

# Statement of Community Involvement



**INITIALLY ADOPTED JULY 2016**

**JANUARY 2019: FOCUSED  
CONSULTATION ON TRACKED CHANGES  
ONLY**

## Foreword

### Introduction

The statement of community involvement (SCI) outlines Dacorum Borough Council's standards for involving the community in the planning process and identifies the ways it will achieve these standards.

It sets out the Council's approach to public consultation in two areas of planning:

- 1) The preparation, alteration and continuing documents; and review of its planning policy
- 2) Consultation on planning applications

### Consultation Arrangements

This draft document has been published for targeted consultation. Feedback is sought from key groups and organisations who have a particular interest or involvement with planning and development issues. This includes:

- **Specific consultation bodies**, as defined in the Localism Act 2001. This includes adjoining local planning authorities, Hertfordshire County Council and other key bodies such as the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England.
- **Planning agents and developers**
- **Town and Parish Councils**
- **Residents groups and community associations**

The consultation is seeking views on the proposed modifications (tracked changes only). It is not an opportunity to raise matters that relate to the unchanged parts of the Statement of Community Involvement.

The consultation runs from xx February until xx March 2019.

Comments received before the xx March 2018 deadline will be reported to the Council's Cabinet and full Council in 2019. Consultation responses will be considered and any necessary changes made to the document prior to its formal adoption by the Council.

Once formally adopted by the Council, the revised SCI will come into force and be used to manage consultation arrangements for both the policy development and decision taking functions of the Council as the local planning authority.

**Commented [RW1]:** To be updated once agreed by Cabinet

## Contents

Glossary.....	5
1. Introduction.....	7
The role of consultation and community engagement.....	8
2. About this SCI.....	10
The need to update this SCI.....	10
Monitoring and Review.....	11
PART A: Community Involvement in Dacorum’s Plan-making and Planning Policy.....	12
3. Who We Consult.....	13
(a) Specific Consultation Bodies.....	14
(b) General Consultation Bodies.....	16
(c) Other Consultation Bodies.....	16
(d) Wider Community.....	16
(e) Other Council Departments and Councillors.....	17
4. How We Will consult with you.....	18
Efficient Use of Resources.....	18
Methods of Communication.....	18
Engaging with everyone.....	21
4. When We Will Consult.....	23
Introduction.....	23
What kinds of Planning Policy documents are prepared?.....	25
Local Plan.....	26
Supplementary Planning Documents.....	29
Neighbourhood Plans.....	32
Local Development Schemes (LDS).....	38
Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).....	38
PART B: Community Involvement in the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).....	41
5. Introduction.....	42
What is the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP)?.....	42
General Principles for Consultation on the South West Herts JSP.....	44
Who we will consult on the Joint Strategic Plan?.....	44
How we will consult on the Joint Strategic Plan?.....	44
When we will consult on the Joint Strategic Plan?.....	45

PART C: Community Involvement in the Planning Application Process.....	46
6. Introduction .....	47
7. Pre-application Consultation and Advice .....	47
8. Planning Performance Agreements .....	48
9. Community Involvement in Planning Application Decisions .....	48
Trees .....	51
Prior Approval.....	51
Lawful Development Certificates.....	51
Advertisement Consent.....	51
Consultation periods.....	51
Development Control Committee .....	53
Post decision .....	53
Appeals .....	54
Enforcement.....	55

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Specific Consultation Bodies .....	56
Appendix 2: Further planning support.....	58
Who can help explain Planning Issues to me?.....	58
What other support for planning is available to me? .....	58
Planning Aid England.....	59
Appendix 3: Key stages in preparing policy documents .....	60

## Glossary

Some of the key terms used within this document are explained below.

<b>Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)</b>	A report produced each year by local authorities, which assesses progress with, and the effectiveness of, its plan making documents. Formerly known as the Annual Monitoring Report.
<b>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)</b>	A new charge which local authorities in England and Wales will be empowered, but not required, to charge on most types of new development in their area. CIL charges will be based on simple formulae which relate to the size of the charge to the size and character of the development paying it.
<b>Deposit Point</b>	Locations across the Borough where consultation documents can be viewed.
<b>Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)</b>	Details of what EIR is, when information is covered by the Regulations and which organisations are covered by the Regulations is available at: <a href="https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/what-are-the-eir/">https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-the-environmental-information-regulations/what-are-the-eir/</a>
<b>Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)</b>	Details of what the FOI Act is, when information is covered by the Act and which organisations are covered by the Act is available at: <a href="https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/what-is-the-foi-act/">https://ico.org.uk/for-organisations/guide-to-freedom-of-information/what-is-the-foi-act/</a>
<b>Local Development Scheme (LDS)</b>	This public statement sets out the programme for the preparation of the Local Plan and Local Development Documents.
<b>Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)</b>	A body, designated by the Secretary of State, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.
<b>Local Nature Partnership (LNP)</b>	Partnership organisation with the main aim of improving the range of benefits and services obtained from a healthy natural environment. Also provide local leadership on environmental issues and to contribute to the green economy by linking with LEPs.
<b>Local Plan</b>	Formal plans for a geographical area which are key points of reference when deciding planning applications. May consist of a single document or a set of documents including a Core Strategy, Site Allocations, Development Management Policies and Area Action Plans.
<b>Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)</b>	The Dacorum LSP is a partnership comprising representatives from public and private organisations, business and the voluntary sector and community groups. One of its roles is to prepare and implement the Sustainable Community Strategy.

<b>Minerals and Waste Local Plan</b>	Produced by Hertfordshire County Council, these documents set out plans relating to mineral and waste developments in Hertfordshire.
<b>National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)</b>	The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England, and how these are expected to be applied. The guidance is to be used by local planning authorities in drawing up plans and determining planning applications.
<b>Neighbourhood Plan</b>	Neighbourhood plans deal with local land use and development issues, rather than strategic issues. They may relate to regeneration or growth. They may cover where new shops, offices or homes should go and what green space should be protected. Plans should be compatible with national policies and policies in the local authority's adopted development plan.
<b>Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs)</b>	Voluntary agreements that commit applicants, local planning authorities and partner organisations to an agreed timetable for determining proposals.
<b>Planning Permission in Principle (PIP)</b>	A new type of permission that is expected to be introduced via the Housing and Planning Bill. It is similar in practice to outline planning permission and is where 'in principle' consent is granted, subject to conditions that the development in question will not begin until certain matters (e.g. access, design, landscaping etc.) have been approved by the Planning Authority.
<b>Programme Officer</b>	Person appointed to assist with all administrative matters related to Examinations of Local Plan Documents.
<b>Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</b>	SPDs provide more detailed planning guidance to supplement what is in the development plan. They are part of the local planning framework.
<b>Sustainability Appraisal (SA)</b>	An appraisal of local development documents against their environmental, social and economic impacts. This often incorporates Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), required for some plans and proposals under European law.

# 1. Introduction

Dacorum Borough Council is fully committed to working in a clear and transparent way and is keen to assist anyone who may wish to get involved in the planning process.

## Role of the SCI:

1.1 The purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is to outline the Council's standards for community involvement in the planning process and to identify ways these standards will be achieved. This SCI reflects the Government's latest planning policy guidance and changes to legislation.

1.2 The SCI sets out the Council's approach to public consultation in two areas of planning:

- **Planning Policies:** the preparation, alteration and continuing review of planning policy documents included within the Local Development Framework (LDF); and
- **Planning Applications:** Consultation on planning applications.

It illustrates how we wish to engage the community, to help them influence new planning policy documents such as the Local Plan and equally important, the ways local people can comment on planning applications which come forward.

1.3 In particular, the SCI sets out the following:

*When the community will be consulted in relation to planning applications, development plan documents and supplementary planning documents*

*What publicity and consultation is expected from applicants before they submit a planning application*

*How the community will be engaged; and*

*Who will be involved*

1.4 All local planning authorities are required to produce an SCI. The legal requirements for consultation, community involvement and planning applications are currently set out in the following legislation:

- **Plan-making:** Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; Town and Country Planning (Local Development) England Regulations 2012 (as amended); Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended); and
- **Planning applications:** Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) and Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Regulations 1990 (as amended).

- 1.5 Dacorum's SCI demonstrates how these requirements are taken into account to ensure that, as far as possible, all parts of the community have the opportunity to engage in the process of preparing planning documents and in the decision making process on planning applications.

### **The role of consultation and community engagement**

- 1.6 We wish to ensure that people are involved at the early stage of Local Plan preparation and in the consideration of planning applications. We want them to feel that they can make a real difference to the future of the areas in which they live and work.

- 1.7 Our aspiration is that:

*“The community of Dacorum should be enabled to participate meaningfully in the development of planning policies and proposals contained in the Local Plan and to comment or make representations on planning applications in the Borough”.*

- 1.8 We want our planning decisions to take proper account of local views. Dacorum Borough Council encourages public involvement in planning matters, both in policy making and in the planning application process. We will do this in various ways and the methods we use to engage with people will vary depending on the nature of the planning issue, stage or process that they are involved with. It is crucial we engage effectively with our local communities in order that they can have the opportunity to have their views taken into account on decisions for development. Through the Statement of Community Involvement the Council will seek to:

#### ***Communicate clearly***

- Keep the process simple by writing our documents in plain English and explaining any planning terms that we need to use
- Explain clearly what we are consulting you on and the reasons why we want to involve you.

#### ***Early Involvement***

- Give those who want to, the opportunity to constructively contribute and participate in the local planning process
- Commence the consultation process to enable comments to be made in the early stages before policies are drawn up, i.e. at the issues and options stage

#### ***Recognising the needs of different groups in the community***

- Communicate in ways that are relevant and accessible to all sections of our community and proportionate to the task
- Actively encourage participation and endeavour to engage with groups in our community who have in the past been under-represented in the

local planning process e.g. young people, disability groups and people from ethnic minority groups

***Providing clear opportunities for involvement***

- Raise awareness of the local planning process by providing clear and up-to-date information on our consultation processes
- Ensure information is provided at the earliest opportunity and give you time to respond.

***Ease of access to information***

- Ensure corporate participation and involve you in all stages of plan making
- Learn from what is and isn't successful when engaging with our communities and to seek ways of improving it or for carrying out consultations using different methods
- Keep organisations and the public informed about the local planning process and provide feedback on how their comments have been considered
- Draw from the consultation process, views of other Council services and where possible outside organisations.

***Providing feedback and sharing information***

- Make our planning documents, background studies and responses to consultations readily available (in the first instance on our website)
- Keep you informed of progress and explain decisions and/or outcomes;
- Protect the personal details of respondents in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations/Data Protection Act 2018.

We want everyone to have the chance to have their say on the outcome regarding our new plan-making documents and during the determination of the planning applications process. We also want our plan-making and planning decisions to take full account of community views.

- 1.9 Our purpose of consulting on planning policy issues and planning applications is to provide opportunities for constructive contributions and involvement. This will:
- Enhance the quality of decision-making by the Council;
  - Promote shared responsibility (where appropriate); and
  - Raise awareness of the issues and understanding of decisions taken.

