corner sites, side extensions will not be permitted to project beyond the return street frontage.

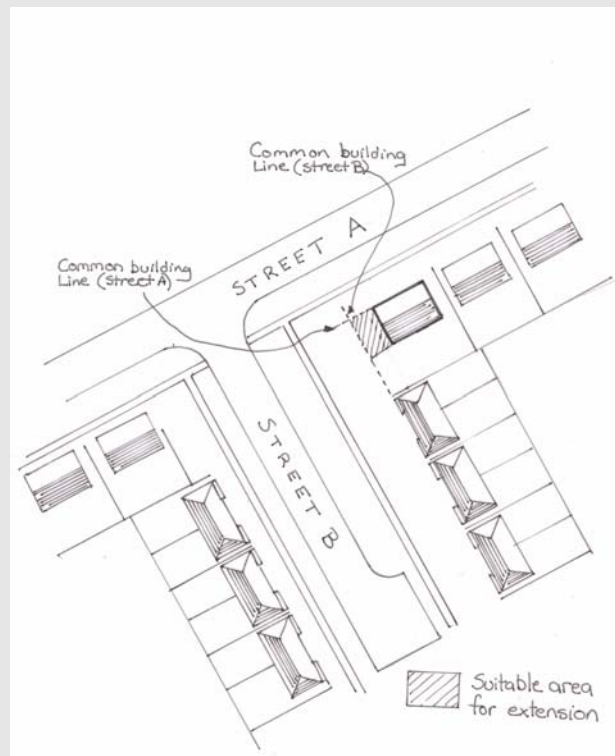
Planning permission will be granted for side extensions where:

- The design of the extension respects the character and appearance of the host dwelling in terms of scale, design and detailing, and of the locality in general;
- In the case of a **single storey side extension**, its design complements the host dwelling and is subordinate to that dwelling in terms of scale and massing;
- In the case of a **two storey side extension**, a minimum distance of 1 metre is preserved between the outside wall of the extension and the side boundary, the first floor element is set back from the main front elevation of the host dwelling by a minimum of 1 metre and the ground floor set back by a minimum of 200mm;
- In the case of a **first floor side extension**, a minimum distance of 1 metre is preserved between the outside wall of the extension and the side boundary, and it is set back by a minimum distance of 1 metre from the main front elevation of the dwelling. Where the existing ground floor distance to the side is less than 1 metre, the first floor extension must set back from the main front elevation by a distance equivalent to at least 25% of the depth of the host dwelling. If any part of the existing ground floor extension projects forward of the main front elevation of the dwelling, that projecting part must be removed;
- Where the dwelling occupies a corner location, the side extension does not project beyond the return street frontage;
- In the case of a detached dwellinghouse, it does not result in extensions to both sides;
- It does not feature a flat roof;
- The roof pitch and design matches that of the host dwelling, and its ridge height is lower; and
- The design of the extension takes account of any significant difference in level between the application site and the adjoining property.

6.11 The following set of diagram depict an example of successful approach to side extensions and what is meant by return street frontage:



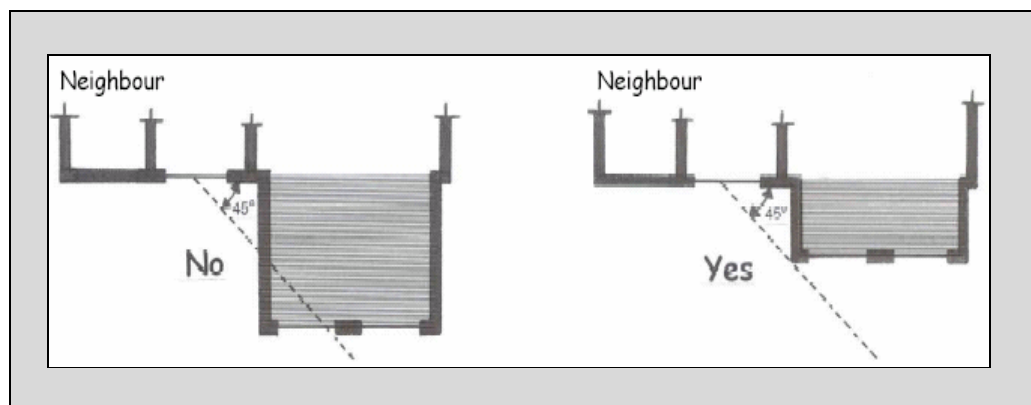
Return Street Frontage



It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

Rear Extensions³

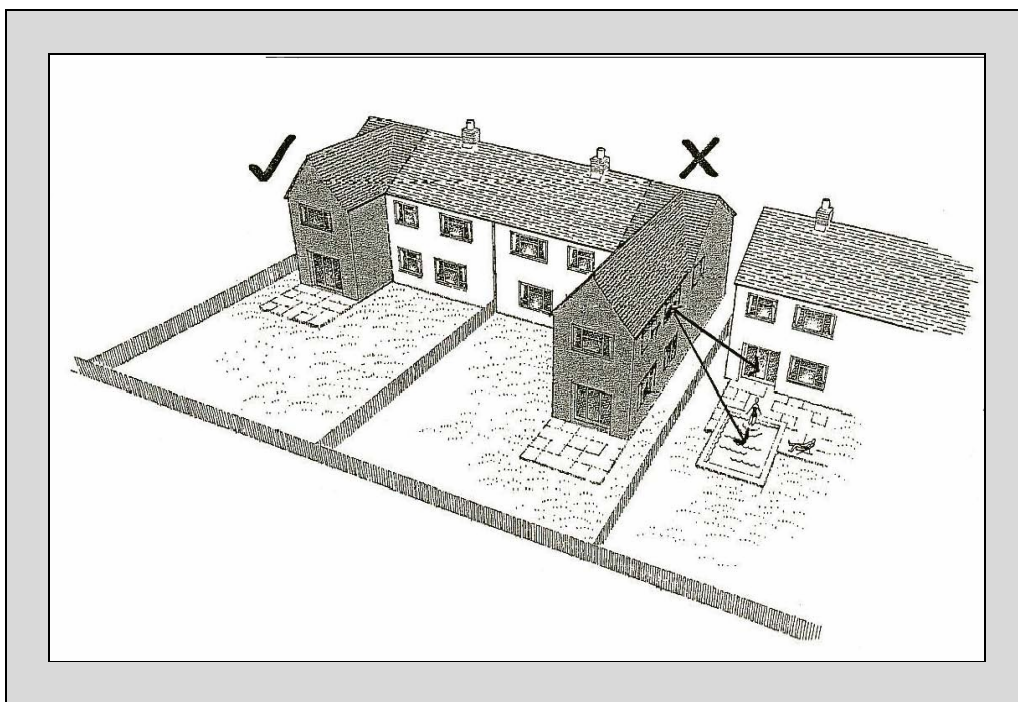
- 7.1 Rear extensions are usually the simplest and most acceptable way of extending the size and number of rooms in your home. Although rear extensions are rarely visible from the street, they are usually highly visible from neighbouring properties. It is important to ensure that there is no adverse affect on neighbouring properties. These properties need to be protected in terms of overshadowing, over dominance, loss of privacy, loss of daylight and sunlight.
- 7.2 The shape of the roof is also an important aspect of a development. Unusual roof shapes are highly obtrusive and degrade the character and appearance of the localised area. Flat roofs are rarely appropriate, and are especially inappropriate on two storey extensions.
- 7.3 First floor and two storey extensions are more intrusive and will have a greater potential impact upon the amenity of adjacent properties than single storey extensions. Therefore, when considering the impact of such developments, these should not encroach within a line taken at 45-degree line from the centre of the nearest habitable room, (*in accordance with the Local Planning Authority's 45-degree code*).
- 7.4 The Local Planning Authority implements a 45-degree code on how the residential extensions should be preferably sited. The code is applied by drawing a line at 45-degrees from the mid-point of the nearest window to a habitable room on any adjoining owner's property. If this line cuts through any part of the development proposed then the extension is too large and should be reduced in scale, in order to fall within this SPD and prevent any negative impact on the privacy of any neighbouring residents.
- 7.5 The diagram below depicts the Council's 45-degree code:



³ For more information on whether your rear extension needs planning permission, please refer to *Planning: A Guide for Householders – Section A*.

Habitable Room⁴

- 7.6 If the window of the nearest habitable room to be affected is not the primary source of daylight, then the 45-degree code may be relaxed.
- 7.7 This diagram depicts what the council means with regard to issues of overshadowing, over dominance, loss of privacy:



- 7.8 Applications for rear extensions will need to:

- Adhere to the 45° code;
- Respect the character and appearance of the dwelling and locality in which it is situated;
- Not affect the amenity of adjacent properties;
- Ensure there are no problems of unreasonable overshadowing, over dominance, loss of privacy, loss of daylight to adjacent properties;
- Ensure the roof pitch of the extension matches that of the original house;
- There is no encroachment on a common boundary with any neighbouring property; and
- Extensions should not have any adverse effect on trees.

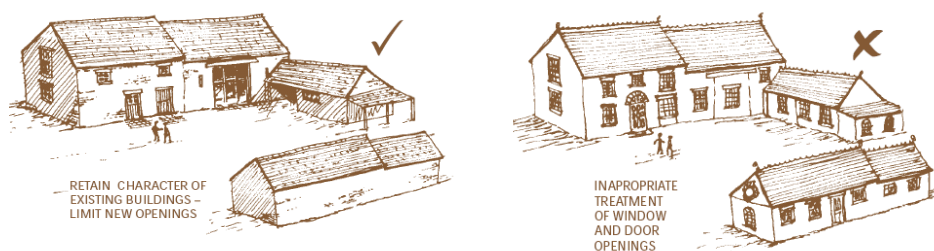
It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

⁴ Any room used or intended to be used for sleeping, cooking, living or eating purposes. This excludes such enclosed spaces as pantries, bath or toilet facilities, service rooms, corridors, laundries, hallways, utility rooms or similar spaces.

Rural Extensions⁵

- 8.1 Dwellings tend to be either isolated farm dwellings surrounded by agricultural buildings or part of small sporadic groupings along roads and lanes connecting villages. Government policy in Planning Policy Statement 7 seeks broadly to restrict development in the countryside as a matter of principle and, related specifically to existing dwellings, to allow reasonable levels of householder development providing that it does not give rise to a visually harmful impact.
- 8.2 Farm buildings have a functional simplicity, which is part of their appeal. Changes to the roof slope, amendments to the eaves line and the addition of porches in most cases result in a loss of the building's original character. The Council believes that farm buildings should be preserved in their original form. The building should, therefore, avoid substantial and alien new extensions.
- 8.3 Applications for rural extensions will need to:

- Expresses a coherent design form;
- Not result in a poorly proportioned or intrusive building in the landscape; and;
- Not undermine the dominance of the landscape through unacceptable cumulative levels of householder related development at the site over time.

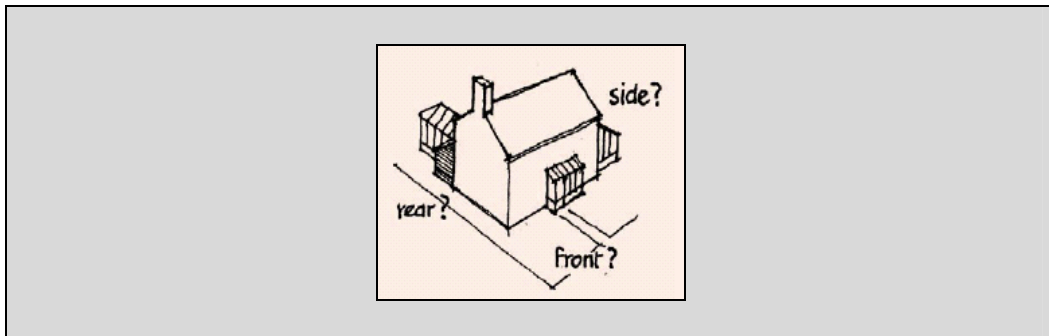


It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

⁵ For more information on whether your rear extension needs planning permission, please refer to *Planning: A Guide for Householders – Section A*

Conservatories⁶

- 9.1 Given the purpose and design of conservatories, they can give rise to problems of loss of privacy and overshadowing for adjacent properties.



- 9.2 Window design is also very important. Matching window styles between the conservatory and the main house enhances the appearance of the conservatory and does not detract from the streetscene.
- 9.3 A conservatory is an extension that incorporates glazing instead of solid wall construction. As with other extensions, conservatories are subject to planning control. The same criteria are applied when considering whether planning permission is required.
- 9.4 Where it is considered that the privacy of adjoining properties (whether habitable room or amenity space) is prejudiced, the window panels from which the overlooking will occur will be required to be of fixed pane construction and obscurely glazed. Also, additional screening e.g. fence may also be required. In situations where the conservatory results in an unacceptable loss of privacy and there are no appropriate mitigating measures, planning permission will be refused.
- 9.5 Applications for conservatories will need to:

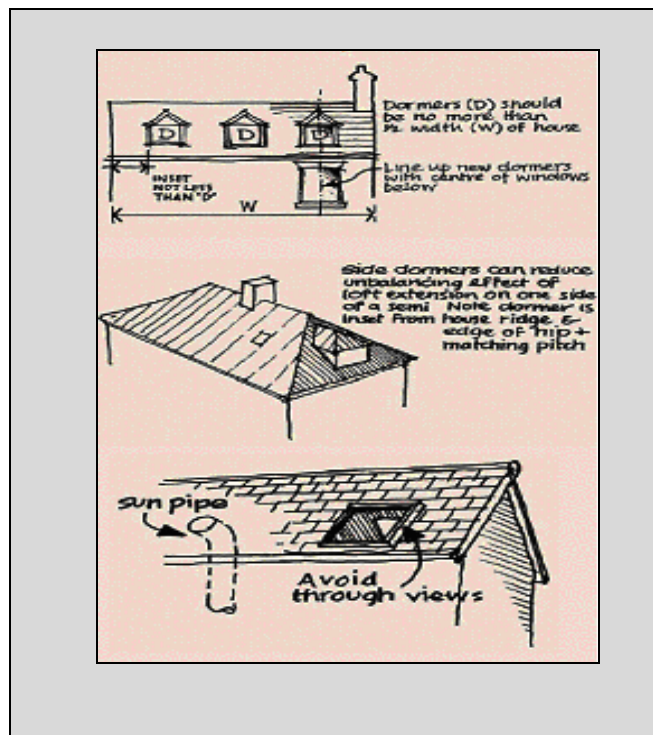
- Ensure that materials used match or complement the host dwelling.
- Respect the form, character, period and style of the existing dwelling;
- Conform with the principles of the 45° code, or the length does not exceed 4m when abutting an adjacent boundary (whichever is the greater);
- A 1.8m high solid boundary is retained along the boundary between neighbours, which is within 3m the conservatory; and
- Where a 1.8m boundary treatment is not appropriate a brick wall, screening or obscure glazing shall be provided in the elevation that fronts the common boundary.

It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

⁶ For more information on whether conservatory needs planning permission, please refer to *Planning: A Guide for Householders – Section A*.

Dormer Windows and Roof Extensions⁷

- 10.1 Dormer windows should not be so large that they dominate the roof, but be at a scale that is within keeping with the property. Dormers that extend along the full length of the roof will create a boxy heavy feel to the elevation and will generally not be accepted particularly on front elevations.
- 10.2 The design of dormer windows should match the scale and characteristic of the building or others in the street. Smaller windows with gabled, sloped or hipped roofs, are often more appropriate.
- 10.3 To maintain the balance of the overall elevation dormer windows should be positioned in line with other fenestration. Take account of the wider context when considering what type of dormer may be suitable for your location.
- 10.4 Dormer windows should be constructed of an appropriate material that blends in with the existing roof. This may be tiles, slates, lead or timber boarding.



- 10.5 It is important that advice is taken from the Borough Council's Building Control team to ensure compliance with Building Regulations.

