

Statement of Community Involvement

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Statement of Community Involvement

1 Introduction

What is a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)?

1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Forest of Dean District Council will involve the community in preparing and revising all local planning documents and in making decisions on planning and related applications. The SCI provides a clear explanation of the opportunities for getting involved in planning issues.

1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all Local Authorities to write a Statement of Community Involvement. The Forest of Dean District Council has an existing SCI which was adopted in June 2006. Since that time new legislation has been introduced, with changes to the way the planning system works and organisational changes have taken place in the Council. In light of this it is considered appropriate to update the 2006 document to strengthen community and stakeholder involvement in the planning and development process.

2 The Planning System

2.1 The current planning system started when the **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004** was introduced. Since this time, the Forest of Dean District Council, as the Local Planning Authority, has been drawing up and consulting on the new **Local Plan (previously called the Development Framework or LDF)**. When it is finally complete it will replace the 2005 Adopted Local Plan Review.

2.2 The Planning System is divided into three overlapping areas

National Planning Policy Framework, March 2012

2.3 The [National Planning Policy Framework](#)⁽¹⁾ was introduced in March 2012. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Framework acts as guidance for Local Planning Authorities and decision takers, both in drawing up plans and making decisions on planning applications.

Forest of Dean Local Plan

2.4 Local Councils are required to produce a local plan which sets out policies for the their area. The Forest of Dean Local Plan will comprise of several related Development Plan Documents (DPDs) which contain planning policies and related Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which provide further guidance upon the implementation of the policies.

2.5 These will be part of the 'statutory development plan' for the Forest of Dean District and will set out the strategic policies to guide where new development is located and to plan for change in the Forest of Dean District. Once adopted it will provide the local policies upon which planning applications will be determined.

1 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

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2.6 The Plan will include:-

The Core Strategy

The [Core Strategy](#)⁽²⁾ was adopted in February 2012, it is the key part of the Local Plan, and all other subsequent development plan documents must be consistent with it. Every local Planning Authority is required to produce a Core Strategy. It sets out the long term overall vision and strategic objectives on how the area should develop. It will include a delivery strategy for achieving the objectives, setting out how much development is intended to happen, where, when and by what means it will be delivered, and how the delivery will be managed and monitored. The Core Strategy can also allocate strategic sites that are considered central to the achievement of the strategy for example sites for employment.

Allocations Development Plan Document

The [Allocations Development Plan Document](#)⁽³⁾ (ADPD) will show how the proposals contained in the Core Strategy will be implemented. An important part of the new ADPD will be a map showing in detail sites identified for particular developments, protected areas and settlement boundaries. This will be accompanied by policies which identify land for development in accordance with the requirements of the Core Strategy.

Adopted Proposals Map.

The [Proposals Map](#)⁽⁴⁾ sets out clearly how the policies and allocations of land will look. It should also identify areas of protection such as nationally protected landscape. It is updated as each new document is approved.

Other local planning documents

These are documents produced by a local planning authority when it feels specific issues or areas are not adequately covered in the Core Strategy. For example an Area Action Plan could be produced, this is a plan which is specific to a geographical area that is in need of significant change, or conservation (for example major regeneration).

Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action Plan

The [Cinderford Northern Quarter Area Action Plan](#)⁽⁵⁾ was adopted as a statutory planning document by the Forest of Dean District Council on the 23rd February 2012. It will now provide the planning framework for this area.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD/SPG), can be produced that may cover a range of issues, thematic or site specific, and provide further detail of policies and proposals in a 'parent' local plan document, e.g. on Affordable Housing or a large redevelopment area.

2 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6478&tt=graphic

3 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=7872&tt=graphic

4 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=7694&tt=graphic

5 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=7025&tt=graphic

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Other Documents

The local planning authority is obliged to publish a project plan in relation to the policy documents it intends to produce called a [Local Development Scheme](#)⁽⁶⁾. It sets out the timetable on what local plan documents will be produced and the main stages in production, including the opportunities for your involvement. Local planning authorities also produce a [Monitoring Report](#)⁽⁷⁾ which should indicate the stage that the plan has reached in its preparation. The Monitoring Report also shows to what extent the policies and proposals set out in the adopted local planning documents are being achieved.

Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP)

[Neighbourhood Planning](#)⁽⁸⁾ commenced in 2012 introduced through the Localism Act 2011. Parish Councils (in the Forest of Dean) are able to produce a Neighbourhood Plan for their area. A Neighbourhood Development Plan is a community led plan for guiding future development, regeneration and conservation of an area, it can set out a vision for an area and planning policies for the use and development of land. A Neighbourhood Development Plan has to support the strategic development needs of the wider area outlined in the local plan. However it can shape and influence where that development will go and what it will look like. Neighbourhood Development Plans will become part of the local development plan for the area.

2.7 Planning applications are assessed against the policies of the local development plan this includes the Forest of Dean Core Strategy and other adopted planning documents.

Development Management (Planning Applications)

2.8 Development Management is the part of the planning process, where applications for planning permission are considered. There are four main areas of work involved in this:

- preliminary enquiries or informal advice, which is, at the time of publication of this document, given free of charge is strongly encouraged. Please see the [Useful documents and downloads](#)⁽⁹⁾ section of the website to find out more about the [pre-application protocol](#).⁽¹⁰⁾
- the formal processing of planning and the various other applications (including advertisement, listed building and conservation area consent etc) for which fees set by central Government must be paid. The applications are submitted to the council. Planning applications need approval by the local council before they can proceed. They will usually need to conform to the Local Plan and any neighbourhood development plan.
- the enforcement process against unacceptable unauthorised developments.
- the appeal process against a refusal of planning permission, a condition on a permission or an enforcement notice.⁽¹¹⁾

6 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6472&tt=graphic

7 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6482&tt=graphic

8 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=8000&tt=graphic

9 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6999&tt=graphic

10 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/media/Assets/Planning-DC/documents/Planning/Pre_Application_Protocol_2007_952k.pdf

11 <http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/planningappeals>

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3 How to get information and stay informed

3.1 Getting involved in the planning process at an early stage is essential to shape the decisions that are made. For every plan that we produce and any planning applications that are submitted to us to determine, we must consult and engage with people and organisations in making our decisions. You can be involved in the two aspects of town planning:-

- **Plan preparation (Local Plan Documents)**
The Local Plan sets the policy framework for the District against which development proposals will be assessed. Decisions on planning applications are made in line with local planning documents so it is important to get involved in the preparation of these documents.
- **Planning applications (Development Management)**
Most types of development require a planning application to be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Anyone can view and make comments on a planning application.

Local Plan

Plan Preparation (Local Plan Documents)

Who we will consult

3.2 The community who live and /or work in the Forest of Dean District are the people who will experience the outcomes of planning decisions. The list below provides information on who we will engage.

- Specific consultation bodies. We are statutorily required by the planning regulations⁽¹²⁾ to consult these organisations in preparing our new plans and proposals. These include statutory organisations such as Councils, Parish and Town Councils, Infrastructure providers and government bodies.
- General consultation bodies as required by the planning regulations:- these include other organisations representing different sections of the local community such as local voluntary groups, bodies representing local economic, social and other community interests and relevant interested parties
- Local businesses, voluntary and other organisations
- Others who have expressed an interest in the subject matter
- The general public

3.3 Any interested party or individuals will be added to our main list of consultees if they wish to be notified of consultations. We will manage and review our consultation database regularly to keep it as up-to-date as possible.

12 <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/767/contents/made>

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Duty to co-operate

3.4 Section 110 of the Localism Act sets out a 'duty to co-operate', that is, local authorities are required to work with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies in preparing their development plan documents. This applies to all local planning authorities, national park authorities and county councils in England and to a number of other public bodies.

How we will consult

3.5 All Local Plan consultations will be a minimum of 8 weeks with the exception of supplementary planning documents where a consultation will be a minimum of 6 Weeks.

- We will notify appropriate organisations and individuals of any consultation events electronically or where a person does not have an email address, letters will be sent to them to inform them of the consultation. The preferred method of consultation is by email.
- We will publicise consultations by methods such as leaflets, website, posters, displays and newspaper notices.
- Copies of the consultation documents will be available for the public to view in the following locations

Forest of Dean Council Offices, Coleford

Forest of Dean Council website The documents will be available on the planning pages of the Council website <http://www.fdean.gov.uk>

Town and Parish Council Offices or with the Town or Parish Clerk if there is no office.