Further support available for Planning matters is listed in Appendix 2.

## 2. About this SCI

### Structure of this Document

2.1 Our SCI comprises two parts:

**Part A: Community Involvement in the Preparation of the Local Plan and Planning Policy**

- provides information on how to get involved with and influence the Council as it prepares its Local Plan and other planning policy documents.

**Part B: Community Involvement in the Planning Application Process**

- provides information on how to become involved with planning applications.

### **The need to update this SCI**

2.2 The Council adopted its first SCI in June 2006. Since then there have been changes in government regulations, policies, guidance and ways of communication which have implications for the way the Council involves the community in planning. These changes in circumstances include:

- **National Requirements:** Dacorum Borough Council has to adhere to and reflect the latest planning legislation and national policy. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) promotes consultation before and after a planning application is submitted and at key stages when preparing the Local Plan and other planning policy documents.
- **Resources:** Consultation is a resource intensive process, therefore practices must be revised due to increasing budget pressures and to ensure consult is carried out in the most efficient way.
- **New technology:** The need to promote and utilise electronic communication techniques and as well as social media, as part of the 'Digital Dacorum' initiative.

An initial update to the SCI was undertaken in 2016 with a focused update in 2019.

### **Equalities Issues**

2.3 The content of the SCI is compliant with the Equalities Act 2010. The purpose of the document is to show how we will engage in consultation with all sections of the community within Dacorum. Equality issues are considered through the sustainability appraisal process whereby the economic, environmental and social effects of the plan making process of a Local Plan will be checked against a series of sustainability criteria. This work will be undertaken by an independent consultant. For all decisions which go through Cabinet, these reports are

accompanied by a Community Impact Assessment (which will influence all major plan making decisions/stages).

### **Reporting to Council Committees, Cabinet and Full Council**

2.4 The Planning and Regeneration team will, at certain key stages of the plan preparation process, report the views and comments expressed during consultation to relevant committees. All reporting of consultation will involve summarising of full responses and will allow all interested parties to understand the range of responses received. These reports will be influential in shaping policy in draft planning documents. Cabinet or Full Council will approve draft and final documents at certain relevant stages of the plan making process.

### **Monitoring and Review**

2.5 The Council considers that this SCI represents a realistic use of the resources available. However, there is some flexibility to undertake additional consultation if required and if sufficient staff and financial resources are available.

2.6 Consultation methods will be assessed for their effectiveness in reaching communities throughout Dacorum through ongoing monitoring and feedback. This will help ensure future consultation targets those groups that have not previously engaged with the consultation process. This will ensure that techniques for community involvement remain appropriate, and are achieving a representative level of involvement across all communities and groups.

2.7 The SCI will be kept under review and sections revised where necessary as part of the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR). This AMR is published as soon as reasonable at the start of each year.

2.7 We will review our SCI frequently (at least every three years) to ensure it remains 'fit for purpose'. Although a full review of the SCI will be carried out if the Government requires us to change who we consult or to use different types of engagement. This review process will involve the parties consulted on this SCI.

# **PART A: Community Involvement in Dacorum's Plan-making and Planning Policy**

- 3.1 Planning Policy involves preparing plans and policies that help to decide where, when and how future development takes place in the Borough. The key planning policy document a Council must prepare is its Local Plan. Once prepared and adopted by the Council, we use those plans and policies to direct decisions on planning applications.
- 3.2 The Government places an emphasis on Councils to seek involvement from local communities on the content of its Local Plan and other planning policy documents at the earliest stage in plan-making. Local communities also have the opportunity to shape the area in which they live and work, by encouraging them to prepare Neighbourhood Plans. The council will support local communities who wish to prepare a neighbourhood plan and has put resources in place to help communities in preparing plans.
- 3.3 Local communities wishing to play an active role in planning for their area can now do two things:
- prepare a Neighbourhood Plan setting out the vision, objectives and planning policies to shape development of their neighbourhood and/or;
  - seek a grant of permission directly for certain types of development in their neighbourhood through a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) or a Community Right to Build Order (CRtBO).

### **3. Who We Consult**

- 3.4 We will always ensure that our consultations on planning policy documents are as extensive as possible. Our methods of consultation we will use will vary depending on the nature of the planning policy document, the stage of the document being consulted on and the geographical scope or nature of the planning issue being considered in the document. A Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for example, may focus on proposals and policies that affect a smaller geographical area, (e.g. a town or parish or a specific location), whereas a Local Plan may focus on policies and proposals that affect the whole district, and/or other neighbouring council areas. In most cases, wider consultation will be carried out where our proposals and/or policies affect a wider geographical area.
- 3.5 Some planning issues may cross administrative boundaries, such as planning for strategic infrastructure or planning for the sustainable development or use of land. We need to take into account our neighbouring council's policies and proposals for addressing these strategic matters in the process of making local plans. This falls under the Duty to Cooperate. The Duty ensures that we will work with our neighbouring councils and other public bodies to plan effectively for sustainable development that extends beyond our own administrative boundaries, for example, by identifying strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries and need to be addressed in our plans. Further information on who we are required to consult with under the Duty is explained in the section below.
- 3.6 To guide the plan-making process, the Council has divided consultees into the first four sub-sections to reflect requirements in government regulations:
- a) Specific Consultation Bodies

- b) General Consultation Bodies
- c) Other Consultation Bodies
- d) Wider community

In addition, other Council departments and elected Members will also be consulted.

3.7 The role and composition of each of these categories is explained further below.

3.8 Specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies are statutory consultees and if considered relevant to a particular issue or document they must be consulted at a prescribed stage of the document preparation. Equally, by law, businesses and residents in the area should be consulted if it is considered appropriate.

3.9 These lists are not exhaustive and may change over time as a result of organisational restructures and/or legislative change. The bodies consulted will be continually reviewed and updated as appropriate.

#### **(a) Specific Consultation Bodies**

3.10 The Localism Act (2011) has introduced the Duty to Co-operate (a legal requirement) which requires planning authorities and other public bodies to actively engage and work jointly on strategic matters. The Government expects councils to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that 'cross border' issues that may affect their neighbouring council areas are coordinated effectively and clearly reflect the policies of each of the councils affected. The council works closely with its neighbouring councils, and Hertfordshire County Council, in regard to strategic priorities and areas of common interest. These partnerships help us to meet our Duty to Co-operate.

3.11 Section 110 of the Localism Act and guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out the duty to cooperate. This duty requires Dacorum Borough Council to work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies involved in planning when it comes to tackling issues at a 'larger than local scale'. The bodies that we are bound to work together with by the duty to cooperate are referred to as 'Specific Consultation Bodies.' They comprise:

- Local planning authorities that adjoin the Borough<sup>1</sup>;
- Hertfordshire County Council and any other County Councils that adjoin the Borough<sup>1</sup>;
- Town and Parish Councils within and adjoining the Borough<sup>1</sup>;
- A local policing body;
- The Coal Authority<sup>1</sup>;
- The Environment Agency;
- The Historic Buildings and Monument Commission for England (English Heritage - now known as Historic England);
- Natural England;

---

<sup>1</sup> See Appendix 1 for detailed list of Specific Consultation Bodies

- The Marine Management Organisation<sup>1</sup>;
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited;
- Highways Agency;
- Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106 (3) (a) of the Communication Act 2003, and any person who owns or control electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area;
- Primary Care Trust<sup>2</sup>;
- Utilities and service providers; and
- Homes and Communities Agency.

3.12 In addition, the NPPF requires local planning authorities to work collaboratively with Local Nature Partnership (LNP) and Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

3.13 The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) is a business-led partnership which aims to accelerate economic growth in the county and create jobs. It has an important role to play in encouraging inward investment, facilitating growth of the local economy and engaging with local businesses. The Council will work in partnership with the LEP in its efforts to consult with the local business community and potential inward investors.

3.14 The Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership (LNP) is one of a number of LNPs across the country. Their main aims are to improve the range of benefits and services we get from a healthy natural environment, provide local leadership on environmental issues and to contribute to the green economy by linking with LEPs. They will also contribute to local authority planning and co-operate with other partnerships where this results in more efficient use of resources. Partnerships will be fully inclusive with representation from local authorities, community forums, government arms-length bodies, civil society organisations and environmental charities, existing biodiversity and green infrastructure partnerships, land owners, businesses, LEPs, health and wellbeing reps and education establishments.

3.15 Town and Parish Councils are an important set of consultees, as they have a key role to play in voicing community needs and issues. Meetings and information exchanges with Town and Parish Councils are an effective use of resources and assist in developing understanding between the Council and local communities on planning and development matters. The Council recognise that the majority of Hemel Hempstead is un-parished (with the exception of Nash Mills) compared to the rest of Dacorum which is parished. The lack of co-ordinated local representation at this level does somewhat reduce how effective and coordinated any active engagement across the town has been on strategic matters like the Local Plan. It continues to be difficult to find a community focus in the town together with the problem of there only being a limited number of active residents groups. To remedy this, however, ward members and ad hoc social platforms can play their role in helping to disseminate local community information.

---

<sup>1</sup> These bodies are considered to be of limited relevance to Dacorum due to the nature of the Borough

<sup>2</sup> Now replaced by the GP Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

3.16 Although not formally classified as a Specific Consultation Bodies, the Chilterns Conservation Board will also be notified with regard to planning policy consultations that could affect their areas of interest.

### **(b) General Consultation Bodies**

3.17 The Council must also ensure it consults the following groups:

- Voluntary bodies, some or all of whose activities benefits any part of the area;
- Bodies which represent the interest of:
  - different ethnic or national groups in the area;
  - different religious groups in the area;
  - disabled people in the area
- Persons carrying on businesses in the area.

### **(c) Other Consultation Bodies**

3.18 Whilst not a requirement of Government regulations, the Council will also seek to consult the known interested parties, groups and organisations who may have an interest in planning policy matters:

- Environmental groups;
- Groups representing users, and the providers, of leisure, sport and recreation
- Health, education, social service and community based service providers
- Cultural, historical and archaeological groups or bodies
- Tenants panels
- Local residents and community associations
- Registered social landlords
- House builders and developers
- Landowners and land agents
- Public transport users and providers
- Groups representing retired and elderly persons
- Groups representing young people
- The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

### **(d) Wider Community**

3.19 It is very important that the wider local community – people who live, work, run businesses and study in the borough are consulted. We always look to understand whom we need to try and talk to in the local community in order to ensure that we consult in the most effective way. This can include local residents; local interest groups; local businesses; local community groups and organisations. In certain circumstances we will seek to encourage higher response rates through focused consultation/engagement or publicity in areas which have historically and repeatedly been disproportionately underrepresented. For such areas, we will engage with our Communications

Team to identify a communications plan/strategy appropriate to the coverage/type of policy document being consulted upon.

3.20 The Strategic Planning team maintain an electronic database of consultees to involve at various stages of the plan making process. Members of the public who would like to be notified about planning consultations and the progress of documents can add their details to this database. This is referred to as the Local Plan consultation database.