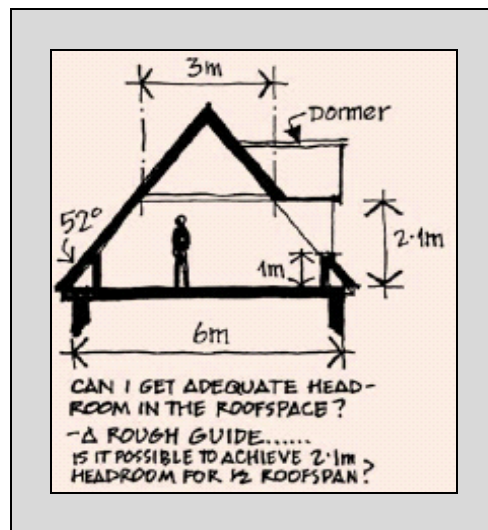
⁷ For more information on whether your dormer window or roof extension needs planning permission, please refer to *Planning: A guide for Householders* – Section A.

10.6 Applications for dormer windows and roof extensions will need to:

- Be in keeping with the character and appearance of the local streetscene;
- Be sited below the ridgeline of the dwelling;
- Be set well back from the eaves line, usually such that the window cill rests on the roof plane;
- Be set well in from the eaves line and not built off any external walls; and,
- Flat-roofed dormer windows will not be allowed.

Loft Conversions

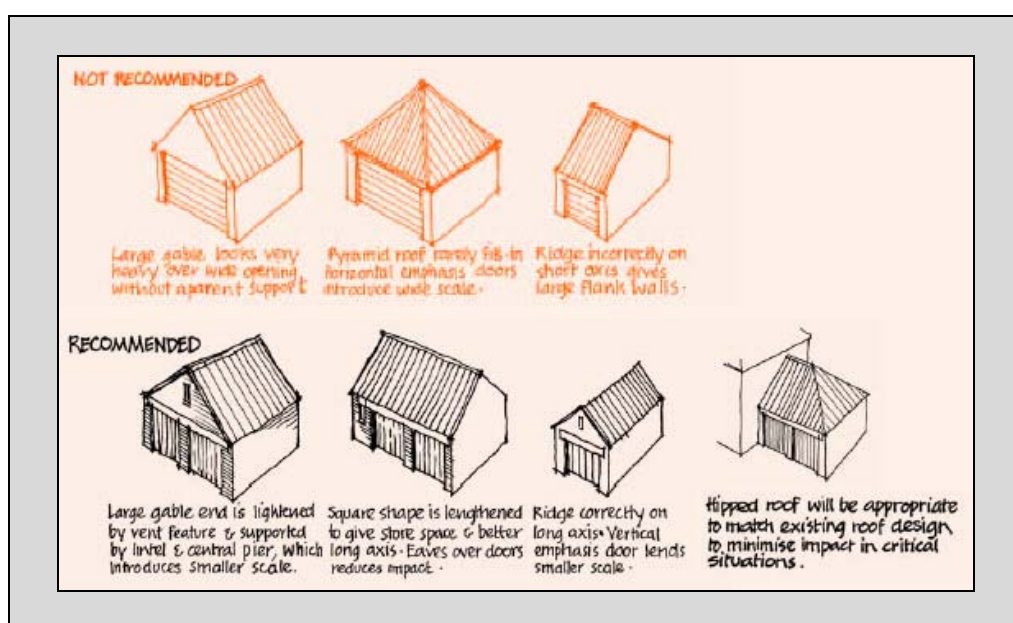
- 10.7 Loft conversions usually require the approval of Building Regulations. You are advised to contact Sedgefield Borough Council's Building Control Service for advice in respect of this, prior to construction or the submission of any planning application. Attention will also need to be applied to the Party Wall Act expanded upon in paragraph 18.1.



It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

Garages and Outbuildings⁸

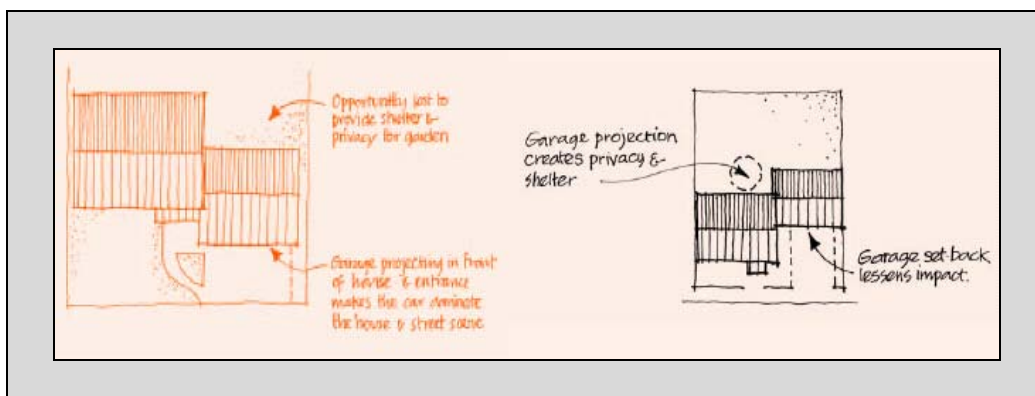
- 11.1 Attached garages to dwellings will be judged in the same way as any extension, therefore the materials, size, design and roof arrangements will have to complement the host dwelling.
- 11.2 Garages and outbuildings should be designed with a roof shape, which complements the main dwelling. Flat and mono-pitched roofs are not appropriate, as they can detract from the host and have serious implications for the character of the streetscene, as well as future maintenance.



- 11.3 Detached garages and outbuildings may be constructed in variety of materials, however materials that match or complement the main dwelling will be preferred.
- 11.4 Garages need to leave a minimum of a 5.5m gap between the boundary adjoining the highway (which includes the footpath) and the front elevation of the garage. This allows adequate space for a vehicle to stand in front of the garage and for the garage door to be opened without having a detrimental impact on the users of the highway, in accordance with Policy D3 (Design for Access) of the Sedgfield Borough Local Plan.

⁸ For garages attached to the house or within 5m of the house please refer to *Planning: A Guide for Householders – Section A*.

For detached garages more than 5m from the house and outbuildings (summer houses, animal houses etc), please refer to *Planning: A Guide for Householders – Section B*.



11.5 Applications for garages and outbuildings will need to:

- Respect the character and appearance of the host dwelling and streetscene;
- Not affect the amenity of adjacent properties;
- Ensure there is no encroachment on the common boundary; and
- Ensure there is no adverse effect on trees.

Flat roofs are considered inappropriate on all garages and outbuildings

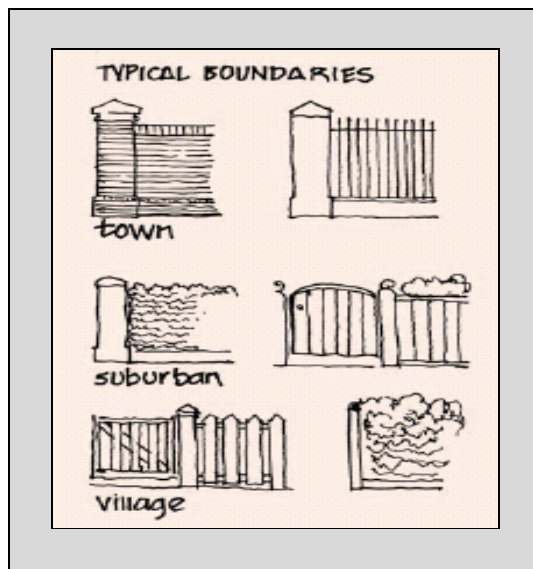
Garage Conversions

- 11.7 In most cases you may convert your garage into a habitable living area without planning permission as long as you do not change its external appearance. For example you must not alter or extend the garage or its roof. The only change that is allowed would be to the look of the front of the garage.
- 11.8 However it is advisable to check with the Local Planning Authority that your permitted development rights have not been removed by a condition imposed on any original planning permission.
- 11.9 Please note that Building Regulations approval would be required to convert your garage.

It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

Walls and Fences

- 12.1 The design and detailing of boundary gates, walls and fences, particularly on highway frontages, plays an important role in defining the character of all residential areas. Means of enclosure can be very prominent in the street scene, and can have a high visual impact.
- 12.2 The safety of users of the highway is of paramount importance. Therefore, there should be no detrimental impact upon highway safety. The erection of walls and fences adjacent to a highway should be sited in such a position that the required visibility splays are maintained free of any obstruction.



- 12.3 Gates, walls or fences should not be permitted on open plan estates.
- 12.4 Applications for gates, walls or fences will need to:

- Ensure that the style and materials matches or compliments the existing style of the boundary treatment in the surrounding area or, when more appropriate, the dwelling itself;
- Open areas of land in residential areas that serve to soften the streetscape and provide an amenity function should be preserved and not enclosed; and,
- Highway visibility should be preserved.

It should be noted that the design issues mentioned in this SPD remain important considerations of any development regardless of whether Planning Permission is required or not.

Other Considerations and Consents

Land Ownership

- 13.1 If you have any query over the ownership of land you should refer to the deeds of your property, or by contacting the Land Registry in Durham on 0191 301 3500. The Planning Service holds no information at all regarding the ownership of land.

Utilities

- 13.2 Northumbrian Water Ltd are the service provider that maintains the existing water mains in the Borough area. Occasionally, proposals for residential extensions are refused permission as they have an adverse affect on the maintenance requirements of the service provider. It is important therefore that the service provider agrees that the proposed extension has no impact upon their service delivery.

Building Regulation Approval

- 13.3 In most situations Building Regulations approval is also necessary. These prescribe minimum standards for health and safety. The Regulations also apply to certain changes of use of existing buildings. You also need approval from the Council if the work you want to do involves building over a sewer or a drain. Applicants are advised to contact the Building Control Section for advice as to whether an application is necessary by calling the number listed in the Contacts section.

Party Wall Act

- 13.4 Any development adjacent to the boundary of the site must also comply with the requirements of the Party Wall Act. An explanatory leaflet can be viewed at: (<http://www.odpm.gov.uk>)

Boundary Encroachment

- 13.5 Extensions to residential properties can often run close to, or along the boundary with neighbouring properties. In such circumstances, the extension of one property should not place demands on land outside of the applicant's control, ensuring that all development is retained within the application site.
- 13.6 In cases where your extension would encroach upon the boundary of a neighbour you will be required to serve notice on your neighbour and submit 'Certificate B' with your planning application to the Local Planning Authority. This indicates to the Council that you do not own all the land on which you intend to develop; and in turn, the serving of the 'Notice' specifically notifies your neighbour that you are making an application for development that will affect land in their ownership.

- 13.7 However, even if planning permission is granted for development, which encroaches onto adjoining land, the owner of this land may not allow such an encroachment to take place. In this instance the proposed development would be unable to be implemented without additional plans being submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Listed Building Consent

- 13.6 You will need to apply for listed building consent if either of the following cases apply.

- You want to demolish or partially demolish a listed building; and
- You want to alter (internally or externally) or extend a listed building in a manner, which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest.

- 13.7 You may also need listed building consent for any works to buildings within the grounds of a listed building. Check the position carefully with the Council – it is a criminal offence to carry out work which needs listed building consent without obtaining it beforehand. Information on Listed and Historic Buildings can be found at: www.english-heritage.org.uk

Conservation Area Consent

- 13.8 If you live in a Conservation Area, you will need Conservation Area Consent to do the following:

- Demolish a building with a volume of more than 115 cubic metres. There are a few exceptions – you can get further information by contacting the Council; and
- To demolish a gate, fence, wall or railing over 1 metre high where next to a highway (including a public footpath or bridleway) or public open space; or over 2 metres high elsewhere.

Sedgefield Village: Article 4 Direction

- 13.9 Parts of the Sedgefield Village Conservation Area have an Article 4 Direction. This direction places additional obligations and restrictions on residential dwellings in terms of the works that they can undertake without the need for planning permission.

- Permission is required for the following development within the curtilage of a dwelling house:
- the alteration, addition, or insertion of a window or window opening;
 - the alteration, addition, or insertion of a door, door frame or door opening;

- the alteration of a chimney stack;
- the enlargement of a dwelling house consisting of an addition or alteration to its roof;

Trees

- 13.10 Many trees are protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO), which means that you need the Council's consent to prune or fell them. In addition, there are controls over many other trees in Conservation Areas. Ask for a copy of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's free leaflet '*Protected Trees: a guide to tree preservation procedures*'.

Rights of Way

- 13.11 If your proposed development would obstruct or impact upon a public footpath, which crosses your property, you should contact Durham County Council's Rights of Way Team on 0191 383 4411.

Wildlife

- 13.12 Some houses may hold roosts of bats or provide a refuge for other protected species. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 gives special protection to bats because of their roosting requirements. English Nature must be notified of any proposed action (e.g., remedial timber treatment, renovation, demolition and extensions), which is likely to disturb bats or their roosts. English Nature must then be allowed time to advise on how best to prevent inconvenience to both bats and householders. Information on bats and law is included in the booklet *Focus on Bats*, which can be obtained, free of charge from English Natures, website: <http://www.english-nature.org.uk>.

Contact Details

Address: Development Control Team
Council Offices,
Spennymoor,
DL16 6JQ

Phone: 01388 816166

Fax: 01388 824200

Email: planning@sedgefield.gov.uk

Website: www.sedgefield.gov.uk/planning/index.htm

Sedgefield Borough Council

Local Development Framework:
Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning
Document

Full Sustainability Appraisal

September 2005

Prepared by Barbara Hooper (Independent Consultant)
on behalf of Sedgefield Borough Council

HOW TO COMMENT ON THIS REPORT

This Sustainability Appraisal Report has been prepared for the Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document. Both are subject of a formal consultation exercise **from A DATE until A DATE.**

Following the consultation period, Sedgefield Borough Council will consider the responses and make any necessary amendments.

Comments are welcomed on this report. In particular, we are seeking views on the following areas.

- Has all the relevant background information been identified and correctly interpreted? (This includes other plans and programmes, and baseline data.)
- Have all the key issues for the SPD been properly identified?
- Do you agree with our appraisal of the significant effects of the SPD?
- Are our suggested indicators appropriate for monitoring the SPD?

Comments must be in writing, and should specify the matters/paragraphs to which they relate.

Copies of the relevant documents have been placed at the Borough Council Offices and local libraries and are available for inspection during normal office hours. The documents are also available on the Council's web site on www.sedgefield.gov.uk

Comments can also be submitted on line, using the following e-mail address cmyers@sedgefield.gov.uk.

Written comments should be sent to:

Mr. C Myers
Forward Planning Manager
Sedgefield Borough Council
Council Offices
Spennymoor
DL16 6JQ

ALL COMMENTS MUST BE SUBMITTED BY A DATE

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INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the Sustainability Appraisal of the draft report 'Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Extensions'. The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) has been prepared as part of the Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework (LDF), and - in accordance with European and national legislation - has undergone a Sustainability Appraisal as part of its preparation.

The Sustainability Appraisal has followed the guidance laid down in the ODPM document '*Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Frameworks*' (Consultation Paper 2004) and the '*Interim Advice Note on Frequently Asked Questions*' (ODPM 2005), and as such complies with the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment 2001/42/EC. The Appraisal also draws heavily upon the work already undertaken in carrying out the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Development Framework Key Issues Paper (published for consultation in July 2005, entitled *Local Development Framework: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report*). **It is strongly recommended that a copy of the Scoping Report is available for reference when reading this Sustainability Appraisal of the SPD.** A full explanation of the Sustainability Appraisal process and its implications for the Local Development Framework are given in that document, along with the details relating to the preparation of the Sustainability Framework which has been used for the appraisal of this SPD.

Throughout this report, the acronym 'LDF' will be used when referring to one or more of the documents included within the Local Development Framework portfolio.

CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND

1.1 The Supplementary Planning Document and related policies

A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) is intended to expand policy or provide further detail to policies contained within a LDF. It needs to be consistent with all LDF policies, and be clearly cross-referenced to the relevant policy that it supplements.

However, the SPD on Residential Extensions is being prepared in advance of the Sedgefield Borough LDF. This is due to the urgent need for improved guidance on residential extensions, as the existing guidance, 'Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: The Design of Extensions to Dwellings' was produced in 2000, and is now out of date.