Libraries All the Forest of Dean Libraries (Coleford, Cinderford, Mitcheldean, Newnham on Severn, Bream, Lydney and Newent) plus Chepstow and Gloucester Central Libraries.

- Paper copies of the documents may be purchased at a price reflecting copying costs.
- Documents will be available on request in alternative formats such as braille, large print, translations into other languages or in audio format.

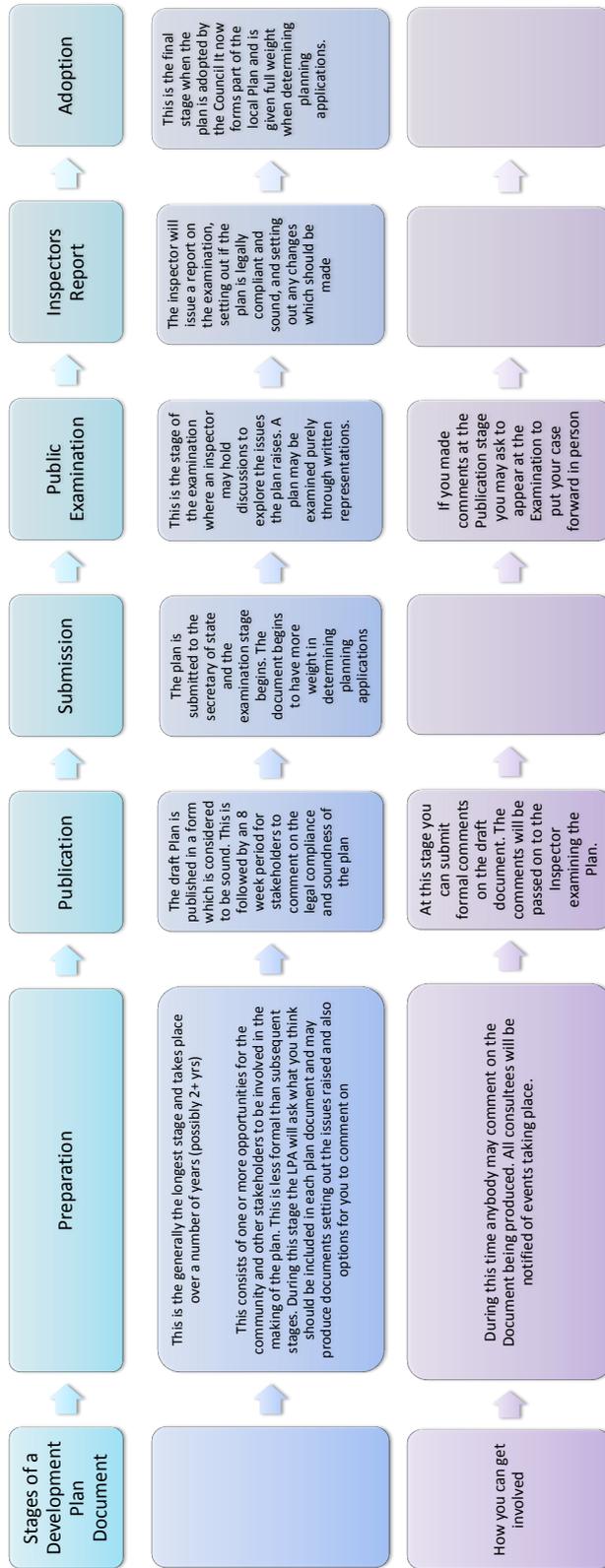
3.6 Following the Consultations

- We will publish comments received as soon as possible.
- We will explain how these comments have been considered.
- We will set out the next steps for the document.

When will we consult?

3.7 The following diagram outlines the Local Plan process for shaping a local plan document. There are various stages when an organisation or individual may comment on a document.

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Local Plan Process

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3.8 Before a document is drafted, we will ask for ideas, views and gather information and evidence from appropriate organisations, individuals and communities. We will ask what the document should consider.

3.9 After considering the initial comments we will usually consult on a draft document which will explain issues to be considered and it may include potential options. There may be the need to prepare documents for additional consultation stages setting out further options, information, greater detail or a preferred option.