To add yourself please visit:

<http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/common/register.jsp>

Alternatively, those wishing to be added to, or deleted from this list should contact the Council at:

Email: [strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk)

Phone: 01442 228660

Write to: Strategic Planning  
Dacorum Borough Council  
The Forum  
Marlowes  
Hemel Hempstead. HP1 1DN

#### **(e) Other Council Departments and Councillors**

3.21 Relevant Council departments and key elected Members will be consulted through the preparation of new planning policies and guidance. Borough Councillors represent their constituents and therefore understand the communities they represent. A Member steering group (known as a Task and Finish Group) may be used to consider detailed issues and provide informal advice to Officers during the development of a Local Plan.

## 4. How We Will consult with you

### Efficient Use of Resources

- 4.1 Consultation and the appropriate methods used at any particular stage will depend on:
- Geographic coverage of the document
  - Stage of the planning process reached
  - Nature of topic/area being considered
  - The appropriateness of the method for that particular consultation
  - Availability of resources
- 4.2 When preparing planning policy documents, the Council needs to balance the extent of community engagement with the available staffing and financial resources. Staff within the planning policy team will primarily be responsible for carrying out the consultation processes for the Local Plan.
- 4.3 In order to avoid consultation fatigue we will maximise opportunities for joint consultation within the Council and with our partners or rely on consultations carried out by other parts of the Council if appropriate for the topic.
- 4.4 Resources will be targeted to where they will be used most effectively. Workshops and focus groups are resource intensive and will therefore be used where a more considered response is required or where there is an opportunity to consider a topic in more depth to encourage greater participation from particular sections of the community.

### Methods of Communication

- 4.5 Since the first Statement of Community was adopted in 2006, methods of interaction and communication with you have significantly changed. Internet access has increased and so our communication with you through digital means has increased with a shift towards online services and the Council will make best use of our website for planning consultations. All planning documents are available to view and access from our website: [www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy) or <http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/portal>.
- 4.6 However, the Council recognises not all residents will have access to the internet. Therefore documents will also be made available in a variety of formats to enable widest possible audience to provide feedback on planning consultations. Particular efforts will be focused towards reaching 'hard to reach groups' such as young people, elderly people and those from ethnic minorities who do not often take part in planning consultations. Table 1 below explains the types of communications methods that will be used.

**Table 1: Methods of Communication During Consultation**

Method	Explanation
<b>PAPER</b>	
Documents made available for inspection	<p>Making documents available for inspection at specified 'Deposit Points' within the Borough is a minimum requirement set by planning regulations. Deposit points<sup>1</sup> are the Borough Council Offices in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring. All three locations are accessible to people with disabilities.</p> <p>Copies of documents are also sent to local libraries<sup>2</sup> within the area and are usually held within the reference section.</p> <p>The availability of documents and opening times of the Deposit Points will be advertised in a number of ways, including letter / email, via the Council's website at <a href="http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy">www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy</a>, through statutory notices within the local press and, where possible, through Dacorum Digest (see below).</p> <p>Charges will apply for printed copies and background paper requests. The Regulations allow for a reasonable charge to be made for copies of documents requested by individuals or organisations. When providing printed copies, we must seek to cover our own costs – costs will be calculated on a case by case basis.</p>
Summary documents and questionnaires	<p>Summary documents and response forms/questionnaires will be made available on the Council's website at: <a href="http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy">www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy</a>. These documents may be provided and posted out where necessary. Where these are not posted out, information regarding how to access such documents will be made available at deposit points and the Council's website during the course of a consultation.</p>
Mail Shots (letters and emails)	<p>Mail shots are used to notify relevant bodies of planning policy consultation events (depending on the issues raised), and are mainly used for statutory notification or to communicate with a specific group of bodies.</p> <p>The Council maintains a consultee database with those individuals and groups who wish to be informed of various stages of the Local Plan process. Before the start of the consultation, we will always notify statutory consultees, and those registered on our consultation database for planning policy matters, of the commencement dates and period for comment, along with clear guidance regarding how to comment.</p> <p>Email is an increasingly preferred means of communication on planning policy consultations. Email is a resource saving, quick and accurate way of communication with the public and various stakeholders.</p> <p>The Council will not send notifications by post where a valid email address is held. Where possible the Council will use email as opposed to posting hard copy documents and letters in order to support its move towards being a</p>

<sup>1</sup> As at August 2018:

The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1DN  
*(Opening hours: Monday to Thursday: 8.45am to 5.15pm and Friday: 8.45am to 4.45pm)*

Berkhamsted Civic Centre, 161 High Street, Berkhamsted, HP4 3HD  
*(Opening hours: Monday: 9.00am to 12.30pm, 1.30pm to 5.00pm; Tuesday 9.30am to 2.00pm and Thursday: 9.30am to 2.00pm)*

Victoria Hall, Akeman Street, Tring, HP23 6AA  
*(Opening hours: Monday: 9.00am to 12.30pm, 1.30pm to 5.00pm; Wednesday: 9.30am to 2.00pm and Friday: 9.30am to 2.00pm)*

<sup>2</sup> Hemel Hempstead Libraries (The Forum, Adeyfield and Leverstock Green Library), Berkhamsted Library, Tring Library, Bovington Library and Kings Langley Library.

Method	Explanation
	paperless authority. Where no email address is held, the Council will send a letter to interested consultees via the post.
Newspapers	<p>It is no longer a statutory requirement for local authorities to advertise consultation on planning policy documents in the local press. However, where appropriate the Council may decide to place an advert in the statutory notices page of The Gazette and St Albans Review (these are known as Public Notices). These notices will include information about where information can be found and consultation deadlines.</p> <p>Press releases will also usually be issued to the local media: although it will be a matter for the newspapers, local radio and television to decide if they wish to provide coverage of the story.</p> <p>Information will also be included in the Council newspaper – Dacorum Digest – which is delivered to every household in the Borough on a six monthly basis. These can be viewed at: <a href="http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/dacorum-digest">http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/dacorum-digest</a>. Articles will also be included in our monthly e-newsletter (Digital Digest). Articles will inform the community of the issues under discussion, how to access information and how they can become involved. This provides a useful method of alerting the community to any forthcoming publications as well as providing updates on the results of previous consultation.</p> <p>Where appropriate, the Council may place informal notices in other newspapers circulating in the District. For example, provide supporting information to town and parish newsletters.</p>
Newsletters	<p>Town and Parish Councils and Ward Councillors in non-parished areas, will be encouraged to help raise the profile of consultation via their newsletters – both paper and online. Officers will provide assistance in writing articles and providing web links as required.</p> <p>A new Local Plan newsletter will provide regular updates for those who hold a valid email address on our Local plan consultation database. These newsletters will also be made available on our website at: <a href="http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy">www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy</a>.</p>
<b>DIGITAL</b>	
Dacorum website and interactive online consultation portal	<p>Digital communication is becoming an increasingly important method of interaction, and is being promoted through the 'Digital Dacorum' initiative.</p> <p>The Council publicises information on forthcoming consultations, including start and finish times on the Planning Policies web page of its website: <a href="http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy">www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy</a>. While individuals can 'provide feedback on our webpages', these comments may not be taken as comments being made to any formal planning policy consultations.</p> <p>All Planning policy documents, consultation documents and supporting information will be made available, together with a direct link to our interactive online consultation portal.</p> <p>Our consultation portal lists all planning policy consultations in one place, making it accessible and easy for people to comment online. By registering your details on this website individuals and organisations will also be directly notified of all forthcoming planning policy consultations they may be interested in. The feedback received on each consultation can also be read via this portal. The link to the online portal is: <a href="http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/portal">http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/portal</a>.</p>

Method	Explanation
	Where appropriate links will be provided to this information from the Council's homepage, Planning News page, and Dacorum's current consultation page (available at: <a href="http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/consultation-feedback/current-consultation">www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/consultation-feedback/current-consultation</a> ).
Social Media	<p>With an increasing number of residents and businesses using various forms of social media, consultation notifications will be posted on the Council's social media pages (e.g. Facebook and Twitter). This will be used to link to our webpages which will inform people of upcoming consultation events, where they can view particular documents, how they can submit comments and where any exhibitions and workshops will be held.</p> <p>Follow us on Twitter at: <a href="https://twitter.com/DacorumBC">@DacorumBC</a> or Facebook at: <a href="https://www.facebook.com/dacorum">www.facebook.com/dacorum</a>. Any comments made to Council posts on social media will not be taken as comments being made to any formal planning policy consultations.</p>
<b>FACE TO FACE</b>	
Meetings with selected stakeholders and key interest groups	<p>This provides a useful way of identifying key issues, getting key bodies involved and achieving alignment with other strategies and initiatives. In certain circumstances, public or identified stakeholder meetings may be held. Discussion groups can also provide an opportunity to receive feedback on specific topic areas.</p> <p>The Council hosts an annual Town and Parish Conference which provides a useful forum to raise and discuss planning and development matters.</p>
Focus Groups/ Workshops /	Workshops and focus groups enable a range of stakeholders, including local residents, to influence and shape proposals in a way that helps meet their aspirations and concerns. These events are usually more helpful when held early on in the plan-making process. This could include targeted work with community and voluntary organisations (e.g. access groups).
Exhibitions	Whilst not suitable or necessary for all consultations, exhibitions provide a useful way of conveying key pieces of information and providing a mechanism for stakeholders to understand the role and content of the consultation and discuss issues with Officers. Public exhibitions can be either staffed (e.g. market stalls) and unstaffed (static exhibitions).

## Engaging with everyone

4.7 Dacorum Borough Council recognises that the planning system can seem complex and confusing, so will try to make consultation documents as accessible as it can. Table 2 sets out some of the potential challenges facing the Council and the solutions that will be put in place to help maximise consultation participation.

**Table 2: Methods to Overcome Consultation Challenges**

Nature of Challenge	Solution
<p>Language barriers may affect the community's ability to understand oral and written communications.</p>	<p>If you would like this information in another format, such as CD (audio) or in another language please contact <a href="mailto:strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk">strategic.planning@dacorum.gov.uk</a>. The Strategic Planning team are able to explain and assist interpretation of planning policy, if required.</p>
<p>Low uptake of online services due to low incomes or lack of IT skills.</p>	<p>Documents will be made available in paper form as well as online. The community is able to access online services by using the public computers at either Dacorum's council offices or within the local libraries.</p>
<p>Young people are less responsive to traditional forms of consultation.</p>	<p>Innovative and interactive consultation methods will need to be employed to engage this section of the community, including increasing use of social media.</p>
<p>Varied working hours and other commitments.</p>	<p>Use of the Council's website and online consultation portal will help ensure people with work and other commitments can be involved in consultations. Where possible, exhibitions will run from daytime into evenings to provide all interested parties with the greatest opportunity to attend.</p>
<p>Certain stakeholders or interested parties dominating consultation for example, some areas may be dominated by business and some by residents.</p>	<p>A mix of consultation to be used to ensure effective coverage of interested parties (e.g. residents and businesses) and encourage feedback from both communities</p>
<p>Lack of public understanding of the planning system</p>	<p>Unnecessary technical jargon will be avoided. Where appropriate, summary documents will be made available.</p>

## 4. When We Will Consult

### Introduction

- 4.1 We will consult on our Planning Policy documents at the relevant stages of plan-making, and we will be guided by up to date legislation and Government guidance.
- 4.2 We will carry out Planning Policy consultations in line with the principles for engagement as set out in this SCI, and in accordance with the latest timetable agreed in our Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- 4.3 Consultation periods differ depending on the nature of the planning policy document being consulted upon. Some may be very focused consultations while others may seek to engage the full community (it will depend on the content of the document). Legislation currently requires us to consult on planning policy documents for a minimum statutory period (see Table 3).