In the absence of any LDF policies, this SPD therefore needs to be cross-referenced back to the relevant policies contained within the Sedgefield Borough Local Plan, adopted in 1996, which will eventually be replaced by the LDF. The relevant policies are:

Policy H15: *Extensions to dwellings will normally be approved provided the proposals are of a scale and design compatible with the property and there are no adverse affects on:*

- a) *the amenity and privacy of surrounding properties contrary to Policy D5;*
- b) *the general character of the area and*
- c) *highway safety contrary to Policy T7.*

Policy H16: *Planning permission will normally be granted for an extension to the front elevation of a dwelling only where:*

- a) *it does not project forward of the building line;*
- b) *it is on an isolated dwelling; or*
- c) *it is on a dwelling in an area where there is no common building line.*

1.2 Appraisal Methodology for the SPD

The methodology for carrying out the SA of the SPD has been based upon the ODPM guidance (referenced in the Introduction), and as such encompasses the requirements of the EU Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive 2001/42/EC. The ODPM guidance sets out a series of tasks which should be followed in order to carry out a SA. These are listed below (encompassing the revisions to Stages B and C suggested by the ODPM Interim Advice Note).

Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and scope

- Task A1: Identifying other relevant plans, programmes
- Task A2: Collecting baseline information
- Task A3: Identifying key sustainability issues
- Task A4: Developing the SA Framework
- Task A5: Testing the SPD objectives against the SA Framework
- Task A6: Consulting on the scope of the SA

Stage B: Appraisal

To include: Testing plan objectives against the SA Framework; Developing and refining options; Predicting and assessing effects; Identifying mitigation measures; Developing proposals for monitoring.

Stage C: Documenting appraisal process in Sustainability Appraisal Report

Stage D: Consulting on the plan and SA Report

A number of the tasks required for Stage A, however, have already been covered in depth when carrying out the SA of the LDF Key Issues, summarised in the *Local Development Framework: Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report* (June 2005) – hereon referred to as the *Scoping Report*. This previous work provides the background for this SA, and this report will therefore focus only on the detailed effects of the SPD.

In particular, the previous work resulted in the development of a Sustainability Framework (Task A4), in consultation with a wide range of key stakeholders. It is proposed that this same Framework is used for the appraisal of the SPD, given in Chapter 5, Table 3. This will assist in streamlining the work required for this SPD, avoiding duplication and ensuring continuity between the different SA's required throughout the LDF production.

Given the nature of the SPD on Residential Extensions, and the recent production and level of detail involved in the *Scoping Report*, the SA of this SPD should cover all Stages outlined above at once, and proceed straight to consultation with the draft SPD and accompanying full Sustainability Appraisal Report. This report therefore encompasses all elements of the SA, and represents the full report for consultation.

CHAPTER 2: IDENTIFYING OTHER RELEVANT PLANS AND PROGRAMMES

2.1 Developing the database

It is important to identify other plans and programmes which will influence the SPD on Residential Extensions. The *Scoping Report* drew together an extensive database for all documents which had relevance to the LDF. A number of these are generic in nature, and provide a broad reference base for this SPD.

However, only those plans and programmes which have a specific influence upon the SPD have been listed below, in Table 1.

The list identified below will be subject to the same limitations as those listed for the database in the *Scoping Report*.

Table 1: Review of relevant plans and programmes

Plan/Programme	Key objectives relevant to SPD	Implications for SPD/SA of SPD
*Planning Policy Guidance 3 (Housing)	Sets out to ensure a sufficient supply of housing in sustainable locations. Sets target of 60% of additional housing to be on previously developed land (PDL) or via conversions by 2008. More efficient use of land urged via density standards. Need to provide wider housing opportunity and choice, and promotes good design in new housing.	SPD will assist with improving mix of size and type of housing. May conflict with opportunities to integrate biodiversity into development, or decrease extent of green space?
*Home Energy Conservation Act (1995)	Promotes use of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency.	Consideration of how energy conservation measures/ renewables can be promoted.
*Housing Needs Survey and Dwelling Balance Analysis (SBC 2003)	Indicates a need for affordable 1-2 bedroom houses and modern flats. Sets targets for each major town.	SPD may help in delivering targets (eg: via conversions, extensions etc)
Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4: The Design of Extensions to Dwellings (SBC, 2000)	Provides guidance on design of extensions to existing buildings. Now limited in its scope and out of date.	Guidance needs replacing with far more detailed and comprehensive advice for residents.
Sedgefield Borough Local Plan (1996): Policies H15 and H16	Outline Council planning policy regarding when extensions to dwellings will normally be approved.	Policies due for revision as part of the LDF production.

**Plans/programmes listed in the LDF SA Scoping Report (June 2005)*

CHAPTER 3: BASELINE INFORMATION FOR SPD ON RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS

3.1 Developing the Database

The ODPM guidance advises that baseline information provides the basis for predicting and monitoring effects of the SPD, and helps to identify sustainability problems and ways of dealing with them. Sufficient information about the current and future state of the plan area should be collected to allow the plan's or programme's effects to be adequately predicted.

As with the review of plans and programmes, above, the recently produced *Scoping Report* developed an extensive database of baseline information, in consultation with organisations, individuals and Council departments. Much of this information is generic, and provides a reference point for the SPD. Only information giving additional detail, and/or considered of specific relevance to this SPD has therefore been identified below.

The data compiled below is subject to the same limitations as listed for the database in the *Scoping Report*.

Table 2: Baseline Information relevant to SPD

Indicator	SBC Situation	Comparator /Trend	Source
Number of applications for extensions (as %age of total no. of applications received?)	April 2002 – March 2003 Householder applications – 304 (49%) April 2003 – March 2004 Householder applications – 415 (65%) April 2004 – March 2005 Householder applications – 511 (68%)	Growth in number and percentage	PS1 & PS2 Government Returns
% applications for extensions requiring amendments	Datawright system not set up to identify statistical data	N/A	Datawright
% applications for extensions determined within time limit	April 2002 – March 2003 (41%) April 2003 – March 2004 (69%) April 2004 – March 2005 (78%)	Improvement in performance	PS1 & PS2 Government Returns
% developed land in residential areas	Unknown?		
% green space/gardens within built up areas	Unknown?		Baseline information required.
*Number of households	36,200 total household 2.41 people/house 1,200 vacant dwellings		Housing Flow Reconciliation Return (updated annually)
*Pattern of development density across plan area	Approx. no. of units/hectare: Spennymoor: 21.29 Newton Aycliffe: 17.36 Shildon: 22.86		Town Centre Surveys????
*Concentrations of underused properties	Chilton 25,941.2m ² Ferryhill Station 9,628.72m ²		GIS Compulsory purchase details
*Energy consumption per household	118 giga-joules pa. (1996/97) 106 giga-joules pa (2003/04)	Decreasing?	Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) Reports 1996-2004

** Baseline information contained within LDF SA Scoping Report (June 2005)*

3.2 Further Baseline information provided by Significant Effects of Saved Policies

In addition to the baseline data identified above, the ODPM Interim Advice Note suggests that the SA of an SPD needs to record the significant social, environmental and economic effects of the policy which the SPD is helping to implement. These will provide a further baseline against which the effects of the SPD itself can be considered.

In this instance, the SPD is helping to implement the saved Policies H15 and H16 from the Borough Local Plan (see Section 1.1 above). In due course, these policies will be formally replaced by the Development Control Policies Development Plan Document, and this will be subject to a full SA.

However, as the saved policies are contained within the older Borough Local Plan, they were not subjected to a SA at the time of preparation. The significant social, environmental and economic effects of these policies therefore need to be recorded. An appraisal was carried out by the planning authority, using the criteria cited in Article 3(5) of the SEA Directive, and the matrix produced is set out in Appendix I.

The screening of the saved Policies H15 and H16 of the Borough Local Plan identified that there were limited significant effects. However, the existing SPG Note 4 is becoming out of date, and if the situation remains, the likelihood of further significant effects will increase. By reviewing and refining the SPG Note 4, in the form of the new SPD on Residential Extensions, it should be possible to minimise any adverse environmental and social effects. Furthermore, the new Development Control Policies DPD to be produced as part of the LDF will, in their turn, be subject to a full SA.

CHAPTER 4: KEY SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES REGARDING RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS

4.1 Key issues identified

The recent *Scoping Report* for the Sustainability Appraisal of the LDF Key Issues carried out a comprehensive assessment of the sustainability issues affecting Sedgefield Borough. A number of these have direct relevance to the SPD on Residential Extensions. These have been further informed by the review of baseline data and other plans and programmes as part of this SA. The issues identified are as follow.

- The growing problem of housing affordability is leading to an increasing number of house extensions.
- There is currently no means of measuring the cumulative effects of increasing numbers of house extensions upon density or loss of green space (eg: gardens).
- Although there is a growing demand for new house building, certain areas of older housing are suffering abandonment.
- Climate change is one of the most serious sustainability issues affecting the Borough. Levels of greenhouse gas emissions are rising, yet levels of use or production of renewable energy are very low.
- There are increasing levels of water consumption and production of waste, but low levels of recycling. The potential for polluting activities (eg: from domestic water) needs to be minimised.
- Knowledge of biodiversity within the Borough is poor, which contributes to the danger of species and habitat loss and fragmentation. There is no means of monitoring the cumulative effects on wildlife (or climate change) of the loss of gardens/green space.

4.2 Implications for SPD

There are a number of potential implications for the SPD arising from these issues.

- *There needs to be an effective means of assessing indirect and cumulative effects of development.*
- *The SPD should encourage sustainable forms of construction, to reduce waste and encourage recycling and energy/water efficiency.*
- *There should be strong encouragement for integration of renewable forms of energy and energy efficiency.*
- *There is an urgent need to improve baseline data for biodiversity, including importance of gardens to wildlife and means of monitoring cumulative effects of loss through extensions.*

CHAPTER 5: APPRAISING THE SPD ON RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS

5.1 The Sustainability Appraisal Framework

A key aspect of the LDF Key Issues Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report was the development of a Sustainability Appraisal Framework, comprising a set of 18 sustainability objectives and associated indicators. This was drawn up with the input of key stakeholders, and used to appraise the LDF aims and objectives.

The SA Framework is considered to be comprehensive and robust, and will therefore be used to carry out the appraisal of the SPD. In order to summarise the effects of the SPD on the Sustainability Objectives, the objectives have been broadly classified into social, environmental and economic categories. (See Table 3, below.)

5.2 Appraising options for the SPD

As outlined in Section 1.2, the recent production of the *Scoping Report* for the LDF Key Issues has provided the local authority with a detailed and up-to-date piece of work to inform the production of this SPD. As a result, it has been possible to move straight into developing the draft SPD, without first going out to consultation on various policy options.

However, the ODPM advice recommends that, as a minimum, the SA should consider what would happen if no SPD were put in place. With this in mind, the planning authority has drawn up a short advice note on the implications of 'No SPD' and 'New SPD'. This has been summarised below.

No SPD: *The 'no SPD' option would mean that planning applications would have to be determined in accordance with out-of-date advice. However, this would have significant negative effects for the community.*

Inappropriate development may be permitted, as the guidance used to assess applications is out-of-date. This would lead to a decline in the overall quality of the built environment, and have an adverse effect on the design and character of the Borough's streetscene.

The 'no SPD' option would have negative social and environmental effects as the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance becomes increasingly out-of-date

New SPD: *The existing SPG is becoming out-of-date and does not offer sufficient detailed guidance to help applicants understand what the Borough Council will use to determine their planning application.*

The provision of a new SPD will help provide an up-to-date and detailed guidance note within which applications for residential extensions can be assessed. This new guidance will help Development Control Officers to advise potential applicants of what is acceptable for residential extensions, through the use of text and of illustrations, and help to process and determine planning applications in a more efficient and effective manner.

5.3 **Methodology for appraising the effects of the SPD**

A matrix has been drawn up (see Table 3) to appraise the effects of the SPD. In assessing the nature of the effects of the SPD on the Sustainability Objectives, the following scale was used.

Assessing the Effects of the SPD on Sustainability Objectives:

Key to appraisal

✓✓	Major positive
✓	Minor positive
0	Neutral
×	Minor negative
××	Major negative
?	Uncertain effect

It is inevitable that the prediction of effects will to a large extent be broad-brush and qualitative, and based upon subjective assessments. Even where predictions could potentially be measured, in many cases the baseline data is not available and is not currently being collated.

When determining the significance of the effect of the SPD, the ODPM guidance advises that issues such as the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects should be taken into account, along with the cumulative, secondary and synergistic effects. The geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected should also be considered.

The analysis of effects also needs to include whether they will be short, medium or long-term, permanent or temporary. The timescales will vary depending upon the options and the objectives against which they are being appraised. (For example: for transport, the short, medium and long terms could be 3, 10 and 25 years, while for climate change they could be 5, 20 and 100 years.)

5.4 **Testing the SPD – Key Findings**

When carrying out the SA of the SPD on Residential Extensions, consideration was given to the design guidelines summarised in each of the grey text boxes within the SPD document. The nature of the guidance means that, inevitably, there is a considerable amount of overlap and repetition between the text boxes. As a result, the decision was taken to appraise the SPD as a whole, amalgamating all the guidance into the one appraisal.

The results are shown in Table 3, below. The justifications for the assessment have been given, along with a summary of the appraisal against the social, environmental and economic objectives. While the advice is likely to bring about permanent social and economic benefits, the environmental effects are mixed, with the potential benefits of reducing the need for more, larger housing offset by the cumulative effects of a negative impact on climate change and loss of gardens/green space.

It should be possible to mitigate some of these negative effects by revising the advice, and giving greater prominence to sustainable construction and energy efficiency, and a number of recommendations have been given, (see below, and as set out in Table 3).

Recommendations arising from Appraisal:

1. Cross-reference to the draft LDF with regards alleviating the impact of climate change, and consider incorporating more encouragement for sustainable construction and energy efficiency.
2. Consider the means of assessing the cumulative effects on wildlife of the loss of gardens/green space.
3. Review the policy on retaining trees and hedges to accommodate options for replacing certain trees/hedges of minimal biodiversity and amenity value, to encourage the planting of species of greater wildlife value.
4. Consider the options for raising awareness of the problems of incorrect plumbing (eg: at the planning application stage), in conjunction with organisations such as the Environment Agency.