3.10 We will publish a draft plan with a consultation aimed at ensuring the draft is relevant to the Forest of Dean. We will evaluate the social, environmental and economic impacts of the emerging plan through a sustainability appraisal.

3.11 We will formally publish the “Proposed Submission” document (or equivalent under any revision to the relevant regulations) and ask for comments on the legal compliance and soundness of the Plan. All comments received at this stage will be submitted to the Secretary of State and considered at the Public Examination.

3.12 When the document is submitted to the Secretary of State we will notify all specific and general consultation bodies and any person who requested to be notified of the submission document.

Planning Portfolio Support Group

3.13 The Planning Portfolio Support Group meet regularly throughout the year to discuss planning policy issues. Members of the public are permitted to attend twice yearly and are able to submit questions to the group.

Planning Application Process

Development Management - Planning Applications

3.14 The Planning service exists for the benefit of the whole community and has to take into account not only the wishes of the individuals or businesses who want to develop but also the views of people affected by the proposed development. The SCI sets out how we will consult the public and other organisations when a planning application is received. A separate document - The [Development Management Charter](#)⁽¹³⁾ sets out in more detail the Development Management process and the services Development Management provides.

Consultation:

Awareness raising and notifying the public of new planning applications

3.15 On receipt of a planning application the Council will advise neighbours by letter or display a site notice and take account of any relevant consultation responses. In some cases, particularly major development proposals, there are extra publicity requirements and these will be advertised

13 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6926&tt=graphic

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in the Press and may require site notices. A period of 21 days will be allowed for comments to be made. At the discretion of the Council if significant changes are made to an application a re-consultation for a further 14 day period may be made.

3.16 Copies of all planning applications will be available for the public to view and to comment on via the [Public Access](#)⁽¹⁴⁾ pages of the Forest of Dean District Council website. On registering with public access, it is possible to search for planning applications and to save these searches or to track an existing application, the person will then be notified by email of any updates.

3.17 In addition to notifying the public about new planning applications we will consult statutory consultees i.e. public bodies such as Parish and Town Councils and other relevant organisations or agencies, giving them 21 days to respond. Consultation is normally by electronic means.

3.18 The Council has two processes for consulting on applications to undertake works to trees protected by Tree Preservation Orders or within a conservation area. The standard approach is to contact neighbours and Parish Council by letter or by putting up a site notice. In these circumstances 14 days is allowed for comments to be made. Where applications meet the appropriate requirements they may be considered as 'enhanced' applications. Enhanced applications are divided into two groups Minor and Major. For Minor applications (e.g. crown reductions under 15 % or removal of a single branch less than 120mm diameter at the truck) no consultations will be undertaken. For enhanced major applications neighbours and Parish Council will be contacted by letter or by putting up a site notice, in these circumstances 14days is allowed for comments to be made.