**Table 3:** Minimum Statutory Period for Consultation on Planning Policy Documents

Planning Policy Document	Minimum Statutory Period for public consultation
Development Plan Document (DPD) (e.g. Dacorum Borough Local Plan, Core Strategy, Site Allocations Document or an Action Area Plan)	6 weeks
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (e.g. A site development brief or a 'theme-specific' document such as the Affordable Housing SPD)	4 weeks
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	4 weeks
Scoping of Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment	5 weeks
Local Development Order (LDO)	28 days
Neighbourhood Plan Area Designation	4-6 weeks (when necessary)
Draft Neighbourhood Plan/Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) (i.e. pre-submission; publication)	6 weeks
Community Right to Build Order (i.e. pre-submission; publication)	6 weeks
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	6 weeks

- 4.4 The statutory periods in Table 3 are currently guided by the relevant and up to date regulations. Should an update to the relevant legislation indicate any changes to the periods for consultation, we will ensure this is reflected in any forthcoming Planning Policy consultations that we undertake (and then in due course, seek to update the SCI to reflect this).

4.5 We may seek to extend our consultations in certain circumstances, for example, where a public holiday, or a school holiday, falls within the consultation period. We always try to minimise undertaking consultations during holiday periods, however in the event that our consultations do cross over a holiday period we will always seek to extend the deadline to account for this. All of our consultations will run for at least two weeks outside of the school holiday period.

#### **How can I see comments made on Planning Policy documents by others?**

4.6 The comments we receive on our planning policy documents will be made publically available online at the earliest opportunity, once the consultation has finished. The comments will be made available to view at: <http://consult.dacorum.gov.uk/portal>.

#### **How will we respond to you when you comment on a Planning Policy document?**

4.7 For consultations on matters related to plan-making, we do receive a high volume of correspondence, and it is difficult to respond to each individual comment that we receive on a particular consultation. All consultation responses received within the allocated timescale will be acknowledged and taken into account to inform the decisions the Council makes. All comments received will be made publically available via the consultation portal and hard copies made available for public inspection at the Council offices.

4.8 We therefore publish a summary of the responses we receive from consultations at each stage of consultation. These are called Consultation Statements.

4.9 Each Consultation Statement sets out how the comments made during the consultation have been considered by the Council before moving to the next stage of plan-making. This will provide information about:

- Who was consulted;
- Consultation techniques used;
- Dates of consultation period(s); and
- The main issues raised and Council's response to these.

These consultation reports will assist Officers and elected Members in deciding what changes may need to be made to a planning policy document before it is progressed. We make our Consultation Statements available on our website at: [www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy). This can be electronically viewed from our council offices and local libraries.

4.23 These consultation reports will assist elected Members in deciding what changes may need to be made to a document before it is adopted.

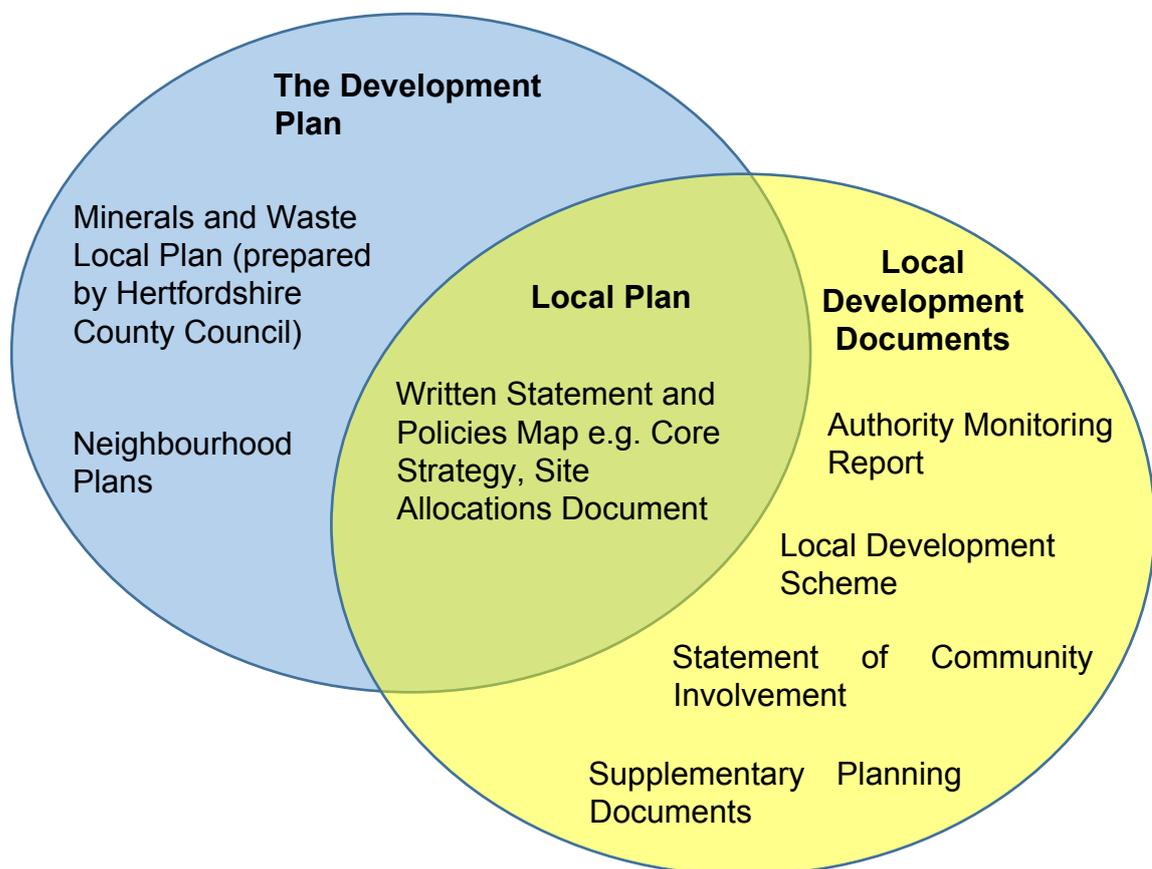
4.24 Any decisions made by the Council following consultation will also take into account a number of external factors including government policies, guidance, technical evidence and the Sustainability Appraisal.

## What kinds of Planning Policy documents are prepared?

4.10 As a local planning authority, Dacorum Borough Council is required to produce plans about new development in the area over a 15-20 year period. These plans need to assess the type and quantity of new housing, ensure there is sufficient land for employment needs, decide where to locate new development and enable delivery of other facilities that will be required by the development (shops, open space, community infrastructure, utilities etc.). Whilst delivering such plans it is essential that Borough's character and environment is conserved and where possible enhanced, ensuring that Dacorum remains a place where people wish to continue to live and work in the future. Involving the local community and other interest groups in these plans is very important.

4.11 A number of different types of planning documents will be prepared (see Figure 1).

**Figure 1:** Types of Plan Making Document



4.12 As illustrated above, Government classifies some documents as Local Development Documents (LDD), whilst others are called Development Plan Documents (DPD). The Local Plan is both a Local Development Documents and Development Plan Documents.

4.13 DPDs are the main documents the Council will use when determining planning applications. LDDs play a supporting role: providing additional planning advice

or information relating the preparation and performance of the Local Plan. Further information on the different documents is set out below.

## Local Plan

- 4.14 Dacorum Borough Council has begun work on a new Local Plan. This will incorporate the early partial review of the Core Strategy adopted in September 2013. This new Local Plan will be pivotal to delivering Dacorum Borough Council's vision for the next 15-20 years. It is expected that the plan will comprise a single written document, with an associated Policies Map, rather than a series of separate documents. Where appropriate, it will be supported by appropriate Supplementary Planning Documents (see below).
- 4.15 The Local Plan will contain planning policies, site allocations and other designations, all of which will be taken into account when deciding planning applications.
- 4.16 It will be subject to rigorous procedures including public consultation with the community and examination by an independent Inspector. It must be found 'sound' by the Inspector before it can be adopted by the Council.
- 4.17 The Local Plan also requires a Sustainable Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) where the economic, social and environmental impacts of a plan are considered. This Sustainability Appraisal must also be made available as part of the consultation. The council will consult on draft SA/SEA reports alongside the draft version of the plan to which it relates. For example, the SA Report will be published alongside the Publication Version of a Local Plan. It may also be appropriate to publish any SEA reports alongside earlier versions of the consultation documents. To view the stages in preparing an Sustainable Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment), please see Appendix 3.
- 4.18 Arrangements for consultation will depend on which stage the plan has reached (see Figure 2). These arrangements are summarised below. References to regulations relate to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

**Figure 2:** Stages in preparing the Local Plan



To view these stages in greater level of detail, please see Appendix 3

## **Stage 1: Prepare Plan (Regulation 18)**

This stage covers the 'Issues and Options' stage (as well as what was referred to as 'Preferred Options' stage) and also any draft plans published for comment.

Whilst the plan is being prepared, it is important that the local community have the opportunity to identify local issues and influence options for future development and examine the emerging technical evidence.

### What will Dacorum Borough Council do?

- Maintain and update our Local Plan consultation database.
- Advertise any consultation and clearly identify how and where material can be viewed and accessed.
- Ensure compliance with current planning regulations, consulting more widely where it is relevant to do so.
- Make the plan and supporting documents available online and in printed copy if necessary.
- Make summary documents, maps and diagrams explaining key issues publically available online and printed if necessary.
- Take comments received into account alongside technical evidence and national policies and guidance.
- Where relevant, prepare a Consultation Report setting out the consultation processes, summarising the main issues raised and the Council's response.

### Who will Dacorum Borough Council Consult?

- Consult specific, general and other consultation bodies where appropriate (full list in Section 3 of this document).
- Consult the wider community at least once during this stage in the production of the document.

### How will Dacorum Borough Council Consult?

A wide range of types of consultation will be used during this stage in order to understand key issues and views. Methods will include one or more of the following:

- Contact persons registered on the Council's Local Plan consultation database (by letter or email) and via the online consultation portal.
- Events, displays, exhibitions, surveys and meetings as appropriate.
- Surveys and questionnaires.
- Workshops or focus groups.
- Drop-in events, displays or exhibitions.
- Make plans available on our website and at deposit points.
- Targeted measures for hard to reach groups.
- Raise awareness of consultation via the Council's social media platforms.