TABLE 3: Sustainability Appraisal of Statements made in Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Extensions

Summary of SA Objectives	Nature of Effect	Assessment of Effect			Justification for Assessment
		Short term	Medium Term	Long Term	
SOCIAL OBJECTIVES					
1 Reduce poverty & social exclusion	It is uncertain whether the improving the physical 'sense of place' would improve areas of disadvantage, and reverse deterioration.	0	?	?	Any positive effect of this advice is only likely to be seen in the medium to longer term, and would be very difficult to measure.
2 Improve health & well-being	Ensuring appropriate design to avoid loss of amenity will ensure continued well-being. Improving the sense of place may contribute towards increased well-being over time.	✓	✓/?	✓/?	The likelihood of these effects are medium to high, would occur throughout the Borough, and would be permanent.
3 Improve education, skills		0	0	0	
4 Opportunity to live in decent home	Using considerate building materials should enhance the appearance of homes.	✓	✓	✓	The likelihood of this is high, would occur throughout the Borough, and would be permanent over all timescales.
5 Improve city safety & reduce fear		0	0	0	
6 Improve quality of where people live	Improving consistency and design will have a strong positive effect upon physical quality of where people live.	✓	✓✓	✓✓	The likelihood of this is high, would occur throughout the Borough, and would be permanent and potentially increasing over time as the improvements take place cumulatively.
7 Improve accessibility to services		0	0	0	
8 Enhance sense of community		0	0	0	
9 Improve tourism, leisure & culture		0	0	0	
Summary appraisal against social objectives:					
By improving the appearance and quality of where people live, the guidance is likely to have a strong positive effect in the medium to long term. This effect would be experienced throughout the Borough.					
Recommendation: None					
ENVIRONMENTAL OBJECTIVES					
10 Reduce harmful impact of transport		0	0	0	

11	Conserve/enhance bio/geo-diversity	<p>Are there circumstances where the use of 'considerate building materials' would require the use of materials taken from sensitive natural locations, (eg: limestone, slate...?).</p> <p>Gardens have an important contribution in terms of wildlife habitat and 'green lungs' to absorb CO₂. With increasing numbers of extensions, would there be a cumulative and longer term impact on biodiversity due to the loss of gardens?</p> <p>Retaining trees and hedges on the basis of their landscape/streetscape value may also have a beneficial impact on biodiversity. However, many urban or garden trees may be species which have minimal benefit for wildlife. In some cases, it might be appropriate to consider replacing less valuable trees with those of a more appropriate species, thereby enabling both the extension to take place, and improving the benefits for wildlife.</p>	?/*	?/*	?/*	<p>Would these policies allow the consideration of alternative materials, which may look appropriate but would not be taken from sensitive areas?</p> <p>With the increase in numbers of extensions, there needs to be some consideration of the scale and impact of the cumulative effects on wildlife of the loss of gardens/green space. The long-term effects of loss of green space within towns could be significant. A system would need to be considered to monitor and assess this impact.</p> <p>There may be potential for the SPD to be carefully worded, to enable the consideration of replacing trees in certain situations where it would bring about enhanced benefits for wildlife in the longer term.</p>
12	Enhance land- & townscapes	<p>Ensuring consistency within dwellings and townscapes will enhance the appearance of areas. Avoiding the cumulative impact of inappropriate rural extensions will also protect landscapes.</p> <p>However, building materials taken from sensitive locations (eg: quarries in the area?) may have negative secondary effects by damaging landscapes.</p>	✓/*	✓/*	✓/*	<p>The comment above applies, regarding the use of alternative materials.</p>
13	Protect/enhance natural resources	<p>Extensions have been identified (nationally) as a potential source of water pollution through incorrect plumbing.</p>	?/*	?/*	?/*	<p>The secondary and cumulative effects of this could be significant, especially with the increasing numbers of extensions. Although not a planning consideration, can this issue be highlighted through the provision of information at the planning application stage?</p>
14	Reduce impact of climate change	<p>Extensions using non-sustainable forms of construction, and inadequate levels of energy efficiency, could lead to increased levels of carbon emissions and atmospheric warming.</p> <p>However, more efficient use of residential properties may lead to a lower demand for larger housing in the area.</p>	✓/*	✓/*	✓/ x x	<p>The draft LDF proposes as one of its key aims, 'To reduce the impact of development on climate change.' Ways of doing this include promoting sustainable construction and design, and promoting energy efficiency and renewables. The means of promoting this aim through this SPD need to be considered, given the potential cumulative effect of extensions. At present, these issues are not covered within the guidance.</p>

15	Reduce waste, re-use and recycle	Extensions using non-sustainable forms of construction could lead to increased waste and inefficient use of resources. However, more efficient use of residential properties may lead to a lower demand for larger housing in the area.	✓/x	✓/x	✓/x	As above, the draft LDF proposes the promotion of sustainable construction and design, and encouraging the efficient use of natural resources. The means of promoting this aim through this SPD needs to be considered. At present, these issues are not covered within the guidance.
Summary appraisal against environmental objectives:						
Ensuring consistency and improving the quality of the physical appearance of townscapes will have a positive effect on a permanent basis throughout the Borough. Also, extending existing properties and making more efficient use of the space may reduce the need for new housing. However, there may be significant, adverse cumulative effects. There is currently no encouragement for sustainable construction methods or energy efficiency. This may significantly undermine one of the key aims of the draft LDF to alleviate the impact of climate change. There is a possibility that the requirement for 'considerate building materials' may have secondary effects on the landscape or biodiversity if those building materials are quarried from sensitive locations. Finally, cumulative impacts of the loss of gardens and green space, the nature of the trees to be protected, and the likelihood of water pollution from incorrect plumbing need to be considered.						
Recommendations:						
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cross-reference to the draft LDF with regards alleviating the impact of climate change, and consider incorporating more encouragement for sustainable construction and energy efficiency. 2. Consider the means of assessing the cumulative effects on wildlife of the loss of gardens/green space. 3. Review the policy on retaining trees and hedges to accommodate options for replacing certain trees/hedges of minimal biodiversity and amenity value, to encourage the planting of species of greater wildlife value. 4. Consider the options for raising awareness of the problems of incorrect plumbing (eg: at the planning application stage), in conjunction with organisations such as the Environment Agency. 						
ECONOMIC OBJECTIVES						
16	Encourage & support business		0	0	0	
17	Enhance image as business location	Enhancing the character and appearance of an area by consolidating design and improving the 'sense of place' will have a positive impact upon the image of the area as a business location.	✓	✓✓	✓✓	The likelihood of this impact is high, permanent and medium to long term, and will be reflected throughout the Borough.
18	Encourage social/ env. performance		0	0	0	
Summary appraisal against economic objectives:						
The advice is likely to bring about a positive benefit for the economy by enhancing the image of the area as a business location over the medium to long term .						
Recommendations: None						
CONCLUSIONS						
The advice is likely to bring about permanent social and economic benefits. The environmental effects, however, are mixed, with the potential benefits of reducing the need for more, larger housing offset by the cumulative effects of a negative impact on climate change and loss of gardens/green space. It should be possible to mitigate some of these negative effects by revising the advice, and giving greater prominence to sustainable construction and energy efficiency.						

CHAPTER 6: MONITORING THE SUSTAINABILITY EFFECTS OF THE SPD

6.1 Establishing an appropriate level of monitoring

The SEA Directive does not specify that monitoring of significant environmental effects has to be done for each plan or programme individually. Nor does it need to be done directly by the local authority. Monitoring may cover several plans and programmes as long as sufficient information about environmental effects is provided for the individual plans and programmes.

The ODPM guidance therefore advises that there is scope for flexibility with the monitoring, depending upon the type and scale of the plan or programme to be monitored, and as long as the requirements of the Directive are met. The monitoring needs to assess the impact (positive or negative) of any sustainability effects. (These are in addition to any monitoring that may need to be carried out to ensure that the SPD is meeting its planning objectives or targets.) In selecting potential indicators for monitoring, consideration also needs to be given to:

- ease of collation;
- existing sources of information; and
- correspondence with other areas of monitoring or data collation.

With this in mind, consideration has been given to what level of monitoring would be appropriate for the SPD. Given the nature of the SPD, and the relatively few significant sustainability effects anticipated, it is considered that the plan can be monitored to a large extent by indicators already being collated, or proposed for collation, elsewhere.

However, this SPD is the first of the LDF documents to undergo the full SA, and as such is the first to be considered for detailed monitoring. No monitoring strategy is yet in place for the LDF as a whole, and while indicators have been suggested for monitoring as part of the SA Scoping Report of the Key Issues, that document is still being finalised.

It is therefore difficult at this stage to be too prescriptive about the monitoring requirements for the SPD. It could be monitored to a large extent via indicators measured for other parts of the LDF and accompanying SA's. However, with those monitoring requirements not finalised as yet, the suggestions below may have to be reviewed when the more substantial LDF documents and monitoring requirements are drawn up at a future date.

The indicators suggested below are therefore given with these provisos in mind.

6.2 Suggested indicators for monitoring the SPD

The significant effects anticipated from the SPD relate to the impacts upon climate change and green space. A number of these issues have been measured as part of the collation of baseline information for the SA Scoping Report of the LDF Key Issues, which was used to inform this report. In addition, a number of suggested indicators were put forward within the Scoping Report in order to measure the contribution the LDF would make towards the achievement of the Sustainability Objectives compiled for the Sustainability Appraisal Framework.

These indicators are set out below. The data for some of these is already being compiled, but a system would have to be set up for others.

In addition, two indicators have been suggested which would be specific to this SPD. These relate to the anticipated cumulative impact of reducing levels of green space/gardens within the urban environment. This data has also been identified as relevant to establishing the baseline information, in Chapter 3.

Indicator	Derived from:	Source	Also collated for:	Ease of collation
EFFECT UPON CLIMATE CHANGE:				
Energy consumption per household	Annual HECA Reports	SBC; TADEA	SA Baseline data (for LDF and SPD)	A
No. of properties built to sustainable construction standards	Development Control figures (could give numbers of extensions?)	SBC	SA Framework monitoring	C
No. of applications approved for, or incorporating forms of renewable energy	Development Control figures (could give numbers for extensions?)	SBC	SA Framework monitoring	B
No. of developments using reclaimed materials in construction	Development Control figures (could give numbers for extensions?)	SBC	SA Framework monitoring	C
EFFECT UPON GREEN SPACE/BIODIVERSITY:				
% developed land in residential areas	Unknown	?	SA Baseline data for SPD	C
% green space/gardens within built up areas	Unknown	?	SA Baseline data for SPD	C

Key for Codes relating to 'Ease of Collation':

- A** Figures already collated and readily available in relevant format
- B** Data available, but system would need to be established to extract information in relevant format and monitor.
- C** Data not currently collected.

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This Sustainability Appraisal of the SPD on Residential Extensions has sought to identify the significant sustainability effects which may arise as a result of implementing the guidance. It has drawn heavily upon the SA Scoping Report of the LDF Key Issues, which had been produced in great detail a very short time earlier. As a result, it was possible to use the Scoping Report to inform the review of plans and programmes, the collation of baseline information, and to provide the Sustainability Framework for carrying out the appraisal.

The nature of the SPD meant that the appraisal process could be consolidated into one general assessment. The SA process identified that the advice is likely to bring about permanent social and economic benefits. The environmental effects, however, are mixed, with the potential benefits of reducing the need for more, larger housing offset by the cumulative effects of a negative impact on climate change and loss of gardens/green space. It should be possible to mitigate some of these negative effects by revising the advice, and giving greater prominence to sustainable construction and energy efficiency, and a number of recommendations have been made.

It has been difficult to be precise about monitoring requirements, given that many of the indicators could correlate with the baseline and monitoring requirements of other LDF documents not yet produced or finalised. However, as with the previous SA Scoping Report for the LDF Key Issues, it has been possible to identify the need for more information on biodiversity and green space for both baseline and monitoring purposes.

The SA process has been able to highlight potential sustainability effects of the SPD, and as a result has suggested ways of mitigating and monitoring these impacts. It has therefore proved useful in helping to inform and improve the SPD.

APPENDIX I: Assessment of Significant Effects Matrix for Saved Policies H15 and H16

	<p>Policy H15 – “Extensions to dwellings will normally be approved provided the proposals are of a scale and design compatible with the property and there are no adverse affect on:</p> <p>a) the amenity and privacy of surrounding properties contrary to Policy D5;</p> <p>b) the general character of the area; and</p> <p>c) highway safety contrary to Policy T7”</p>	<p>Policy H16 – “Planning permission will normally be granted for an extension to the front elevation of a dwelling only where:</p> <p>a) it does not project forward of the building line;</p> <p>b) it is on an isolated dwelling; or</p> <p>c) it is on a dwelling in an area where there is no common building line.”</p>
<p>Characteristics of the plan or programme</p> <p>the degree to which the plan or programme sets a framework for projects or other activities, either with regard to the location, nature, size and operating conditions or by allocating resources</p> <p>the degree to which the plan or programme influences other plans and programmes including those in a hierarchy;</p> <p>the relevance of the plan or programme for the integration of environmental considerations in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development</p> <p>environmental problems relevant to the plan or programme</p> <p>the relevance of the plan or programme for the implementation of Community legislation on the environment.</p>	<p>Policy H15 identifies the locations where planning permission for residential extensions to dwellings will be approved in the Borough, subject to conformity with specific visual and social criteria.</p> <p>Policy H15 currently influences existing Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4.</p> <p>Policy H15 allows existing residential to extend their property in a visually and socially acceptable manner. This helps to minimise impact, but there is no cross-reference to environmental or sustainability criteria.</p> <p>Policy H15 aims to prevent inappropriate extensions.</p> <p>The Borough Local Plan was prepared prior to EU legislation on Strategic Environmental Assessment.</p>	<p>Policy H16 identifies the locations where planning permission for front residential extensions to dwellings will be approved in the Borough, subject to conformity with specific visual/spatial criteria.</p> <p>Policy H16 currently influences existing Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4.</p> <p>Policy H16 allows existing residential to extend their property in a visually and socially acceptable manner. This helps to minimise impact, but there is no cross-reference to environmental or sustainability criteria.</p> <p>Policy H16 aims to prevent inappropriate extensions.</p> <p>The Borough Local Plan was prepared prior to EU legislation on Strategic Environmental Assessment.</p>

<p>Characteristics of the effects and of the area likely to be affected</p>		
<p>the probability, duration, frequency and reversibility of the effects</p>	<p>Residential extensions should take place within the curtilage of dwellings. They would therefore be defined as previously developed land, by Annex c of Planning Policy Guidance note 3. Planning applications for residential extensions are increasing. The existing Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4 is becoming out-of-date and in need of review. A review of this SPG would encourage development to come forward in an environmentally and socially acceptable manner.</p>	<p>Extensions to the front elevation of dwellings are very limited. The issue is linked to the issues affecting the implementation of Policy H15. The existing Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4 is becoming out-of-date and in need of review. A review of this SPG would encourage development to come forward in an environmentally and socially acceptable manner.</p>
<p>the cumulative nature of the effects</p>	<p>Adverse residential extensions can have a negative impact, eg: upon the local streetscene, or upon climate change due to poor construction. Therefore, up-to-date guidance is necessary.</p>	<p>Adverse residential extensions to front elevations have a negative impact upon the local streetscene. Therefore, up-to-date guidance is necessary to ensure that these do not come forward.</p>
<p>the trans-boundary nature of the effects</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>the risks to human health or the environment (e.g. due to accidents)</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>the magnitude and spatial extent of the effects (geographical area and size of the population likely to be affected);</p>	<p>Policy H15 affects the residential areas of the Borough.</p>	<p>Policy H16 affects the residential areas of the Borough.</p>
<p>the value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected due to: - special nature characteristics or cultural heritage; - exceeded environmental quality standards or limit values - intensive land-use</p>	<p>Policy H15 affects the residential areas of the Borough. No significant effects will take place on cultural, nature conservation assets as a result of the implementation of this Policy.</p>	<p>Policy H16 affects the residential areas of the Borough. No significant effects will take place on cultural, nature conservation assets as a result of the implementation of this Policy.</p>
<p>the effects on areas or landscapes which have a recognised national, Community or international protection status</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>None</p>



Sedgefield Borough Council

Local Development Framework:
Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning
Document

Statement of Consultation

September 2005

Statement of Consultation for Sedgefield Borough Council Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 requires Local Planning Authorities to prepare a statement of consultation when preparing Supplementary Planning Documents. This is a reflection of the Government's belief to strengthen community involvement. The Council is currently preparing its Statement of Community Involvement that will set out how the public will be engaged by the Local Planning Authority. Once the Statement of Community Involvement is adopted next year, all documents that form part of the Local Development Framework will be required to conform to its provisions.
- 1.2 This statement of consultation has been prepared in advance of the adopted Statement of Community Involvement but aims to take forward the key principles included within the Submission Draft version of the Statement of Community Involvement. It is being made available during the formal period of public consultation, along with the Draft Supplementary Planning Document, the Sustainability Appraisal and the Assessment for Soundness.

2. Initial Consultation

- 2.1 An initial Draft Supplementary Planning Document was prepared for the Borough Council by Planning Students at the University of Newcastle in May 2004. This draft was circulated to relevant officers within Sedgefield Borough's Planning Services and refined followed specific meetings.
- 2.2 The draft document was also discussed during the informal consultations with the Town and Parish Councils during 2004. Much of the feedback to consultation and discussions undertaken was received on an informal basis. As a result of these consultations, the initial draft has been significantly refined and undergone a Sustainability Appraisal that has refined the document further.

3. Formal Consultation

- 3.1 The Draft Supplementary Planning Document was endorsed by Management Team, and by Borough Council Cabinet during September 2005 and subsequently approved for public consultation. This consultation exercise will commence on **Monday 11th April and Monday 23rd May 2005.** Any comments on the draft Supplementary Planning

Document must be received by the Borough Council by 5pm, ****. Any late representations will not be accepted.

Letters

- 3.2 Various interest groups and other organisations whose contact details are held on our consultation database will be sent letters notifying them that the draft Supplementary Planning Document will be available for a six-week consultation period, inviting their comments upon this draft. The letters will also specify details where the document could be viewed and how comments relating to the document should be submitted to the Council. A detailed list of these consultees is attached at **Appendix 1**. The Borough Council believe these groups and organisations to be inclusive of all the specific and general consultation bodies as specified by Regulation 25(1) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and those that are relevant to planning at a local level.

Availability at Council Offices and Buildings

- 3.3 During the 6-week consultation period, copies of the draft Statement of Community Involvement and comments forms were available:
- o At the main Borough Council Offices (Green Lane);
 - o In all libraries in the Borough.