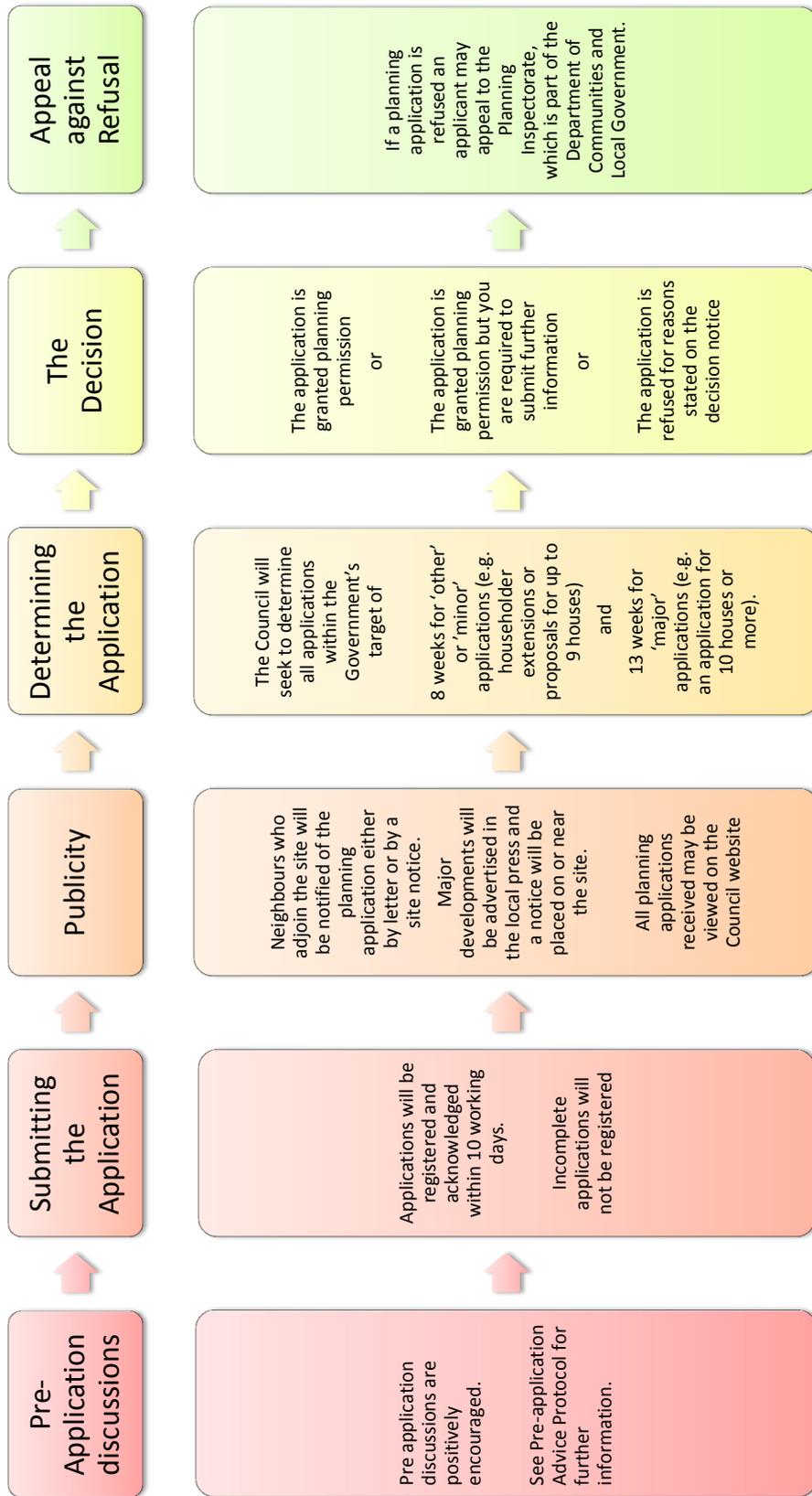
3.19 In the case of Demolition applications (buildings over 50 square metres) and agricultural determinations consultations are discretionary. Parish Councils are notified and the deadline for comments will be 14 days due to the government reduced target time of 28 days for dealing with the application.

3.20 Applications for very small changes known as non material amendments will not be the subject of any consultation.

3.21 All comments will be available for public inspection and posted on the Council's website. Planning applications are public documents and can be viewed at the Council offices and on the Council's website. The Council will publish the decisions on all planning applications on its website.

14 http://www.fdean.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=6448#important

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4 How to make your comments

4.1 To make a representation (comment) on a Forest of Dean planning policy document during its consultation period either

1. Email: ldf@fdean.gov.uk
2. Write to :
Local Plan Section, Planning and Housing Group, Council Offices, High Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8HG
3. Log on to the consultation portal : <http://fdean-consult.limehouse.co.uk/portal>

4.2 To make a comment on a planning application during its consultation period

1. The preferred form of communication is via the public access system having viewed the application online on the council's website www.fdean.gov.uk.
2. Email: planning@fdean.gov.uk
3. Write to :
Development Management, Planning and Housing Group, Council Offices, High Street, Coleford, Gloucestershire, GL16 8HG

4.3 Please note that representations are public documents and a name and address will be needed for a representation to be taken into account. Complying with the Data Protection Act 1998 other contact details will be removed except if the consultee is a business or organisation. Anonymous e-mails or letters will not be accepted as valid representations.

5 Updates

5.1 The Statement of Community Involvement will be updated as and when it is considered necessary.