## **Stage 2: Publish Proposed Submission (Regulations 19, 20 and 22)**

This stage is often referred to as 'Pre-Submission.'

Dacorum Borough Council will prepare and consult on the final draft of the plan prior to submission to the Secretary of State for Examination. Representations submitted at this stage will be forwarded to the Planning Inspector.

### What will Dacorum Borough Council do?

- Consult on the plan for at least 6 weeks.
- Publicise where and when the documents can be inspected through what is called a 'Statement of Representations Procedure.'
- Make the plan and supporting documents available online and in printed copy if necessary.
- When appropriate, publish summary documents, maps and diagrams explaining key issues.
- Raise awareness of consultation via the Council's social media platforms.
- Take into account all comments made within the consultation period and if necessary, make changes to the plan before it is submitted to the Secretary of State. Prepare a Consultation Report setting out the consultation processes, summarising the main issues raised and the Council's response.
- Notify consultees of the submission of the plan by letter or email.

### Who will Dacorum Borough Council consult?

- All consultees listed in Section 3 of this document, including all who submitted comments at earlier stages.

### How will Dacorum Borough Council consult?

- Contact persons registered on the Council's consultation database (by letter or email) and via the online consultation portal.
- Make plans available on our website and at deposit points.
- Raise awareness of consultation via the Council's social media platforms.

## **Stage 3: Examination (Regulations 23 and 24)**

Dacorum Borough Council is required to submit a plan and supporting information to the Secretary of State for a public examination. The independently appointed Inspector will take into account written comments on the plan and if invited by the Inspector, those who commented can also appear at the examination to speak in support of, or against the plan.

### What will Dacorum Borough Council do?

- Make a copy of the full Examination library supporting the plan available online and at the Borough Council offices in Hemel Hempstead.
- Appoint a Programme Officer who will publish full details of the Examination of the Plan on the Council's website.

### **Stage 3 continued: Examination (Regulations 23 and 24)**

- Ensure everyone who commented on the plan at Proposed Submission stage is aware of the Examination at least 6 weeks in advance.

#### Who will Dacorum Borough Council consult?

- Specific, general and other consultation bodies who previously were invited to make representations on the plan, and those who requested to be notified, about the submission of the plan to the Secretary of State.
- The Programme Officer will notify all those who commented on the plan at stage 2: Proposed Submission Document with details of the Examination.

#### How will Dacorum Borough Council Consult?

- Notify relevant people and organisations on the Council's Local Plan consultation database (by letter or email).

### **Stage 4: Adoption (Regulations 25 and 26)**

The Council will consider the Inspector's Report issued following the examination.

Changes will be made where appropriate (this may require a focused consultation on the modifications) and then the document will be formally adopted.

#### What will Dacorum Borough Council do?

- If a main modifications consultation is undertaken, prepare a Consultation Report setting out the consultation processes, summarising the main issues raised and the Council's response. The Inspector will then consider these additional comments received.
- Publish the Inspector's Report and notify bodies who requested to be notified.
- Make the adopted Plan, Sustainability Appraisal Report, Adoption Statement and other relevant information available for inspection at the Council's Hemel Hempstead office and on the Council's website.
- Publish the adopted document and place an Adoption Statement on the website.

#### Who will Dacorum Borough Council notify?

- The Adoption Statement will be sent to all individual and organisations who asked to be notified, and to the Secretary of State.

## **Supplementary Planning Documents**

4.19 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide additional guidance on adopted policies in the Local Plan. They include issue-based documents, design guidance and site master plans and briefs. Their role is to provide more detail about how policies in the Local Plan should be used. SPDs will also be prepared

with the involvement of relevant consultees. They are not subject to examination by an independent Inspector and therefore, can be produced more quickly, but do need to be formally adopted by the Council.

4.20 Figure 3 below identifies the stages used in the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents. References to regulations relate to the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

**Figure 3:** Stages in Supplementary Planning Documents



To view these stages in greater level of detail, please see Appendix 3.

### **Stage 1: Prepare Draft Supplementary Planning Document**

The scoping stage helps gather ideas and look at alternative approaches before preparing the document. This may be very informal consultation to identify relevant issues or matters to be considered.

#### What will Dacorum Borough Council do and who will we consult?

- Consult organisations and individuals who are relevant to the successful implementation of Supplementary Planning Document.
- Consider wider consultation, depending on scope and content of document.

#### How will Dacorum Borough Council consult?

Consultation will vary depending on the type of SPD. A variety of methods will be considered, including:

- Contact persons and bodies registered on the Council's Local Plan consultation database, especially where interest in geographic area or subject has been registered.
- Make documents available on our website and at relevant deposit points.

We will also consider if the following is appropriate/relevant:

- Workshops or focus groups.
- Meetings.
- Drop in events.
- Exhibitions.

## **Stage 2: Publish Draft Supplementary Planning Document (Regulations 12 and 13)**

Dacorum Borough Council is required to consult on the Supplementary Planning Documents it produces. Publishing draft copies of the document provides an opportunity for comments to be made and for the Council to consider these and make any necessary changes prior to the document being finalised.

### What will Dacorum Borough Council do and who will we consult?

- Consult on the document for at least 4 weeks.
- Publicise where and when the document can be inspected.
- Consult specific, general and other bodies to whom the Supplementary Planning Document may be relevant.
- Consult residents and businesses in the area, depending on nature of document.
- Consider and report all comments received.
- Prepare a Consultation Report setting out the consultation processes, summarising the main issues raised and the Council's response.

### How will Dacorum Borough Council consult?

The way Dacorum Borough Council will consult will vary due to the nature of the Supplementary Planning Document being consulted. Ways we will consult include:

- Contact persons and bodies registered on the Council's Local Plan consultation database.
- Make plans available on our website and at relevant deposit points.

We will also consider:

- Workshops or focus groups.
- Meetings.  
Drop in events.

## **Stage 3: Adoption (Regulation 14)**

Once Dacorum Borough Council has taken into account comments and made any changes, it will be adopted by the Council's Cabinet. Independent examinations for Supplementary Planning Documents are not required.

### What will Dacorum Borough Council do?

- Adopt the Supplementary Planning Document.
- Publish the adopted document and place an Adoption Statement on the website.
- Make documents available for inspection at the deposit points.

### Who will Dacorum Borough Council Notify?

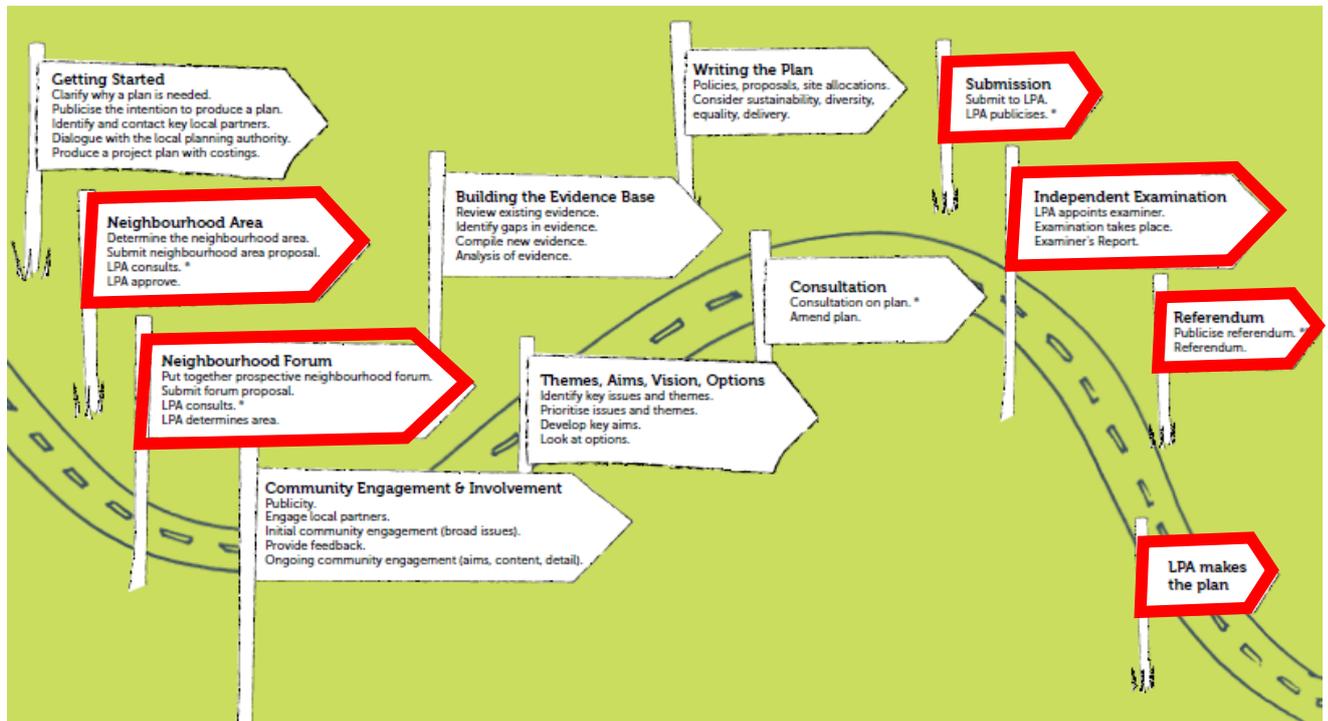
- Send copy of the Adoption Statement to anyone who has asked to be notified.

## Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.21 The regulations for Neighbourhood Planning came into force on 6th April 2012. The Localism Act 2011, together with these regulations, places various duties and responsibilities upon the Council and made provision for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans directly by local communities. There are two main mechanisms for neighbourhood planning – Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders.
- 4.22 A Neighbourhood Plan is a way of helping local communities to influence the planning of the area they live and work in. If a plan is prepared and agreed by the community in a referendum it will become part of the development plan for the area and be used in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.23 Neighbourhood plans let people set out their vision for their local area and general planning policies to guide development in their neighbourhood. Neighbourhood Plans can only be prepared by Town and Parish Councils or by a designated Neighbourhood Forum.
- 4.24 The council will continue to proactively engage with communities who wish to prepare a neighbourhood plan. We will support communities in planning effectively for their towns and villages. Although a draft neighbourhood development plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area of Dacorum Borough. Dacorum's strategic policies have therefore been defined as those policies which are important to:
- the supply of land for strategic uses to meet strategic needs such as housing, employment and transport;
  - the provision or retention of key services and facilities to help achieve sustainable development across the Borough;
  - the protection and/or enhancement of strategic environmental assets important to a Borough-wide population; and/or
  - those supporting specific policies identified in the NPPF which the Government identifies as strategically important in restricting development.
- 4.25 A Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) can be used to grant planning permission for types of development (in full or outline) without the need for planning permission. When preparing an NDO, it must still be in line with national and local policy and other legal requirements. If a NDO or community right to build order were being proposed then it would be useful for them to be submitted to the local planning authority at the same time as the proposed neighbourhood plan. This allows them to be dealt with concurrently at the examination and referendum stages.
- 4.26 It is the responsibility of the relevant body (a parish/town council or designated neighbourhood forum in an unparished area who are known as 'qualifying bodies') to prepare the neighbourhood plan and to undertake an inclusive consultation, although the borough council has a duty to assist. Conducting a wide-reaching consultation procedure is in the interest of the relevant body as the plan or order can only be adopted after a referendum in which over 50% of

voters support the plan or order. Neighbourhood plans must also conform to national planning policy, the development plan for the area and other “basic conditions”. The process for making a Neighbourhood Plan or a Neighbourhood Development Order is different to preparing a Local Plan or a Development Plan Document. The key stages are shown below, those which the Local Planning Authority lead upon are highlighted by the red flags in Figure 4 below.