Availability on the Council Website

- 3.4 The draft Supplementary Planning Document will be available for downloading on the Council's website (www.sedgefield.gov.uk).

Publicity – Advertisement in the Local Press

- 3.5 The draft Supplementary Planning Document will be consulted upon at the same time as the Submission Draft Statement of Community Involvement. This will be advertised by way of a legal notice placed in the following newspaper circulating within the North East (**Appendix 2**):

Newspaper	Date Notice Published
The Northern Echo	**** 2005

- 3.6 A press release will also be issued through the Borough Council's Communications Team and featured in local newspapers and Council publications to further advertise the consultation.

Presentations

- 3.7 An invitation will be extended to each of the Town and Parish Councils, and Parish Meetings within the Borough offering the opportunity for members of the Forward Planning Team to give a presentation on the Draft Supplementary Planning Document at their next meeting. Furthermore, an invitation will be extended to the Local Strategic Partnership Environment and Leisure Policy Group to give a presentation.

4. Procedures Following Consultation

- 4.1 Any representations received on the Draft Supplementary Planning Document received during the consultation period will be formally recorded by Sedgefield Borough Council and will send either an acknowledgement letter or e-mail.
- 4.2 Following the consultation period, all representations will be summarized and recorded in a single document. A report will then be produced listing all representations received, a response to that representation and a recommendation as to what changes, if any, should be made. This will be produced at the time when the Council seeks to adopt the Supplementary Planning Document. This is timetabled for April 2006 but could come forward earlier if there are no adverse representations.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Consultees

Environment Agency	Ferryhill Town Council	Mr G. Hagger – Kier Land Ltd	Chilton Library
Highways Agency	Great Aycliffe Town Council	Mr Malcolm Walker – Peacock and Smith	Cornforth Library
Historic Buildings & Monuments Commission for UK	Sedgefield Town Council	Mr Justin Hancock – H.J. Banks Ltd	Ferryhill Library
English Nature	Shildon Town Council	Mr Christopher Padgett	Newton Aycliffe Library
The Strategic Rail Authority	Spennymoor Town Council	BAC Bulk Haulage Ltd	Sedgefield Library
Strategic Health Authority	Chilton Town Council	Mr Alistair Carr – Anvil Homes Ltd	Shildon Library
Home Office	Bishop Middleham Parish Council	Jay Everett – Storeys: SSP	Spennymoor Library
Department for Education & Skills	Cornforth Parish Council	Mr J T McCaskie	Trimdon Library
The Countryside Agency	Eldon Parish Council	Mr Jonathan M Burroughs – Bidwells	Etherley Parish Council
Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs	Fishburn Parish Council	Mr Ian Cyhanko – Barton Willmore Planning Partnership	Coatham Mundeville Parish Council
Department for Transport	Trimdon Parish Council	Mr D Martin – Acorn Residential Estates	Brafferton Parish Council
Department of Health	Windlestone Parish Council	Paul Medcalfe – Bellway Homes Ltd	Great Stainton Parish Council
Department of Trade & Industry	Middridge Parish Council	Paul Stock – North Country Homes Group Ltd	Heighington Parish Council
Ministry of Defence	Bradbury Parish Meeting	Miss Katie Lazzam – Malcolm Judd and Partners	Grindon Parish Council
Department of Work & Pensions	Mordon Parish Meeting	Mrs Sandra Thompson – Signet Planning	Stillington & Whitton Parish Council
The Department of Constitutional Affairs	Castles Residents Association	Claire Davy – Dickinson Dees	Elwick Parish Council
Department for Culture, Media & Sport	Chilton West Residents Association	Charles Robinson – CDS	Councillor David Newell
Office of Government Commerce	Lakes Residents Association	Katie Adderley – The British Wind Energy Association	Councillor Benjamin Ord
Age Concern	Williamfield Residents Association	Bryan Huntley – Halcrow Group Limited	Councillor Ms Marie Predski
Airport Operators	New Shildon Residents Association	Graham Bradley – Woodland Trust	Councillor Brian F. Avery
British Chemical Distributors & Traders Association	Ferryhill Station Residents Association	Robert Taylor – Plot of Gold Ltd	Councillor Mrs Agnes Armstrong
British Geological Survey	Linden Residents Association	John Robinson – Sedgefield Arts Recreation	Councillor Vincent Crosby
Chambers of Commerce	Dean Bank Residents Association	Mr M Smethurst	Councillor Brian Hall
Church Commissioners	Sunnydale Residents Association	Durham Wildlife Trust	Councillor Kevin Thompson

Civil Aviation Authority	Eden Residents Association	Forestry Commission	Councillor David Hancock
The Coal Authority	MARG	Dev Plan UK Ltd	Councillor David Brown
Commission for Architecture & the Built Environment	Dales Residents Association	Teesdale District Council	Councillor Barbara Clare
Commission for New Towns & English Partnerships	Burnhill Residents Association	Wear Valley District Council	Councillor Kathleen Conroy
Commission for Racial Equality	St Paul's Residents Association	Derwentside District Council	Councillor June Croft
Crown Estate Office	Lower Trimdon Residents Association	Durham City Council	Councillor Michael Dalton
Diocesan Board of Finance	R H Brown	Chester-le-Street District Council	Councillor Gareth Howe
Disability Rights Commission	Mrs J S Thompson – Merrington Grange Farm	Easington District Council	Councillor Ronald Patchett
Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee	Mr W Moorfoot	Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council	Councillor Christine Sproat
The National Grid Company	Alexander Sharp	Hartlepool Borough Council	Councillor James Wayman JP
Council for the Protection of Rural England	Louise Nicholson – Yuill Homes	Darlington Borough Council	Councillor Angela Fleming
Friends of the Earth	Mrs Powles	Tees Valley JSU	Councillor Martin Jones
Royal Society for the Protection of Birds	Ms Angela Turner	Councillor Andrew Smith	Councillor George Scott
The Wildlife Trusts	John Lavender – Plan Arch Design	Councillor W.M. Blenkinsopp	Councillor John Smith
Fire & Rescue Services	Rob Smith – Peacock and Smith	Councillor Malcolm Iveson	Councillor Enid Paylor
The Forestry Commission	John Potts Ltd	Councillor John Piggott	Councillor Keith Henderson
Freight Transport Association	John Calvert – Inventures	Councillor John Burton	Councillor John Robinson
Gypsy Council	David Rixson – Vincent and Gorbng	Councillor Andrew Gray	Councillor Mrs Joan Gray
Health and Safety Executive	M M Dawson	Councillor George Morgan	Councillor Terence Ward
Help the Aged	David Salkeld – Camtec Properties Ltd	Councillor Robert Stuart Fleming	Councillor William Waters
Housing Corporation	Tony Scorer – EDF Energy	Councillor Thomas Frank Forrest	Councillor J.G. Huntingdon
Learning & Skills Council	Dan Grierson – TNEI Services Ltd	Councillor Mrs Barbara Graham	Councillor Mrs Ina Jackson Smith
Local Agenda 21	Ted Jackson – Tilly Bailey & Irvine Solicitors	Councillor George Coulson Gray	Councillor Mrs Lorraine Smith
Civic Societies	Ian Lyle – England & Lyle	Councillor Alan Hodgson	Mr Phil Horan – TechniCAD Services
National Playing Fields Association	Mrs J Montgomery – Brimble, Lea & Partners	Councillor Mrs Lucy Howvels	Alan Etherington

Network Rail	D J Halstead – The Planning Inspectorate	Councillor John Patrick Moran	Dr H J Stafford
Passenger Transport Authorities	Julie Hesmondhalgh – Blackett, Hart & Pratt Solicitors	Councillor Kester Noble	C. A Gray – Stonegrave Aggregates Ltd
Police Architectural Liaison Officers	Ranger Transport Services	Councillor Mrs Christine Potts	Andrew Hutton – Smiths Gore
Rail Freight Group	Chris Outtersides – GVA Grimley	Councillor Brian Meek	A. Mawston
Road Haulage Association	Mr A Moss – Ward Hadaway Solicitors	Councillor James Eric Higgin	Adrian Morgan Hopper
Sport England	Richard Hardy – Compassion in World Farming	Councillor John Khan	Karen Read – Robert Muckle Solicitors
The House Builders Federation	Laura Rheiter – RTPi	Commission for Racial Equality North of England	Malcolm Havercroft – Ordnance Survey
Traveller Law Reform Coalition	Peter Cumming – Carlton Land & Estates	Disability Alliance	Mrs V Horner – Heighington Parish Council
Women's National Commissions	Graeme Blenkinsopp – Wisemove Estate Agents	Business in the Community	Judi Scholey – Development Planning Partnership
One North East	Peter Nicol	CAVOS	Mrs E Sowerby
North East Assembly	Mr John Allison	CEN - Community Empowerment Network	Sgt Bob Porter – Ethnic Liaison Group
Regional Sports Board	R. A Beckwith Moore – Trimdon Estates Ltd	Sedgefield Primary Care Trust	Mr Sampson
Durham Constabulary (South Area)	Chris Harrison – Nathaniel Lichfield & Partners	Voluntary Organisations' Network North East	David Kerford – Section 55
Sedgefield NHS Primary Care Trust	Georgian Group	Durham Architectural & Archaeological Society	Dave Anderson – Hall Construction Services Ltd
Durham County Council	Victorian Society	Ancient Monuments Society	Mobile Operators Association
Durham County Council	Twentieth Century Society	Council for British Archaeology	English Nature
Sedgefield Borough Business Service	Garden History Society	Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings	Countryside Agency
Durham County Council	British Gas	Northumbrian Water	The National Trust
Government Office for the North East	Transco	English Heritage	

Appendix 2 – Statutory Advertisement in Local Press

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Notice of Deposit of the Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document

Sedgefield Borough Council has prepared its Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document. This sets out how the Council will appraise planning applications for residential extensions. When this is adopted, it will form part of the Local Development Framework for the area of Sedgefield Borough Council. The Local Development Framework forms the basis for decisions on land use planning affecting that area.

Copies of the Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document are available for public inspection, free of charge, from **11 April to 27 May 2005, at:**

Sedgefield Borough Council Offices, Spennymoor	On	Mondays - Thursdays Fridays	8.30 am - 5.00 pm 8.30 am - 4.30 pm
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The Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document is also available on the Council's website at www.sedgefield.gov.uk

Objections to, and representations in respect of, the Draft Residential Extensions Supplementary Planning Document should be sent in writing to the Forward Planning Team, Neighbourhood Services, Sedgefield Borough Council, Council Offices, Spennymoor, DL16 6JQ before 5.00pm **on 27 May 2005**. Objections and representations should specify the matters to which they relate and grounds on which they are made.

Further information is available from Forward Planning Team, on telephone 01388 816166 or via the website www.sedgefield.gov.uk

**Dennis Hall
Solicitor to the Council
Council Offices, Spennymoor**

September 2005

Sedgefield Borough Council

Local Development Framework:
Residential Extensions Supplementary
Planning Document

Assessment for Soundness

September 2005

Test of Soundness Matrix

Test of Soundness Indicator	How Sedgefield Borough has complied with Indicator
It has been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme	The Local Development Scheme identifies that the Draft Residential Extensions SPD should come forward in September 2005.
It has been prepared in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement, or with the minimum requirements set out in the Regulations where no SCI exists	Refer to Statement of Consultation
The Plan and policies have been subjected to Sustainability Appraisal	The Draft SPD has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal and this accompanies the SPD.
It is a spatial plan which is consistent with national planning policy and in general conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy, and it has properly had regard to any other relevant plans, policies and strategies	It is consistent with the implementation of a detailed development control policy in the Local Plan. It does take into account the issues raised in the Key Issues Paper that was released for consultation in July 2005.
It has had regard to the Community Strategy	The Draft SPD will help meet two aims of the Community Strategy: An Attractive Borough and Strong Communities
The strategies/policies/allocations in the plan are coherent and consistent within and between Development Plan Documents	The Draft SPD provides detailed advice and guidance to support the implementation of saved Policies H15 and H16 of the Borough Local Plan
The strategies/policies/allocations represent the most appropriate in all the circumstances, having considered the relevant alternatives, and they are founded on a robust and credible evidence base	The Draft SPD is based upon national best practice, refined to suit local circumstances, and takes account of the clear evidence that the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance Note 4, adopted in 2000, has become out-of-date and requires urgent review. This issue is fully considered within the Sustainability Appraisal
There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring	The Sustainability Appraisal identifies a number of indicators to help monitor the implementation of the Draft SPD. Existing monitoring arrangements will need to be modified to take account of the new requirements

Test of Soundness Indicator	How Sedgefield Borough has complied with Indicator
The plan is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances	The Draft SPD will be monitored to ensure that it being correctly implemented. Where the need arises, the Annual Monitoring Report will identify the need to replace the SPD and keep it up-to-date with national best practice

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Item 7

REPORT TO CABINET

15th SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

Portfolio: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – POSITION AT 31st JULY 2005

1. SUMMARY

This report summarises individual spending forecasts for the nine portfolios for 2005/2006, which shows that:

- The General Fund is expected to use balances of around £587,000 compared to a budgeted use of £800,000.
- The Housing Revenue Account is currently predicting an overspend of £183,000 before the refund of LSVT expenses from Sunderland Housing Group.
- The Training and Employment Service is anticipated to make an operating loss in the region of £95,000, in line with the initial budget forecast.

Details in respect of significant items previously only reported within the Annual Statement of Accounts are also included in order to provide a wider perspective on the Council's financial standing.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the financial position for 2005/2006 be noted.
- That a further report be submitted to Cabinet, detailing the position as at the 30th September 2005, 31st December and final outturn as at 31st March in line with the budgetary Control Monitoring Arrangements 2005/06 reported to Management Team on 22nd August 2005.
- Detailed reports be submitted to future Strategic Working Groups in order to monitor progress throughout the year.

3. DETAILED FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31st JULY 2005

3.1 Monitoring Arrangements for 2005-2006

The budgetary control monitoring arrangements for 2005-2006 have been enhanced by ensuring that the Councils four Strategic Working Groups receive regular reports in respect of those areas of responsibility, but at a more detailed level than is presented to Cabinet for consideration.

The expectation is that issues arising from any significant variances from approved budgets will be considered by the Groups who will instigate corrective action where necessary and ensure that their deliberations are reported back to Cabinet at the next budgetary review opportunity.

Several of the Councils budgets are susceptible to market forces and as such if not closely monitored could lead to budget problems [E.g. Leisure Centre income, Planning & Building Regulation fees etc.]. Research is currently being undertaken as to how best to monitor these budgets and report on them. It is anticipated that once the framework has been agreed with the Director of Resources and relevant Heads of Service it will lead to monthly reporting to Management Team on the selected items. The results of the exercise will then influence future budgetary control reports commencing with the six-month position to Cabinet due in November 2005.

3.2 General Fund

The following table covers the first four months of 2005/2006 (April – July) and shows: -

- The approved budget for each of the main portfolios.
- The profiled budget for the first four months of 2005/2006.
- The actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's Financial Management System.
- Projected Probable Outturn for 2005/2006 based on spend to date and known commitments.
- Variance between the annual budget and the projected probable outturn.

The original approved budgets have been revised to take account of a full re-apportionment of asset charges across all Portfolios.

The Budgets also take account of the release of the funds in respect of Community Safety and Street Cleansing that were frozen pending the receipt of the proceeds of the land sale at Newton Aycliffe. As a consequence of the delay in the receipt of the funds the full resources allocated have been reduced to reflect the late implementation of the proposals for service growth resulting in £104,650 being transferred to the Contingency Sum to help balance the loss of investment income.

The overall financial position for the General Fund is therefore as follows: -

	Budget 2005/06 £'000	Budget To Date £'000	Spend To Date £'000	Probable Outturn £'000	Variance £'000
<i>Resource Management*</i>	687	(112)	250	745	58
<i>Culture and Recreation</i>	3,857	1,217	1,286	3,904	47
<i>Environment</i>	4,423	1,518	1,396	4,469	46
<i>Housing</i>	624	235	255	575	(49)
<i>Regeneration</i>	1,591	502	437	1,504	(87)
<i>Community Safety</i>	659	333	301	670	11
<i>Supporting People</i>	1,023	6023	5,917	784	(239)
<i>Contingency#</i>	346	-	-	496	-)
	13,210	9,716	9,842	13,147	(63)
<i>Use of Balances</i>	(800)			(587)	213
<i>Unanticipated Income</i>	-		(150)	(150)	(150)
Budget Requirement	12,410	-	-	12,410	-

*Includes performance Management & Welfare & Communications Portfolios

#After accounting for anticipated salary savings amounting to £220,000.