**Figure 4: Stages in Neighbourhood Plan making**



To view these stages in greater level of detail, please see Appendix 3.

4.27 Local authorities should screen the emerging neighbourhood plan for strategic environmental assessment (SEA) or habitat regulations assessment (HRA). There is also a requirement for local planning authorities to notify parish councils or neighbourhood forums of planning applications in their neighbourhood areas.

It is common to apply for the neighbourhood area first, then the neighbourhood forum.

### **Stage 1(a): Neighbourhood Area**

There is a lot a community can do before this stage in considering the issues and aspirations their plan might cover. The parish or town council or prospective neighbourhood forum need to submit a map identifying the proposed neighbourhood area, a statement explaining why the area is appropriate to be designated and confirmation that the body making the area application is capable of being a ‘qualifying body’.

Once the neighbourhood area is designated, parish or town councils may formally commence work on the plan.

## **Stage 1(a) continued: Neighbourhood Area**

### What will Dacorum Borough Council do and who will we consult?

- Consult organisations and individuals who are relevant, for example: consult with the relevant statutory bodies (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England), neighbouring councils and adjoining town and parishes.
- We will always consult with those bodies identified in Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

### How will Dacorum Borough Council consult?

Consultation will vary depending on the extent of the area consulted upon. A variety of methods will be considered, including:

- Publicise the area designation application for a 6 week period
- Make documents available on our website and at relevant deposit points.

We will also consider if the following is appropriate/relevant:

- Contact persons and bodies registered on the Council's Local Plan consultation database, especially where interest in geographic area or subject has been registered.
- Consult any neighbouring local, town or parish councils, significant landowners, local businesses and local community organisations, such as chambers of commerce, civic societies and local trusts.

An exception to this is applications submitted by parish or town councils for designation of the whole of its area as a neighbourhood area. The local planning authority has to designate the neighbourhood area in such circumstances, so there are no publicity requirements.

## **Stage 1(b): Neighbourhood Forum**

Where there is a town or parish council, then that is the neighbourhood planning body for producing a neighbourhood plan. There is no need to put together a neighbourhood forum in this instance, as parish or town councils may choose to put together a steering or working group(s) of community representatives to assist in the process.

### What will Dacorum Borough Council do and who will we consult?

- Consult organisations and individuals who are relevant, for example: consult with the relevant statutory bodies (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England), neighbouring councils and adjoining town and parishes.
- We will always consult with those bodies identified in Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

## **Stage 1(b) continued: Neighbourhood Forum**

### How will Dacorum Borough Council consult?

Consultation will vary depending on the extent of the area consulted upon. A variety of methods will be considered, including:

- Publicise the area designation application for a 6 week period

Make documents available on our website and at relevant deposit points.

We will also consider if the following is appropriate/relevant:

- Contact persons and bodies registered on the Council's Local Plan consultation database, especially where interest in geographic area or subject has been registered.

The qualifying body will draft the Neighbourhood Plan and consult upon the Pre-Submission version of the plan (Regulation 14). The qualifying body will consider whether there are any necessary changes to be made prior to the document being finalised.

## **Stage 2: Bringing the plan into force**

The local authority will publicise the plan (Regulation 16) and arrange for the independent examination and arranging for the referendum to take place.

### **Stage 2(a): Submission of plan (Regulation 16)**

The submission must include a map or statement of the area, a consultation statement, the neighbourhood plan proposal and a basic conditions statement. The publicity of the plan gives people an opportunity to make representations that will be passed to the independent examiner.

### What will Dacorum Borough Council do and who will we consult?

Consult organisations and individuals who are relevant, for example: consult with the relevant statutory bodies (e.g. Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England), neighbouring councils and adjoining town and parishes.

- We will always consult with those bodies identified in Schedule 1 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012
- Consult with any interested parties who registered interest in the emerging plan and wished to be kept informed of its progress.
- Any party who has made a representation on the neighbourhood plan (summarised in the consultation statement).

### How will Dacorum Borough Council consult?

Consultation will vary depending on the extent of the area consulted upon. A variety of methods will be considered, including:

- Publicise the area designation application for a 6 week period
- Publicise where and when the document can be inspected.
- Make documents available on our website and at relevant deposit points.

## **Stage 2 continued: Bringing the plan into force**

We will also consider if the following is appropriate/relevant:

- Contact persons and bodies registered on the Council's Local Plan consultation database, especially where interest in geographic area or subject has been registered.

Any representations made will be passed to the independent examiner. This means they will be considered within the remit of the independent examination (i.e. whether the neighbourhood plan proposal meets the basic conditions).

### **Stage 2(b):Examination (Regulation 17 and 18)**

The independent examiner will take into account written comments on the plan and will also consider whether the proposed neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other requirements set out by law. Following the examination, the examiner will issue a report to the local authority and the neighbourhood planning body. The Council will consider the Inspector's Report issued following the examination.

#### What will Dacorum Borough Council do?

- Publish the Inspector's Report and notify bodies who requested to be notified.

#### Who will Dacorum Borough Council notify?

Notification will be sent to all individual and organisations who asked to be notified, and to the Secretary of State.

### **Stage 2(c):Referendum**

If there is a majority yes vote, then the neighbourhood plan is made and becomes part of the statutory development plan for the area. This process will be managed by Democratic Services/Election Services (in line with relevant regulations/legislation).

The local authority is required to publish information about the neighbourhood plan 28 working days before the date of the referendum. Then 25 working days before the date of the referendum, they are required to give notice that a referendum is taking place and the date of the poll.

### **Stage 2(d):Adoption (Regulation 20)**

#### What will Dacorum Borough Council do?

- Publish the adopted document, decision notice and other relevant information available for inspection at the Council's Hemel Hempstead office and on the Council's website.

#### Who will Dacorum Borough Council notify?

The Adoption Statement will be sent to all individual and organisations who asked to be notified, and to the Secretary of State.

## **What is the district council's role in Neighbourhood Planning?**

4.28 The Council has a 'duty to support' qualifying bodies preparing Neighbourhood Plans in accordance with the relevant regulations. The support we will provide at the key stages of neighbourhood plan preparation include the following:

- confirming the geographical area of the neighbourhood plan;
- providing mapping information;
- providing statistical data which we hold or suggesting the best contact when it is held by a third party;
- acting as critical friend in reviewing/ testing emerging policies;
- undertaking the formal consultation (Regulation 16) on the draft neighbourhood plan prior to its independent examination;
- arranging the independent examination;
- holding the referendum;
- 'making' the neighbourhood plan part of the development plan where all legal requirements have been met.

4.29 The Council will also seek to provide informal guidance and support where this is practical. This could include, for example, providing policy guidance to support neighbourhood planning steering groups.

Further support available for Neighbourhood Planning is listed in Appendix 2.

### **Local Development Orders (LDOs)**

4.30 A Local Development Order (LDO) is made by the council and grants planning permission to specific types of development within a defined area.

4.31 The purpose of the LDO is to streamline the planning process by removing the need for developers to make a planning application to the council.

4.32 The extent of public consultation will depend on the nature and scale of the proposal. For example, an LDO for a specific site may require focussed consultation with the town and/or parish and a range of community groups. Proposals for a Local Development Order that cover a broader scope may require wider and proportionate consultation where necessary.

To view the stages in preparing a LDO, please see Appendix 3.

### **Local Development Schemes (LDS)**

4.33 The Local Development Scheme sets out the programme for the preparation of the Local Plan. A copy is available on the Council's website:

[www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/planningpolicy)

4.34 Due to the factual nature of its content, it is not subject to public consultation.

### **Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)**

4.35 Previously referred to as the 'Annual Monitoring Report', this document is produced by local authorities to assess progress with (the preparation and implementation), and the effectiveness of, plan-making documents. These are

also available to view on the Council's website:  
<http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-strategic-planning/monitoring-reports-and-land-position-statements>

4.36 Due to the factual nature of its contents, it is not subject to public consultation.

### **Other Planning Policy Documents**

#### *Informal Masterplans and Planning Statements*

4.37 Sometimes the Council will prepare a masterplan or planning statement relating to a site or area that does not require the formal status of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). These documents will usually involve some consultation, but this will be more limited and targeted than required by the regulations governing formal SPDs.

#### *Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)*

4.38 The CIL is a new way of collecting contributions from developments towards the provision of infrastructure required to support growth within Dacorum. It is a tariff that will be applied per square meter of new development which may vary by scale, use and geography. Dacorum Borough Council is responsible for setting a CIL charge, collecting CIL money and allocating money for infrastructure projects. The CIL charge is applicable to developments that received planning permission on or after 1 July 2015. To view the key stages to prepare CIL, please see Appendix 3.

#### *Advice Notes / Clarification Notes*

4.39 From time to time the Council may prepare documents that provide additional advice or clarification about how it will apply policies or processes. Consultation will not usually be required on these documents, as their role is to explain the application of existing policies or processes which will have already been subject to consultation.

## **Matters Outside of District Control**

### *The Hertfordshire Minerals and Waste Local Plan*

4.40 These plans are produced by Hertfordshire County Council and set out policies and proposals relating to mineral and waste developments in Hertfordshire. Dacorum Borough Council is not directly involved in writing these plans but is a statutory consultee. Hertfordshire County Council has produced its own SCI for matters it is responsible for and will carrying out consultation in accordance with this:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/envplan/plan/hccdevplan/sci1/>

# **PART B: Community Involvement in the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP)**

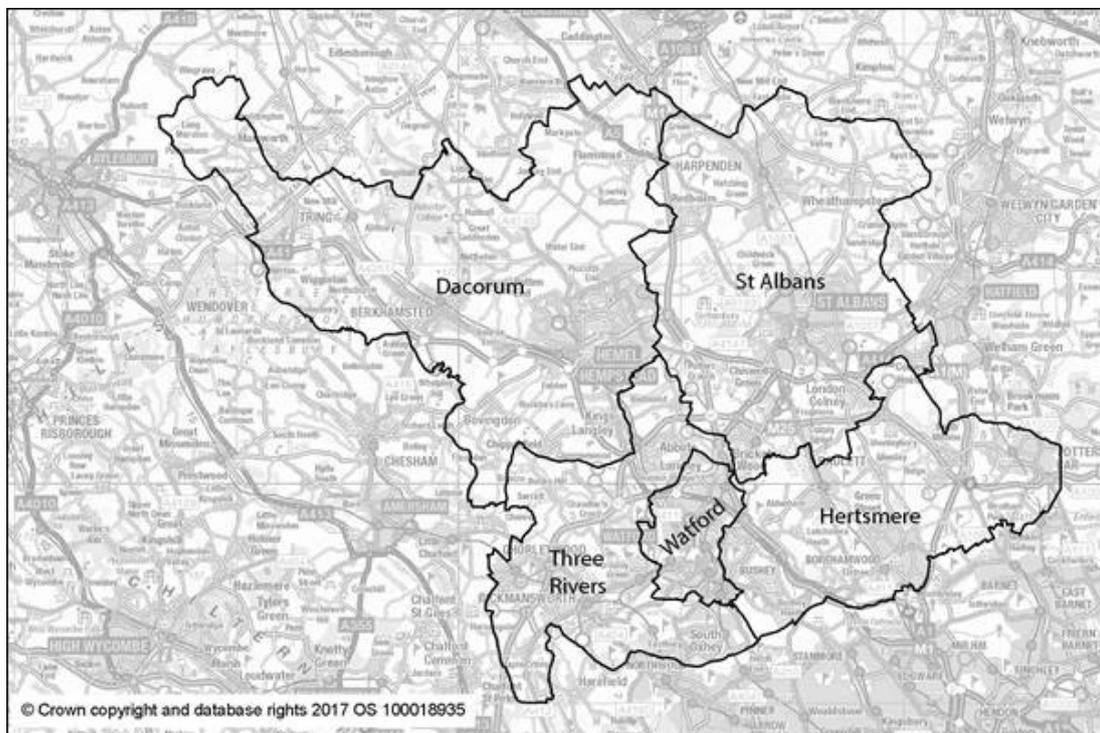
## 5. Introduction

- 5.1 This Part C Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out a consistent approach for consultation and involvement on preparing a South-West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). This Part C SCI provides an addendum to each of the existing SCI's for the five South-West Hertfordshire authorities working in partnership on the JSP: Dacorum Borough, Watford Borough, Hertsmere Borough, Three Rivers District, and St. Albans City & District Councils.
- 5.2 This Part C SCI sets out the consultation approach for the JSP only and not on other planning documents or on planning applications. All five authorities' existing Statements of Community Involvement will continue to set out the approach to consultation and involvement for other planning policy documents and planning applications, and these are not affected by this Part C document. Please refer to each authority's website for details.

### What is the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP)?

- 5.3 In Spring 2018, Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers, and Watford Councils gave formal endorsement to begin work on a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South-West Hertfordshire (see Figure 5 below).

**Figure 5: Extent of South-West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan Area**



- 5.4 The South-West Herts JSP will provide the overarching strategic planning framework for the five Local Planning Authority areas. Hertfordshire County Council will also assist with preparing the JSP. The South-West Herts JSP will

contain strategic allocations and policies, including an overall spatial strategy and amount of housing, employment and supporting infrastructure to be provided. It will cover the period up to 2050.

5.5 The key stages to be undertaken in preparing the South-West Herts JSP are set out in Figure 6. Consultation is required at various stages during JSP preparation, including “Publication” stage, after which it will be submitted to Government. An independent Planning Inspector then carries out an Examination into the document, considering the views of interested people. The final decision on the soundness of the Plan will be made by that Inspector, after which the plan will be adopted by the five councils. You can find government guidance on preparing local plans here: [www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-plans).

**Figure 6: Key stages in preparing the South-West Herts Joint Strategic Plan (JSP)**



\* The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

5.6 Each council will continue to be responsible for preparing its own Local Plan, but the JSP will also provide the platform to consider how the challenges of growth in the wider South-West Hertfordshire area can be addressed longer term (i.e. to 2050). Figure 7 below illustrates how these two key planning documents will fit together.

**Figure 7: Relationship between the South West Herts JSP and Local Plans**



5.7 By working together, the South-West Hertfordshire Local Authorities will also be in a stronger position to deliver and better fund essential local transport links, health services and educational facilities that local people want to see alongside new homes and jobs.

### **General Principles for Consultation on the South West Herts JSP**

5.8 We will apply some general principles to our JSP consultation.

- Involvement will be open to all regardless of gender, faith, race, ethnicity, disability, sexuality, age and social deprivation.
- We will undertake consultation as the plan is prepared.
- We will choose consultation processes by balancing available resources, cost and time constraints, and our level of discretion on the outcome.
- Consultation publications will be clear and concise and avoid unnecessary jargon, without understating the complexities of any decision.
- Enough time (minimum of 6 weeks) will be given for responses.
- We will inform those who respond to a consultation of later stages in the process, where required.

### **Who we will consult on the Joint Strategic Plan?**

5.9 We will consult with the following as we jointly prepare the JSP:

- Statutory organisations including councils, infrastructure providers and government bodies as legally required or otherwise appropriate.
- The general public.
- Groups representing place or interest communities.
- Local business, voluntary and other organisations.
- Planning and development industry and consultants.
- Others who have expressed an interest in the subject matter.

### **How we will consult on the Joint Strategic Plan?**

5.10 We will consult in the following ways as we prepare the JSP:

- We will contact appropriate organisations and individuals directly.

- We will publicise consultations by a combination of methods, as appropriate, such as: website, press release, displays, social media, community groups, community events.
- We will make consultation documents available at council offices and public libraries where appropriate.
- Consultation documents will be made available for download via each Council's website.
- We will consider organising consultation events such as public exhibitions and stakeholder workshops.
- We will publish comments received or a summary as soon as feasible. We will explain how these comments have been taken into account when decisions are made.

## **When we will consult on the Joint Strategic Plan?**

- 5.11 The new South-West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan is in the initial stages of preparation. It is envisaged that an Issues and Options consultation on a draft JSP will take place in late Summer 2019.
- 5.12 In preparing the Issues and Options consultation, we will undertake targeted engagement with organisations and key stakeholders to help us develop the draft Plan option for consultation.
- 5.13 After considering the responses to the Issues & Options consultation we will formally publish the Pre-Submission Plan in August 2020. Following consultation on that Plan, we will formally consult on the 'Publication Version' of Plan for representations in accordance with the relevant regulations before submission to Government and independent examination.

# **PART C: Community Involvement in the Planning Application Process**

## 6. Introduction

- 6.1 For many people, the submission of a planning application, on a neighbouring or nearby site or premises, is the first, and possibly, the only time that they will become directly involved in the planning system. It is important that anyone who feels that they may be affected by a development proposal or has an opinion that they wish to be taken into account before a decision is made, is able to take part in and respond to consultation.
- 6.2 This section sets out the consultation requirements for applicants before a planning application is submitted, how the rest of the community will be informed about applications and how they can be involved in the decision making process.
- 6.3 All planning applications are available to view and access from our website:
  - Development Management: <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-applications/search-planning-applications>

## 7. Pre-application Consultation and Advice

- 7.1 Before submitting a planning application, we encourage prospective applicants to seek advice at the pre-application stage. This allows for the identification of issues and constraints at an early stage in the design process; it enables concerns to be raised early; and can improve the quality of the scheme. Where the Council receives a request to disclose any information in relation to these pre-application discussions, it will notify and consult with the prospective applicant concerning its possible release. However, the Council reserves the right, to disclose any such information it deems appropriate and shall be responsible for determining at its absolute discretion whether the information is exempt from disclosure in accordance with the FOIA or EIR regulations. (See link to website below which includes protocol for pre-applications and charging schedule (November 2018). The protocol includes definitions for all scales of development).
- 7.2 Where proposals are large scale and likely to have an impact on an area, the Council would encourage the applicant to engage directly with the local community. This would usually be through the use of public meetings, meetings with local residents groups, amenity groups or parish/town councils, exhibitions and press releases. It is the applicant's choice whether they consult with the community and how they go about this. However, Officers can provide advice to applicants regarding appropriate local groups to contact with regard to specific planning applications through the pre-application process and how best to go about this.
- 7.3 At an early stage, developers should discuss with service providers the implications of development on, and contribution towards, provision of infrastructure. Consultation with statutory consultees may take place as part of the pre-application service. However, some of the consultees may charge for advice and this will need to be paid for separately by the applicant.

- 7.4 Further details of the service can be found on the Council's website below including details of charges which have been updated from November 2018. <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planningapplications/pre-application-advice>

## **8. Planning Performance Agreements**

- 8.1 Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) are primarily aimed at complex development proposals. They are voluntary agreements that commit applicants, local planning authorities and partner organisations to an agreed timetable and fee for pre-application discussions and determining planning applications. Essentially they are a collaborative project management process, which aim to improve the quality of development and decision making by taking away national targets for determining an application (13 or 16 weeks) and setting out the key topics and milestones of the pre-application.
- 8.2 When a PPA is proposed, an inception meeting will be held with all the relevant parties. At this meeting a project team, with named persons from each party, will be agreed and a framework will be established setting out the process, timing and fees applicable. The framework will include the pre-application procedure, number and nature of meetings to be held, timing of submission of application through to decision and may include timings for discharge of conditions and an implementation programme for the development. The fee will be dependent on the scale and complexity of the development, the number of parties involved and number and length of meetings, time involved in research and information gathering.

## **9. Community Involvement in Planning Application Decisions**

- 9.1 Development should be in accordance with the policies and proposals set out in the development plan unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. The previous sections of this SCI have dealt with how stakeholders can influence the drafting of these policies and proposals. However, there will continue to be the opportunity for individuals, groups and organisations to become involved in the decision making process for planning applications.
- 9.2 The Government has set minimum standards for consultation on planning and other related applications. Local planning authorities are required to undertake a formal period of public consultation, prior to deciding a planning application. This is prescribed in Article 15 of the Development Management Procedure Order. There are separate arrangements for listed buildings which are set out in Regulation 5 and Regulation 5A of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Regulations 1990 (as amended).
- 9.3 The Council currently goes further in trying to engage the community in the determination of applications. For example the Council will send out individual letters to any sites adjoining the application site and if they are adjacent if it were not for the presence of a highway telling owners/occupiers about planning applications rather than simply relying on a site notice. When a notice is to be used these will be placed in locations which will be seen by those likely to have

an interest in or be affected by a development. This is considered to be the most effective way of letting people know about planning proposals that may affect them. In addition, we consult the relevant Town or Parish Council where applicable. Table 4 below sets out the current practices for statutory consultation which is the minimum that the Council will do.