On the basis that the whole of the contingency sum is fully utilised in 2005/2006 there will be an anticipated use balances of £587,000 against a budgeted use of balances of £800,000.

In preparing the probable outturn position, no account has yet been taken of the possible impact of the Job Evaluation exercise, which will be concluded in Autumn 2005. It is difficult to forecast what impact this may have on service costs but it is assumed that the contingency sum will be sufficient to meet any likely costs of the scheme.

The main features that contribute to the overall underspend include: -

3.2.1. Resource Management

The projected spend to the 31st March 2006 is £745,000 compared to an initial budget of £687,000; an estimated overspend of £58,000.

The main factors that contribute to this overspend are as follows: -

- Delays in filling staff posts and staff turnover have resulted in savings of £46,000 within the Chief Executives Department and £168,000 within the Resources Department .
- The cost of the Long Service Award scheme for employees with 15 and 25 years of services is anticipated to cost £28,000 in the introductory year.
- Costs associated with the implementation and evaluation stages of Job evaluation are expected cost in the region of £43,000.
- As a consequence in the delays in receiving the significant capital receipt from the sale of land at Cobblers Hall, together with a downturn in investment rates being received mean that the level of investment income has fallen by £214,000.

3.2.2. Culture and Recreation

The projected spend to 31st March 2006 is £3,904,000 compared to the initial budget approval of £3,857,000, a net overspend of £47,000.

The main factors contributing to the current overspend projection are as follows:-

- Early indications suggest that the income target for Spennymoor Leisure Centre is not going to be achieved as a consequence of the capital works being carried around the extension to the centre for the Gymnasium. [£10,000]
- Income targets set for the Bars are not going to be achieved mainly as a result of introducing the no smoking policy in the councils leisure centres [£16,000]
- Locomotion has now been open for nearly a year and a better understanding of the operating cost is emerging. Projections indicate that there will be additional costs in the region of £58,000, 50% of which will be met by the NRM.
- With effect from the 1st August 2005 the Council has discontinued using the Sildon pool, responsibility has now been passed back to Durham County Council saving £11,000.
- The Director of Leisure Services is looking carefully at his current spending commitments and expects to make significant inroads into the current overspend position by the 31st March 2006.

3.2.3. Environment

Projected net expenditure to 31st March 2006 is £4,469,000 compared to the original budget approved of £4,423,000 - an overspend of £46,000 (or 1.1%).

The main issues that are having an impact on the anticipated final position are:-

- Delays in filling staff posts within the Environmental Services Section of the Neighbourhood Services team have resulted in savings of £30,000.
- Changes in the way the Council has to dispose of refuse following the closure of the Todhills tip now requires the refuse to be transferred to Thornley. This together with increased demand for the Special collection service have increased costs by approximately £40,000. The Head of Environmental Services is examining all costs associated with the service change in order to achieve savings, any additional costs may be met from the Contingency sum once the impact of Job evaluation has been assessed. In addition the target set for Trade Waste income is unlikely to be achieved resulting in a shortfall of income of £10,000.
- During the time when the Council had a substantial window replacement programme, an internal skip service was established, which helped generate additional income for the Refuse Collection Service. Although it has been reducing over the last couple of years, the pace of the reduction in the skip service has increased in the current year and the outturn forecast reflects a further potential loss of income of £20,000. The leasing agreement on the Skip vehicles is due for renewal later this year and it is likely that the service will be discontinued as a result.
- The current costs of the Street Cleansing service includes the costs of the single status agreement that was approved last February in the sum of £72,000. A transfer from the Contingency sum has met this and the final costs are still subject to the completion of job evaluation.
- The Director of Neighbourhood Service is looking carefully at his current spending commitments and expects to make significant inroads into the current overspend position by the 31st March 2006.

3.2.4. Housing General Fund

Projected spend to the 31st March 2006 is £575,000 compared to a revised budget approval of £624,000; an estimated underspend of £49,000 (or 8%), which is mainly as a result of :-

- Delays in filling staff posts within the Neighbourhood Services Department.
- Additional costs in bringing more Homeless units into service
- Loss of ERDF grant in respect of the Aycliffe Neighbourhood Management service.

3.2.5. Regeneration

The projected spend to the 31st March 2006 is £1,504,000 compared to an original budget approval of £1,591,000; an estimated underspend of £87,000.

The main reasons for the underspend are :-

- Salary savings resulting from the delay or non-filling of vacant posts within the Neighbourhood Services Department
- Additional income being generated from increases in Planning Fee income.
- Lower than anticipated occupancy rates on the Industrial Units, linked with rent - Revenue Budgetary Control Report - Position at 31st July 2005 free periods and other incentives are likely to result in a shortfall of rental income of £52,000.

3.2.6. Community Safety

The projected spend to the 31st March 2006 is £670,000 compared to a revised budget approval of £659,000 - an overspend of £11,000 (or 1.7%).

- At the time the budget was prepared provision for the appointment of 5 additional Neighbourhood Wardens was delayed because of the uncertainty of resources pending the receipt of the proceeds from significant land sales. In August 2005 Council gave permission for the release of the relevant resources and the process of recruiting the additional posts is now underway.
- The main reason for the projected overspend relates to increased leasing costs associated with the recent replacement of Neighbourhood Wardens vehicles including an excess mileage charge in respect of the replaced vehicles.

3.2.7. Supporting People

The projected spend to the 31st March 2006 is £784,000, compared to an original budget approval of £1,023,000, an estimated underspend of £239,000 (or 23.4%).

The main factors which contribute to the underspend are all related to Housing benefits. During 2004-2005 the Government fundamentally changed the way Housing and Council Tax Benefit was funded. For example, Rent Rebates, which was previously accounted for in the HRA, were transferred into the General Fund. This created some uncertainty and transitional arrangements were put in place to protect the General Fund. The full implications of these changes only became apparent when the final subsidy claim for 2004-2005 was completed. The impact of the changes on 2005-2006 has now been fully re-assessed, resulting in an additional subsidy entitlement of £230,000

3.3 Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The projected position to the 31st March 2006 is an estimated contribution to HRA balances of £557,000 compared to a breakeven position when the budgets were originally prepared.

The main factors that have contributed to the underspend are:-

- An increase in net rental income after accounting for losses in respect of empty houses and a reduced bad debts provision. This is as a result in the downturn of Right to Buy Sales experienced in the first four months in the year.
- The budgetary position at the end of July 2005 indicates that the Housing Maintenance Budget will be overspent by around £225,000. These increased costs are partly as a result of works associated with the storm damage in the early part of the year. The Director of Housing is carefully examining the current spending profile in order to see what action can be taken to mitigate the overspend position.
- At this stage of the financial year it is assumed that the Contingency sum will be fully utilised during 2005-2006 partly to meet the costs of job evaluation.

It is anticipated that following the unsuccessful LSVT Sunderland Housing Group will be reimbursing the Council £740,000 in respect of pre-ballot costs.

3.4 Training and Employment Services

The initial budget prepared for 2005/2006 predicted that the trading account would make an operating loss of about £95,000 [excluding asset charges] by the 31st March 2006. Current projections indicate that after the four-month stage this forecast remains unchanged. However Job Centre Plus has recently announced that the Adult Learning contract worth £400,000 to the Council is being substantially reduced with effect from 1st October 2005, this will have a significant impact on the

service. The full impact is currently being assessed and a report will be prepared for Cabinet's consideration at the earliest opportunity.

4. Further revenue developments during 2005-2006

Since the budgets were approved in February there have been a number of developments that have provided the Council with additional resources which could be made available to provide enhanced service delivery.

- The initial budget for Planning Delivery Grant assumed that the Council would receive a similar award to that received in 2004-2005. The Council has been notified that it will receive £270,950 in 2005-2006 an increase of £ 156,950. The rules governing the use of the PDG have changed since last year and 25% of the award has to be used for capital purposes. The Director of Neighbourhood Services is currently preparing a report for Cabinet's consideration on how the PDG could be utilised
- The Council has again been awarded a DEFRA Performance Standards Grant for Recycling and Composting amounting to £27,267. This is to be used by the Head of Environmental Services to help the Council achieve its 18% recycling target. Some of the funding will be spent on providing new and replacement kerb-it boxes.
- Members will be aware that the Director of Resources had engaged a Consultant to appeal against Rating Assessments levied on a number of the Council's properties in connection with all the Valuation lists issued since 1990. The Council benefited significantly from this approach in 2003-2004 with refunds totalling £894,000. The last few appeals in respect of two of the Leisure Centre have recently been determined resulting in a further refund of £165,000 [after Agents commissions] As the refunds related to earlier financial years there is no impact on the current budget for the Centres concerned and it is recommended that the sum be added into the Contingency sum.
- Over the last few years the Council has been participating in a county-wide Local Public Service Agreement and in particular the element relating to cost efficiency indicators. The Council has achieved its stretch performance target to which it signed up to which should release a performance reward grant in the region of £268,000 over the next two years.[50% of the grant has to be used for capital purposes]. A report outlining how these resources will be used will be prepared for Cabinet's consideration in due course.

5. Collection Fund Surplus

The Council as billing authority for council tax and non domestic rates purposes maintains on behalf of the authorities which precept on the Council a separate set of accounts known as the Collection Fund. Whilst these accounts are not part of our normal budgetary control reporting arrangements any surplus or deficit on the fund has a direct impact on future council tax levels in the Borough. The projected surplus as at the 31st March 2006 is currently in the region of £730,000 of which £171,000 represents the Councils share,[compared with £250,000 for 2005-2006]. This estimated surplus is subject to fluctuation depending upon collection rates and levels of debt written off.

6. Revenue Reserves 2005-2006

Attached at appendix 1 is a schedule detailing all of the Council's revenue reserves, which reflects the latest budget spending projections, outlined above. It is anticipated that reserves totalling £10,085,100 will be available to the Council as at 31st March 2006. Details of how the Council will use these will be included in the

review of the Medium Term Financial Plan which will be considered by Cabinet later this year.

7. Revenue Provisions 2005-2006

In approving the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2005-2006 to Council in June 2005 the Director of Resources was given authority to create revenue provisions in the sum of £197,000 that would be utilised to meet specific additional commitments in 2005-2006 for which no budgetary provision had been made. In addition the Council has other revenue provisions amounting to £1,274,000 that relate in the main to premiums and discounts on debt rescheduling that will be charged to revenue accounts over a number of years in accordance with approved accounting practices. A full schedule of all the Provisions held is attached at appendix 2.

8. Balance Sheet Management

Previously Cabinet has only received updates during the year on the progress on revenue and capital projects.

Current best practice recommends that Council's should consider reporting significant items from the "balance sheet", and in particular those items that may have a material impact on the Council if not reviewed on a regular basis.

Whilst there is no guidance on what to include in the review it is considered prudent to consider the following items until guidance becomes available:-

- **External Loan Debt** – monies borrowed by the Council.
- **Short Term Investments** – surplus cash invested by the Council.
- **Sundry Debtors** – sums owed to the Council in respect of Rents, Council Tax, overpaid Housing Benefits, Mortgages and Accounts Receivable.

Performance Management arrangements closely monitor the above areas on at least a monthly basis to ensure that the Councils Treasury Management strategy is being adhered to in respect of the first two items and in respect of the last item debt recovery action is instigated where debts are not settled within expected time scales.

- **External loan debt**
 - The value of loans outstanding at the 31st July 2005 was £18.837m, down from £18.987m at the 31st March 2005.
 - The current strategy does not anticipate any new borrowing in the current financial year and consequently external loan debt at 31st March 2006 is expected to have reduced to £18.678m, an overall reduction in the year of £309,000.
 - Current interest rates are such that any debt rescheduling opportunities are unlikely in the foreseeable future.
- **Short Term Investments**
 - As at the 31st July 2005 the Council had £27.925m on short-term deposit with Financial Institutions. The original budget forecast of investment income was £1.4m, delays in the receipt of the land sale proceeds and the recent reductions in Bank Base rate will see investment income fall to approximately £1.186m. The Council will however actively pursue investment opportunities throughout the year in order to maximise investment returns. The reduction in investment income has been fully accounted for in the budgetary control statement.
- **Sundry Debtors**
 - Recovery of all sums due to the Council promptly can have a significant material impact on the cash-flow of the Council and lead onto higher than expected investment returns as indicated above if it is actively managed.

- As at the 31st March 2005 the Council recorded in its Annual Accounts that the amounts due from debtors amounted to £9.955m. A significant proportion of this debt related to year-end grant claims which is a normal position, at this time of year and will be certified and paid as an outcome of the external audit process.
- However some of the outstanding debt has to be actively managed to ensure that it is eventually collected and is not written off as a “bad debt”. As at the 31st July the following analysis is available [Appendix 3 attached providing a more detailed breakdown]

Type of Debt	Total Arrears	Current Arrears	Aged Arrears
	£	£	£
Current Housing Rents	611,589	261,283	350,306
Former Tenants Housing Rents	958,050	-	958,050
Council Tax	4,455,259	1,125,339	3,329,920
Accounts Receivable	544,566	462,258	82,308
Housing Benefit Overpayments	341,410	178,720	162,690
Mortgages	600	600	-
Total Outstanding debt	6,911,474	2,028,200	4,883,274

Current arrears is debt less than 60days old & Aged arrears is debt older than 60days

- Housing Rent is a weekly charge on the property. The five area teams manage current arrears with former tenants being managed by a centralised debt recovery team. Both Teams work to an approved policy document which involves a number of stages culminating in seeking repossession where a current tenant fails to make arrangements to pay and referral to a certified bailiff in former tenant arrears cases.
- Council Tax is an annual charge and the arrears above reflect those accounts where no arrangements have been agreed to collect the initial charge by instalments. When accounts fall into arrears Liability Orders are obtained from the Magistrates Court. Where this procedure fails to obtain settlement of the debt a range of other recovery processes are initiated including use of certified bailiffs and committal proceedings. Whilst the level of arrears looks high it must be taken in the context of the overall total debit in excess of £253 million. The Council has a very good collection rate and since Council Tax was introduced it has achieved a collection rate in excess of £99%.
- Accounts Receivable debt can relate to any of the services that the Council provides. Debt recovery action is the responsibility of the department that provides the service and raises the initial invoice. If the department is unable to collect the debt the Director of Resources may refer the debt to a certified Bailiff for further recovery action.
- Housing Benefit overpayments usually arise where a person in receipt of benefit has failed to notify the Council of a change in circumstances that would effect their entitlement. If the claimant is still in receipt of benefit the overpayment is automatically recovered at the rate of £8.55 per week. Where the claimant is no longer in receipt of benefit of has vacated the property an accounts receivable invoice is sent to the person. In instance where a former claimant moves back into the Borough and becomes eligible for benefit the debt is reinstated and recovered from on-going entitlement.
- Mortgages debt is all current [i.e. less than 60 days old] and arrangements are in hand to recover the debt outstanding.

9. Training Issues

Effective Budget monitoring is dependant upon Heads of Service and Budget Holders taking ownership of the budgets they manage to ensure services are delivered in accordance with Councils priorities as outlined in the Corporate Plan. In order to ensure that these staff are aware of their responsibilities and have the skill to perform their financial management roles it is intended to engage an external facilitator at an estimated cost of £2,000. In addition the Accountancy Services section in conjunction with the councils ICT Trainer will be developing a training course for Financial Management System users to ensure it is used effectively .

10. CORPORATE POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This report does not contain proposals that would require any changes to the Council's agreed policy framework and corporate objectives.

11. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no further resource implications arising from this report.

12. CONSULTATIONS

Comprehensive consultation has previously been held during the construction of the 2005/2006 Budget Framework. This report does not contain any proposals or recommendations requiring further consultation.

13. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

There are no other significant material considerations arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

14. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

Consultation and engagement with Overview and Scrutiny Committees has previously been held in development and review of the 2005/2006 Budget Framework.

Contact Officer: Brian Allen (Director of Resources)
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E-Mail: ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward(s): Not Ward Specific

Background Papers: ~ Report to Special Council 25th February 2005 – Budget Framework 2005/2006.
~ Report to Council 29th June 2005- Statement of Accounts 2004-2005

Examination by Statutory Officers:

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S.151 Officer or his representative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Management Team has approved the report.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

BALANCES STATEMENT 2005 - 2006

Appendix 1

	ACTUAL AT 31/3/05 £'000	CONTRIB. IN YEAR £'000	USE OF FUNDS £'000	EST. BAL. AT 31/3/06 £'000
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>				
70 406 : BUDGET SUPPORT FUND	1,622.0	0.0	(587.0)	1,035.0
70 407 : GENERAL FUND	2,240.3	0.0	0.0	2,240.3
70 413 : NON HRA HOUSING FUND	203.2	0.0	0.0	203.2
70 408 : INSURANCE FUND	1,098.4	100.0	(175.0)	1,023.4
70 409 : ASSET MANAGEMENT FUND	501.8	0.0	0.0	501.8
70 410 : ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUND	267.1	0.0	(57.5)	209.6
70 411 : EMPLOYMENT TRAINING	386.8	0.0	(95.0)	291.8
70 412 : YOUTH DEVELOPMENT FUND #	151.1	0.0	(102.0)	49.1
70 414 : ENERGY MANAGEMENT FUND	29.7	0.0	(10.0)	19.7
70 416: OTHER MINOR FUNDS	31.8	6.0	0.0	37.8
70 303: LOAN DEBT SUPPORT FUND	706.1	0.0	(250.0)	456.1
<u>TOTAL GENERAL FUND</u>	7,238.3	106.0	(1,276.5)	6,067.8
# Based on first round of applications				
<u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u>				
76 041 : WORKING BALANCE	3,460.3	557.0	0.0	4,017.3
<u>TOTAL H.R.A</u>	3,460.3	557.0	0.0	4,017.3
<u>TOTAL RESERVES</u>	10,698.6	663.0	(1,276.5)	10,085.1

PROVISIONS STATEMENT 2005 - 2006

Appendix 2

	ACTUAL AT 31/3/05 £'000	CONTRIB. IN YEAR £'000	USE OF FUNDS £'000	EST. BAL. AT 31/3/06 £'000
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>				
70 302 : PREMIUMS - DEBT RESCHEDULING	193.0	0.0	(45.0)	148.0
70 300 : HEALTH EXPRESS	4.0	0.0	(4.0)	0.0
70 304 : SURE START - FERRYHILL & CHILTON	58.7	0.0	0.0	58.7
70 305 : SURE START - SHILDON & AYCLIFFE	69.6	0.0	0.0	69.6
70 301 : SPECIFIC YEAR END PROVISIONS				
: PC REPLACEMENT COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT	5.0	0.0	(5.0)	0.0
: COUNCIL TAX BACK SCANNING OF DOCUMENTS	14.4	0.0	(14.4)	0.0
: BENEFITS PERFORMANCE STANDARDS INITIATIVES	50.0	0.0	(50.0)	0.0
: LSP ADMINISTRATION SUPPORT	45.0	0.0	(15.0)	30.0
: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PLAN	28.0	0.0	(28.0)	0.0
: COMMUNITY APPRAISALS - REGENERATION	15.0	0.0	(15.0)	0.0
: LOCAL PLAN - STRATEGIC FLOODING RISK ASSESSMENT	10.0	0.0	(10.0)	0.0
: LA 21 - ACTION PACKED FUTURES EVENT	6.0	0.0	(6.0)	0.0
: GREEN LANE OFFICES - ASBESTOS REMOVAL	10.0	0.0	(10.0)	0.0
: ICT CONTRIBUTIONS TO CRM PROJECT OFFICE	8.0	0.0	(8.0)	0.0
: ICT - CONSULTANCY RE E-PROCUREMENT IMPLEMENTATION	6.0	0.0	(6.0)	0.0
<u>TOTAL GENERAL FUND</u>	522.7	0.0	(216.4)	306.3
<u>HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT</u>				
76 042 : PREMIUMS - DEBT RESCHEDULING	1,146.2	0.0	(427.1)	719.1
76 042 : DISCOUNTS - DEBT RESCHEDULING	(197.5)	0.0	39.3	(158.2)
<u>TOTAL H.R.A</u>	948.7	0.0	(387.8)	560.9
<u>TOTAL PROVISIONS</u>	1,471.4	0.0	(604.2)	867.2

OUTSTANDING DEBT AS AT 31st JULY 2005

Current Housing Rents

	£	
Total arrears at 31st July		
- Houses, Bungalows & Garages	496,538	
- Other charges [HB overpayments etc.]	115,051	
	611,589	
Analyses as follows:-		
- Less than £500 outstanding	261,284	5189 tenancies
- Between £501 & £1000 outstanding	138,329	194 tenancies
- over £1000 outstanding	211,976	114 tenancies
	611,589	5497 tenancies*

* Estimated No. tenancies at 31st July 2005 = 8955

Former Housing Tenants

	£	
Total arrears at 31st July	958,050	2049 cases

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Council Tax

	Current Year £
Total Collectable Debit	<u>29,638,739</u>
Already Paid	9,225,758
Debit Outstanding	<u>20,412,981</u>
Instalments arranged	18,082,866
reminders Sent	1,033,397
Final Notice issued	875,974
Liability Order Obtained	420,744
	<u>20,412,981</u> #

The Council has a full range of recovery procedures in respect of council tax and has a recovery rate well in excess of 99% in this area.

Accounts Receivable

	£
Value of invoices outstanding	544,566
Analysed as follows:-	
- Between 0 & 60 days	462,287
- Between 61 & 120 days	53,322
- Outstanding over 120 days	28,957
	<u>544,566</u>

Housing Benefit Overpayments

	£	
Value of Overpayments Outstanding	341,410	
Analysed as follows:-		
- recovery from on-going entitlement	210,104	584 cases
- recovery by Invoice	131,306	327 cases
	<u>341,410</u>	

Mortgages

	£
Value of Mortgages Outstanding	176,030
total arrears outstanding	600

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Item 8

REPORT TO CABINET

15th SEPTEMBER 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

Portfolio: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

CAPITAL BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2005/2006 POSITION TO 31ST JULY 2005

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides a review of the position on the 2005/06 Capital Programme to 31st July 2005. It includes an overview of progress made to date in meeting spending targets, carry forward approvals from the 2004/05 capital programme, available capital resources and the proposed financing of the programme. The 2005/06 report also outlines developments that have occurred during the year to date that have an impact on the overall capital programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- (i) Management Team note the four month spend position to 31st July 2005;
- (ii) Further reports be submitted to Management Team detailing the position as at 30th September, 31st December and final outturn as at 31st March in line with the Budgetary Control Monitoring Arrangements 2005/06 reported to Management Team on 22nd August 2005.
- (iii) Detailed project based reports be submitted to all future Strategic Working Groups in order to monitor progress throughout the year.

3.0 CAPITAL SPEND AND RESOURCES MONITORING 2005/06

Initial Spending Targets / Revised Capital Programme

3.1 Council approved the Capital Programme for 2005/06 on the 25th February 2005 as part of the overall Budget Framework 2005/06. Target spending plans totalling £10,800,000 were set and allocated across Council portfolios. In addition Council approved a special provision for Regeneration Initiatives of £5,000,000 linked to the significant capital receipts due in respect of land sales in Newton Aycliffe. The total capital programme for 2005/06 was approved at £15.8m.

3.2 The Regeneration Initiatives Programme was subsequently postponed due to the delays in realising these capital receipts as highlighted in the report to Cabinet on 30th June 2005. As a result this budget provision has since been

restricted to £2.5 million for 2005/06. Approval has also been given to the carry forward of £554,000 from the 2004/05 Regeneration Initiatives Provision in respect of the Council's contribution towards the costs of the Gymnastics Centre at Spennymoor Leisure Centre.

- 3.3 The actual out-turn position for the previous financial year was reviewed by Management Team on the 20th June 2005 when considering the Statement of Accounts 2004/05. This identified an under-spend of £1.5 million on the 2004/05 capital programme and a number of schemes totalling £1.348 million were identified for carry forward into 2005/06. Consequently, revised spending targets were set by the Director of Resources to reflect this carry forward of resources.
- 3.4 In addition, approval has recently been given to the transfer of £110,000 from the £190,000 Contingency Sum to Culture and Recreation Capital Programme in respect of roof repairs required at Spennymoor Leisure Centre.
- 3.5 The approved Capital Programme only shows the use of the Council's own resources towards capital spending. The Council has also secured a number of sources of external funding towards the Capital Programme in the way of government grant approvals, lottery funding and other grants and contributions. The total level of capital spending will therefore be significantly higher once external funding has been taken into account.
- 3.6 The following table shows the original 2005/06 Capital Programme approved by Council, the approved carry forward from 2004/05 which is added to give the revised Capital Programme approval for the year and details all approved external funding secured to date to show the total Gross Budget reflecting total capital resources available for the year:

Capital Programme / Portfolio	Original Approved Net Budget	Approved Carry Forward from 2004/05	Revised Net Budget	Approved External Funding	Gross Budget 2005/06
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Resource Management:					
- ICT+	1,000	323	1,323	50	1,373
- Green Lane	175	-	175	-	175
- Chilton Depot	65	56	121	-	121
Culture and Recreation*	610	40	650	1,284	1,934
Regeneration	400	494	894	1,011	1,905
Economic Development	200	159	359	300	659
General Fund Housing	1,000	-	1,000	853	1,853
Community Safety	80	(24)	56	-	56
Environment	120	-	120	-	120
Supporting People	70	-	70	-	70
Regeneration Initiatives#	2,500	554	3,054	-	3,054
Contingency Sum*	80	-	80	-	80
Total General Fund	6,300	1,602	7,902	3,498	11,400
Housing Revenue Account	7,000	300	7,300	-	7,300
Total	13,300	1,902	15,202	3,498	18,700

+ Includes £150,000 IEG Funding

* Includes £110,000 transferred from Contingency Sum to Culture and Recreation in respect of repairs to SLC roof

£554,000 carried forward from 2004/05 Regeneration Initiatives Provision in respect of the Council's contribution towards the Gymnastics Centre at Spennymoor Leisure Centre

Developments During 2005/2006

- 3.7 As previously reported, the Council has now received significant capital receipts from the sale of housing land at Cobblers Hall, Newton Aycliffe during the current financial year. However as a result of the delays experienced in receiving these receipts, the £5 million special provision for capital spending on affordable housing and regeneration projects has been restricted to £2.5 million. A separate report is to be presented to Management Team and Cabinet by the Head of Strategy and Regeneration providing a breakdown of the proposed use of this budget.
- 3.8 The Council has been successful in its applications to One North East for Single Programme Grant of £1.011 million towards the Spennymoor Town Centre Improvement Programme and £250,000 for the Aycliffe Industrial Estate Improvement Fund. These approvals will significantly enhance the Regeneration Capital Programme this year.
- 3.9 The General Fund Housing Capital Programme has been significantly boosted by the approval of £650,000 from the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) (including £50,000 carried forward from 2004/05) which will be utilised in regenerating private sector housing estates in Chilton and Ferryhill. In addition the Portfolio has benefited from a carry forward from 2004/05 of £18,000 Disabled Facilities Grant in addition to the £185,000 2005/06 approval.
- 3.10 The approved Culture and Recreation Capital Budget for 2005-2006 benefits from external funding totalling £1.233 million from the National Lottery and Competition Line in respect of the Gymnastics Centre at Spennymoor Leisure Centre.
- 3.11 Following submission of the Implementing Electronic Government Statement for 2005/06 (IEG 4.5) to the ODPM, the Council has again been successful in securing a grant of £150,000 to support spending in this area. The Council's ICT capital budget for E-Government initiatives already reflects the approval of this grant. In addition, an ISU grant from the ODPM of £50,000 has been secured and this will be utilised in helping to project manage the ICT capital programme.
- 3.12 The Council has recently approved a capital allocation of £700,000 (£350,000 in 2005/06 and 2006/07) in respect of investment in children's fixed play equipment. This programme of works is to be financed from the Housing Land Capital Receipts Strategy approved by Cabinet on 30th June 2005 (£2.5 million provision in 2005/06 Capital Programme).
- 3.13 The capital allocation for the Community Safety portfolio has been reduced by £24,000. This was because the digital recording capital project commenced in 2004/05 and part of the current years allocation was therefore brought forward to last years capital programme to offset the costs.

Revised Capital Programme and Actual Spend to 31st July 2005

- 3.14 The adjustments explained above have resulted in a revised net spending target of £15.2 million for 2005/06. A summarised statement of actual spend to 31st July 2005 across all portfolios is shown as follows:

Portfolio	Revised Gross Budget £'000	Actual Gross Spend £'000
Resource Management:		
- ICT	1,373	148
- Green Lane	175	26
- Depot	121	66
Culture and Recreation	1,934	424
Regeneration	1,905	334
Economic Development	659	7
General Fund Housing	1,853	260
Community Safety	56	-
Environment	120	48
Supporting People	70	1
Regeneration Initiatives	3,054	-
General Contingency	80	-
Total General Fund	11,400	1,314
Housing Revenue Account	7,300	1,970
Total	18,700	3,284

- 3.15 A gross total of £3.284m has been spent in the first four months to 31st July 2005. Additional grants and contributions of £0.236m have been received resulting in a net spend position of £3.048m or 20% of the revised net Capital Programme.

Progress on Major Capital Projects

- 3.16 Since 2001/2002 the Council has been making financial provision for the development of a regional gymnastics centre based at the rear of the Spennymoor Leisure Centre developed in partnership with Sports Lottery funding. The Council agreed to contribute £554,000 and this will be met this year from carried forward Regeneration Initiatives resources. Work is underway on this project and is expected to be completed by the end of 2005.
- 3.17 The Council has been working with partners to attract resources for tackling private sector housing suffering from market failure. A joint bid with other South Durham Coalfield Councils was made to the Regional Housing Board and an allocation of £650,000 has been confirmed from the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) for 2005/06 (including £50,000 carried forward from 2004/05). In terms of tackling market failure in older private sector housing, Ferryhill Station, Dean Bank and Chilton have been identified as three priority areas and consultants have now been appointed to develop of programme of works to achieve the spend by 31st March 2006.
- 3.18 As highlighted in paragraph 3.8 One Northeast has approved the Council's Spennymoor Town Centre Improvement Programme with a grant of £1.011 million available in 2005/06. The contract for the works has now been awarded and it is envisaged that the Town Centre Improvements will be substantially completed during this financial year.

The Council continues to make progress in achieving the Decent Homes Standard through its major Housing Capital Programme. Financial forecasts currently indicate that the spending target of £7.3 million will be achieved by the end of the year.

- 3.19 Due to the nature of capital projects it is difficult to predict exactly when financial payments will be made, unlike revenue budgets, which can be profiled accurately. Therefore an accurate assessment of expected spending at this point in time cannot be made. Capital spending has traditionally been concentrated in the latter half of the year, particularly in the last quarter, and this will probably be the case for 2005/06. Some capital projects have significant lead-in times and in other cases there is a need to secure funding approval from other agencies before expenditure is incurred, which can all lead to delays. Future budgetary control reports will be able to provide a clearer picture of progress on the Capital Programme.
- 3.20 In order to raise awareness on the progress of the capital programme regular monitoring reports will be submitted to all future Strategic Working Groups.
- 3.21 In light of the substantial capital resources available as highlighted in paragraph 3.23 below, the Council will be able to maintain its flexible approach to managing the capital programme. As in 2004/05 underspending on key projects, which have commenced or been committed to during the year, will be able to be carried forward into 2006/07.

Capital Resources

- 3.22 Based on current projections the total level of capital resources likely to be available to finance this year's Capital Programme are summarised in the table below. Capital resources are split between those brought forward from 2004/05 and those expected to be received in 2005/06:

Available Capital Resource	Resources Held At 31.03.05 £'000	Anticipated In Year £'000	Total Anticipated Resources £'000
Capital Receipts:			
- RTB's	-	2,188	2,188
- Land Sales	2,587	14,239	16,826
- Other Sales / Receipts	-	14	14
- Section 106 Agreements	137	50	187
Total Capital Receipts	2,724	16,491	19,215
Capital Grants:			
- Single Programme	65	1,311	1,376
- SHIP	-	650	650
- DFG	-	203	203
- Lottery Funding	18	1,066	1,084
- Other Grants #	23	200	233
Total Capital Grants	106	3,430	3,536
Capital Contributions	19	150	169
Supported Capital Borrowing	-	671	671
Major Repairs Allowance [HRA]	-	5,037	5,037
Direct Revenue Financing [HRA]	-	1,875	1,875

Total Available Resources	2,849	27,454	30,303
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includes IEG of £150,000

Financing the Capital Programme

- 3.23 Assuming that revised spending targets are achieved by the 31st March 2006, and that the above capital resources are realised, the financing of the capital programme is likely to be as follows:

	<i>Initial 2005/06 £'000</i>	<i>Revised 2005/06 £'000</i>
Gross Capital Spending Target (1)	15,800	18,700
Financed by:		
Government Allocations:		
- Supported Capital Expenditure	671	671
- Capital Grants and Contributions	335	3,648
- Major Repairs Allowance	5,037	5,037
Capital Receipts	7,882	7,469
Direct Revenue Financing – HRA	1,875	1,875
Total Resources	15,800	18,700

(1) The initial target has been increased to reflect the approved carry forward from 2004/05 and the phasing in of additional grants and contributions secured in respect of specific capital schemes

- 3.24 Assuming the revised spending targets are achieved, there will be unused capital receipts and other resources of around £11.6 million at the end of the financial year which can be used to support future spending commitments. The updated Medium Term Financial Plan to be approved by Cabinet later this year will determine how these resources will be used.

Corporate Policy Implications

- 3.25 This report does not contain proposals that would require any changes to the Council's agreed policy framework and corporate objectives.

4.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no further resource implications arising from this report. Planned spending commitments are in line with previously approved capital spending programmes set for the Council's portfolios.

5.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Comprehensive consultation has previously been held during the construction of the 2005/06 Budget Framework. This report does not contain any proposals or recommendations requiring further consultation.

6.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 There are no other significant material considerations arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

7.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Consultation and engagement with Overview and Scrutiny Committees has previously been held in development and review of the 2005/06 Budget Framework.

Contact Officer: Brian Allen (Director of Resources)
Telephone No.: 01388-816166 ext. 4003
E-Mail Address: ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward(s): Not Ward Specific

Background Papers:

1. Report to Council 25.02.05 Budget Framework 2005/06
2. Report to Council 29.06.05 Statement of Accounts 2004/05
3. Report to Cabinet 30.06.05 Promotion of the Regeneration of the Borough – Housing Land Capital Receipts Strategy
4. Report to Cabinet 14.07.05 Children’s Fixed Play Equipment 2005-07
5. Report to Cabinet 30.06.05 Housing Capital and Improvement Works 2005/06
6. Report to Cabinet 31.03.05 Culture and Recreation Capital Programme 2005/06
7. Report to Cabinet 09.12.04 Spennymoor Leisure Centre Gymnastics Centre
8. Report to Cabinet 12.05.05 Resource Management – Capital Programme 2005/06
9. Report to Cabinet 17.02.05 Spennymoor Town Centre – Contract Negotiation
10. Report to Cabinet 04.10.04 Spennymoor Town Centre – Shop Improvements Grants Scheme
11. Report to Cabinet 11.12.03 Spennymoor Town Centre Programme
12. Report to Cabinet 11.11.04 Single Housing Investment Pot Allocation – Ferryhill Station, Dean Bank and Chilton
13. Report to Management Team 25.07.05 Private Sector Housing Capital Programme and Single Housing Investment Programme Round 2

EXAMINATION BY STATUTORY OFFICERS

	YES	NOT APPLICABLE
1. The report has been examined by the Council’s Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council’s S151 Officer or his representative.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council’s Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Item 9

**REPORT TO CABINET
15th SEPT 05**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

Community Safety Portfolio

DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SERVICE

SUMMARY

In support of Sedgefield Borough Councils Corporate Ambition to promote a Borough with Strong Communities, Corporate Plan Aim number 36 cites as a key action the expansion of the Neighbourhood Warden Service. Consequently, the Borough Council Medium Term Financial Plan includes provision to resource such an extension of service. Within resources to be made available as from 1st. August, 2005 it is proposed to establish a dedicated Neighbourhood Warden Streetsafe Unit with the same core duties and training as the existing Neighbourhood Warden Service but with a particular focus on Signal Crimes, Joint Initiatives with Partner Agencies and Mobile CCTV Operations.

Anti social behaviour, fear of crime and associated environmental issues such as littering, graffiti etc have been consistently highlighted by our communities, both in the Council housing and private housing sectors. The report proposes that in accordance with provision within the current Medium Term Financial Plan and as an initial stage the establishment of the Streetsafe Unit within the Neighbourhood Warden Section. This will require the creation of a post of Neighbourhood Warden Co-ordinator and four new Neighbourhood Warden posts and include the Transfer of a Service Function and post from Environmental Services Division.

Additionally, a pilot scheme for Neighbourhood Wardens working with Sedgefield Borough Council Housing Department under a Service Level Agreement, with financial contribution from the Housing Revenue Account is proposed which will inform any proposed further development of such arrangements. Any plans to further develop a HRA linked service would be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2006/7 – 2008/9 and in addition to expanding the number of Neighbourhood wardens would also consider how management arrangements could be strengthened.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That a Neighbourhood Warden Streetsafe Unit be established with a particular focus on Signal Crimes, Joint Initiatives with Partner Agencies and Mobile CCTV Operations.
2. That a pilot be introduced for the remainder of 2005/6 providing Neighbourhood Warden Services to York Hill and Tudhoe Moor, Spennymoor on behalf of the Housing Department and that any subsequent planned expansion of this service be considered within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2006/7 – 2008/9

NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN SERVICE

In support of Sedgefield Borough Councils Corporate Ambition to promote a Borough with Strong Communities, Corporate Plan Aim number 36 cites as a key action the expansion of the Neighbourhood Warden Service. Consequently, the Borough Council Medium Term Financial Plan includes provision to resource such an extension of service.

The last 18 months has seen the re-engineering of the Community Force into a Neighbourhood Warden service with a particular focus on addressing Quality of Life issues.

Staff training programmes have been developed linked to NVQ qualifications, communication systems have been revised, the service has received formal Accreditation from Durham Constabulary, work is in hand to achieve the National Warden Quality Standard for the service and income generating partnership working has been extended.

Anti social behaviour, fear of crime and associated environmental issues such as littering, graffiti etc have been consistently highlighted by our communities, both in the Council housing and private housing sectors. The Borough Council Medium Term Financial Plan includes provision for an initial expansion of the Neighbourhood Warden Service. The purpose of this report is to outline an approach to service extension and development and highlight a pilot opportunity to inform any further service development.

It is proposed to develop a dedicated Neighbourhood Wardens Streetsafe Unit which will have the same core duties and training as the main Neighbourhood Warden Service but will focus on response to

- Signal Crimes
- Joint Initiatives with Partner Agencies
- Mobile CCTV Operations

Establishment of the Streetsafe Unit would include the Transfer of Service Function and the post of Environmental Protection Assistant – Environmental Enforcement from the Environmental Services Division to the Community

Services Division within the Neighbourhood Services Department. Additionally, as part of the exit strategy relating to the NRF funded service for the removal of abandoned vehicles responsibility for this function would also transfer to the Community Services Division. In developing these proposals consideration has been given to functional responsibility for Enforcement, Education and Removal between Community Services and Environmental Services Divisions in the Neighbourhood Services Department in the following areas.

Function	Enforcement	Education	Removal
Dog Fouling	Wardens	Shared	Street Scene
Litter	Wardens	Shared	Street Scene
Fly Tipping (Domestic) Fly Tipping (Commercial / Large Scale)	Wardens / Env. Services / Env. Agency	Shared Shared	Street Scene / Env. Agency
Graffiti / Fly Posting	Wardens	Shared	Street Scene / Private Contractor
Vandalism	Police (<i>criminal damage</i>)	Shared	Street Scene - <i>if SBC</i> –
Abandoned Vehicles	Wardens	Shared	Private Contractor
Stray Dogs	Env. Services	Env. Services	Env. Services

Consideration was also given to emerging requirements relating to:-

- The Clean Neighbourhood & Environment Bill relating to fly tipping and stopping of vehicles not on the highway. This was seen as part of the Fly Tipping function.
- The Licensing Act 2002 – Neighbourhood Warden involvement in development of ‘Pub Watch’ would complement licensing & enforcement function undertaken by Environmental Services.

Funding has been released as from 1st. August in accordance with the Medium Term Financial Plan proposals which will support the establishment of the Neighbourhood Wardens Streetsafe Unit.

Additionally, a pilot scheme for Neighbourhood Wardens working with Sedgefield Borough Housing Department, with funding support from the Housing Revenue Account is proposed which will inform any proposed further development of such arrangements. A Service Level Agreement will be entered into with Housing department which will include a formula to determine HRA support, service targets, outcomes, hours of working etc. Any plans to further develop a HRA linked service would be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan for 2006/7 – 2008/9 and in addition to expanding the number of Neighbourhood wardens would also consider how management arrangements could be strengthened.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The proposal is consistent with provision within the Medium Term Financial Plan and current budgets.

CONSULTATIONS

Community consultation undertaken as part of the development of the Sedgefield Community Safety Partnership Audit & Strategy 2005/08 highlighted that issues of crime and anti social behaviour and the fear associated with such behaviour are a key priority for the public of Sedgefield Borough. Such consultation informed the development of the Strategy and the strategic response included within SBC Community Strategy.

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Tackling issues of crime, anti social behaviour and the fear such issues engender is key to fulfilling the Council's Corporate Ambition to create a Borough with Strong Communities. The role of Neighbourhood Wardens is an integral part of the Councils operational response to our statutory responsibilities under the Crime & Disorder Act and our stated Corporate Ambitions.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

None.

Contact Officer: Dennis Scarr
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Email Address: dscarr@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward(s)

All

Key Decision Validation

Background Papers

1. SBC Community Strategy and Corporate Plan
2. SBC Medium Term Financial Plan
3. Sedgefield Community Safety Partnership Audit & Strategy 2005/08.

Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Item 10

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday, 12 July 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor V. Crosby (Chairman) and

Councillors D.R. Brown, Mrs. B.A. Clare, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, M.T.B. Jones
J.P. Moran, B.M. Ord, Mrs. C. Potts, A. Smith and Mrs. C. Sproat

In Attendance:

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, A. Gray, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington
B. Meek, G. Morgan, Mrs. E.M. Paylor and J. Wayman J.P

Apologies: Councillors B.F. Avery J.P and Mrs. L. Smith

OSC(3)1/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

OSC(3)2/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th April, 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OSC(3)3/05 CARS PARKED ON OPEN SPACES

It was explained that Ian Bestford, Environmental Protection Assistant – Vehicle Action Co-ordinator, was present at the meeting to give a presentation outlining the current situation in relation to the above issue and to answer queries.

He explained that there had been a substantial increase in the number of vehicles on roads during recent years. Many of the estates, particularly in areas of older housing, had not been designed to accommodate the increased number of vehicles. The lack of adequate parking facilities on estates was an issue.

The lack of parking facilities had resulted in an increase in the number of vehicles parking on open spaces and particularly on verges and pavements including on areas of Council-owned land. The issues involved in vehicles parking on those areas included damage to the grass verges, pavements etc., spillage of oil and petrol effecting the environment, the obstruction of the highways to vehicle access and pedestrians, an increase in the number of cars etc being advertised for sale on the highway and also trespass.

Members were informed that a number of legislative controls existed to deal with the issues including powers under the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990, the Highways Act 1980 and Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005.

With regard to cars parked on Council-owned land the Council had powers to place notices on abandoned and illegally parked cars informing offenders that if the vehicle was not removed within 24 hours the Council would have the vehicle removed and a charge would be made to the owner for the return of the vehicle. If the vehicle was not claimed within seven days, the Council had powers to dispose of the vehicle.

Enforcement action in relation to abandoned vehicles could be taken under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which specified that notices must be served on all interested parties. These powers were however difficult to use on Council-owned land as the Council was itself an interested party.

With respect to damage etc., caused to Council-owned land by vehicles and the recovery of costs this involved taking civil action. It was, however, often difficult to prove the cause of the damage and the responsible person.

In respect of obstruction of the highway under the Highways Act 1980 it was an offence to cause an obstruction on the highway and contravention of that Act carried a maximum fine of £1,000. Most highways were, however, adopted by Durham County Council and it was therefore that authority's responsibility to take legal action.

The Committee was informed that the issue of trespass was a civil matter which involved an injunction being served on offenders.

In conclusion it was explained that there were a number of enforcement actions which could be taken to deal with the issues. However, they did not address the issue of lack of suitable parking facilities on estates.

Reference was made by Members to the ability of Police to deal with the extent of the situation bearing in mind lack of resources etc.. In response it was explained that Durham County Council was the first port of call for dealing with issues in relation to parking on the highways and that Council was given the opportunity to deal with offenders without Police intervention.

Members of the Committee queried the County Council's strategy for dealing with the issues. It was suggested that, as that Authority was responsible for dealing with vehicles on the highway, officers and the relevant Cabinet Member from Durham County Council, a representative from the Police Authority and other appropriate agencies be invited to a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee to discuss the issues.

Discussion was also held regarding car repairs and restoration being carried out from private premises and then being advertised for sale on the highway. Members were informed that if this issue was occurring on private land then there was no action which could be taken. However, if the situation was occurring on the highway then this was a matter for the Highway Authority.

AGREED : That officers and the relevant Portfolio holder from Durham County Council and the Police be invited to attend a meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 to discuss the issues.

OSC(3)4/05 PREPARATION OF THE ANNUAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REPORT

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive Officer (for copy see file of Minutes) and also a presentation which was given in relation to the preparation of the Annual Overview and Scrutiny report.

The Committee reviewed the work undertaken, considered a suggested Action Plan for the overview and scrutiny function and also reviewed working methods in order to improve the Overview and Scrutiny function.

Members were reminded that in accordance with the Council's Constitution a combined Annual Overview and Scrutiny report covering all three Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be submitted to Council on 30th September 2005 .

The achievements which the Committee had progressed were outlined in the report. It was explained that no key decisions of Cabinet had been called in during the past year. However, Members had raised queries about the number of issues which had resulted in the appropriate Cabinet Member being invited to attend meetings and respond to concerns.

Two Review Groups had been established to undertake in-depth studies of the Regeneration of Neighbourhoods with Older Private Sector Housing and the Street Safe Initiative. Those Groups were in their final stages of completing their studies and would submit final reports to the Committee in due course.

The work of external organisations had also been scrutinised by the Committee including Durham Constabulary's Business Plan for the South Area as it related to Sedgefield Borough and also a proposal from Durham Fire and Rescue Service relating to a private finance initiative to develop a community Fire Station and Life Skills Centre within the Borough. In each case the Committee had forwarded comments to the organisation concerned.

The Committee had reviewed its work programme at each meeting during the previous year and identified issues which Members wished to consider. In addition a range of Performance Indicators would be presented to Members which would enable Members to identify areas for consideration.

In relation to the Overview and Scrutiny function it had been intended to review and republish the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Guide and develop a website to encourage public participation. However, it had not been possible to complete those projects.

An evaluation of the Overview and Scrutiny function needed to take place in order that the effectiveness of the function was assessed and further improvements in working practices etc could be made. Once this had been completed it would be possible to update the Council's Guide taking into account any changes in working practices identified by the assessment. The Guide would provide Members, Officers and members of the public with a clear understanding of the aims and objectives of overview and scrutiny. Following the introduction of that Guide, training would be provided for Members and officers.

AGREED : That the Annual Report as outlined be submitted to Council.

OSC(3)5/05 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the Committees work programme (for copy see file of Minutes).

In relation to the Street Safe Initiative the Review's conclusions had been drawn up, and a report was being drafted which would be submitted to the next meeting of the Review Group.

In relation to the Regeneration of Neighbourhoods with Older Private Sector Housing, a meeting was to be held on 18th July, 2005 to consider the final draft report.

In relation to items to be included on future agendas it was agreed that appropriate representatives from Durham County Council be invited to attend a future meeting to consider the issue of parking of cars on open spaces.

AGREED : That the Committee's work programme be approved.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North 01388 816166 ext 4237