**Table 4 – Statutory Dacorum Borough Council Publicity Requirements for Planning and Heritage Applications**

Type of development	Site notice	site notice <u>and/or</u> neighbour notification letter'	Newspaper advert	Website
Applications for major development as defined in Article 2 of the Development Management Procedure Order	✓		✓	✓
Applications subject to Environmental Impact Assessment which are accompanied by an environmental statement	✓		✓	✓
Applications which do not accord with the development plan in force in the area	✓		✓	✓
Applications which would affect a right of way to which Part 3 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 applies	✓		✓	✓
Applications for planning permission not covered in the entries above e.g. non-major development		✓		✓
Applications for listed building consent	✓		✓	✓

Note: the [Environment Impact Assessment guidance](#) sets out further publicity and consultation requirements for applicants where this is relevant.

- 9.4 No system for publicising planning applications can be infallible, however extensive. There needs to be a balance between consideration of cost, speed of decision making and providing a reasonable opportunity for public comment. The current procedures do balance these conflicting priorities.

## **10. Consultation Procedures for other types of Planning Applications**

### **Trees**

- 10.1 For applications for approval of works to trees that are subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) or Tress in a Conservation Area (TCA), these will be sent to the Trees and Woodlands team and the relevant Town or Parish Council(s).

### **Prior Approval**

- 10.2 We consult as required by the Regulations (in most cases the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015 (as amended)) e.g. by serving a notice on adjoining owners or occupiers immediately adjoining the site

### **Lawful Development Certificates**

- 10.3 Applications for Lawful Development Certificates require a technical assessment of whether planning permission is required. Comments on the planning merits of the proposal cannot be taken into account. Where a certificate is seeking to confirm that a development or use has been in existence for 4 or 10 years investigations will be carried out to verify the information submitted by the applicant. This will be determined by the Planning Case Officer on a case by case basis. The relevant Town or Parish Council will be notified of the proposal (for information only).

### **Advertisement Consent**

- 10.4 We consult as required by the Regulations, e.g. in relevant cases with the Local Highway Authority, the relevant Town/Parish Council and Conservation team (if located within a Conservation Area).

### **Consultation periods**

- 10.6 Our letters / notifications / advertisements make clear the deadline by which comments should be submitted. We normally allow 21 days but there may be occasions when a 14 day period is set, for example in cases of special urgency, or in certain cases where a re-consultation is required, such as the submission of materially different amended plans. Consultees can only be certain that their

views will be taken into account if they meet our deadline. However, in practice, further time may be available before the decision is made. If a consultee is having difficulty meeting the deadline; they should contact the planning case officer to see whether a late comment will be acceptable. Statutory consultees may be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed in legislation.

10.7 Representations on any planning or other application should be made via our Dacorum website where all plans and associated documents can be viewed before making comments. To ensure that views are not misinterpreted, we can only accept written comments. We will accept comments by letter or email but ideally comments should be made on-line. Online comments are the most effective mechanism to ensure comments expeditiously reach the website. Comments received by email and post may take longer to appear on the website. Representations should refer only to material planning considerations.

10.8 All material planning comments are taken into account in considering planning applications. Examples of some of the material planning matters that can be taken into account when deciding a planning application are listed below. Please note this list is not exclusive:

- ✓ National planning policies and guidance
- ✓ Local planning policies and guidance
- ✓ Highway safety issues
- ✓ Impact on amenity of neighbouring properties such as overshadowing and loss of light, over dominance, noise disturbance, smells, obtrusive lighting or other impacts on amenity
- ✓ The impact on the character and appearance of the area
- ✓ Design, layout, scale, density and materials
- ✓ Traffic generation
- ✓ Car parking provision
- ✓ Impact on important trees and landscaping
- ✓ Impact on the character or setting of a listed building
- ✓ Impact on the character or appearance of a conservation area

Examples of non-material planning matters that will not be taken into account are listed below. Please note this list is not exclusive:

- ✗ Reduction in property values
- ✗ Boundary and access disputes
- ✗ Covenants and other private property matters
- ✗ Commercial competition
- ✗ Loss of a private view over land
- ✗ Planning application has been submitted retrospectively

In accordance with our Customer Service Standards, the council will not tolerate comments that contain abusive, offensive or derogatory language, or those related to a personal circumstance. Any comments submitted to the council in this manner will not be published.

10.9 A weekly list of applications received is sent out to the Town and Parish Councils, Councillors, internal consultees and other groups or individuals interested. Any local amenity group or individual can be added to the list by emailing the Planning Mailbox: [planning@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:planning@dacorum.gov.uk).

## **11. How a Decision Is Made**

11.1 Once the application has been registered and the consultation letters sent out the application is passed to the Planning Case Officer. When the Case Officer has visited the site and received all comments he/she will write a report, after the completion of the consultation period, recommending that planning permission is either refused or granted.

11.2 Not all of our planning applications are reported to the Council's Development Control Committee. If the application is not contentious and falls within the Council's Scheme of Delegation the application will be decided by the Group Manager or other delegated officers. In other cases the application will be reported to the Development Control Committee who sit on a three-weekly cycle. The Committee will then decide on the application.

### **Development Control Committee**

11.3 The Committee is made up of 14 of the Council's elected Members.

11.4 Meetings of the Development Control Committee meeting are open to the public. You can address Councillors at the meeting. There are some rules to make sure that as many people as practicable can be heard fairly. You need to register in advance of the meeting with the Council's Member Support Section. Speakers are given 3 minutes to address the Committee. Where more than 1 person wishes to speak, on a single item, a total time of 5 minutes is shared between speakers.

11.5 Further information on the process and how to register to speak can be found on the following link:

<https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/council-democracy/meetings-minutes-andagendas/speak-at-a-committee-meeting/speak-at-a-development-controlcommittee-meeting>

### **Post decision**

11.6 Decision notices are sent to applicants electronically and can be viewed on the Council's website.

11.7 A weekly list provides a list of all applications determined in a particular week. This is available on the website:

<http://site.dacorum.gov.uk/planonline/acolnetcgi.gov>

11.8 The weekly list of applications received and determined is also sent to Town/Parish Councils for information purposes. Any group or individual can be added to the list by emailing the Planning Mailbox: [planning@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:planning@dacorum.gov.uk).

## **Appeals**

11.9 After the council has reached a decision on a planning or a related application, and has refused it or permitted it with conditions attached, the applicant has a right of appeal against that decision. This appeal will be submitted to, and determined by, the Planning Inspectorate (PINS), a body independent of the Council.

11.10 The requirements for notification with regard to appeals are set down in government regulations and the council will comply with these. We will notify the interested parties of the appeal and provide information on how and when to respond to PINS. If an appeal is to be considered at an informal hearing or public inquiry, we also notify interested parties of the venue and time of the hearing in line with the Planning Inspectorate's requirements.

11.11 The council produces information on its website about the appeal process which gives further details of the appeal procedures and the potential for third parties to be involved.

## Enforcement

- 11.12 If development takes place without the right approvals being obtained, this is known as a breach of planning control and enforcement action can be taken. Before it is decided what enforcement action the Council can take, the Council must take into account legislation, government advice, the Council's planning policies and previous planning decisions. One of the underlying principles of planning enforcement is for the Council to respond to alleged breaches of planning control in a proportionate manner, taking into account the severity of any harm caused by the breach.
- 11.13 All complaints about alleged breaches of planning control must be made in writing. Discretion may be used in rare cases to waive this requirement, but this will usually be limited to those cases where there is the prior knowledge or existing involvement of an officer, or where the complaint relates to unauthorised works to a listed building or trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order. **We cannot accept anonymous complaints.** Any complaint you do make will be treated in the strictest confidence in accordance with the procedures outlined in the Local Enforcement Plan<sup>1</sup>.
- 11.14 Reports of a breach of planning control, or queries relating to a potential breach of planning control, should be made via the web form on the Planning Enforcement pages on the Council's web-site. It is also possible to e-mail [planning.enforcement@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:planning.enforcement@dacorum.gov.uk) or send a letter; however, the Council's preferred method is via the web form<sup>2</sup> as this will ensure that the information required to start an enforcement investigation is provided at the beginning.
- 11.15 Planning Enforcement will keep the interested parties informed of the planning enforcement investigation, and its conclusion, in accordance with the procedures detailed in the Local Enforcement Plan. The number and frequency of updates will depend on the priority level given to the case, as well as the complexity of the enforcement investigation.

## 12. Review

- 12.1 Members of the Development Management team have opportunities to engage with key stakeholders and to discuss relevant issues regarding the planning process. These can include the annual parish conference (where a planning update is given), the quarterly Town/Parish Clerks forum or attendance at the quarterly agent/developers' forum. Such meetings provide an opportunity for the Council to promote the key principles of this Statement of Community Involvement.

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/planning-development/planning-enforcement>

<sup>2</sup> <https://eforms.dacorum.gov.uk/eforms/Planning/enforcement/>

## **Appendix 1: Specific Consultation Bodies**

### *Local planning authorities that adjoin the Borough*

- Aylesbury Vale
- Chiltern
- Three Rivers
- St Albans

To enhance SW Herts Joint Strategic Planning working, we will also consult:

- Watford
- Hertsmere

### *Hertfordshire County Council and any other County Councils that adjoin the Borough*

- Central Bedfordshire
- Luton
- Hertfordshire
- Buckinghamshire

### *Town and Parish Councils within and adjoining the Borough*

#### Chiltern

- Ashley Green
- Latimer and Ley Hill
- Chenies
- Cholesbury cum St Leonards

#### Three Rivers

- Sarratt
- Abbots Langley

#### St Albans

- St Michael
- Harpenden Rural
- Redbourn

#### Central Beds

- Studham
- Hyde
- Caddington
- Slip End
- Kensworth
- Whipsnade

Aylesbury Vale

- Ivinghoe
- Pitstone
- Cheddington
- Marsworth
- Edlesborough
- Buckland
- Drayton Beauchamp
- Aston Clinton
- Hulcott
- Wingrave with Rowsham
- Mentmore

Dacorum

- Ivinghoe (within excel)
- Aldbury
- Berkhamsted
- Chipperfield
- Flamsted
- Flaunden
- Great Gaddesden
- Kings Langley
- Little Gaddesden
- Markyate
- Nash Mills
- Nettleden with Potten End
- Tring Rural
- Tring Town
- Wigginton
- Northchurch

## **Appendix 2: Further planning support**

### **Who can help explain Planning Issues to me?**

1. In most instances, the information you will need in relation to plan-making and planning applications can be found on the Council website. If you still have questions after looking at that information, you may wish to contact our Customer Services Team by phone 01442 228000 or email [customer.services@dacorum.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@dacorum.gov.uk).
2. Officers that can explain planning issues include:

#### **The Strategic Planning & Regeneration Team (plan-making) which is:**

- Responsible for producing the Local Plan and other planning documents that make up the Development Plan along with other planning policy guidance and;
- Responsible for organising and leading the consultations on draft council planning documents. The team considers consultation responses and incorporates, where appropriate, any amendments into the council's final version for councillors to consider and approve.

#### **The Development Management Team (planning applications) which is:**

- Responsible for assessing planning applications in accordance with the adopted development plan, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) and any other material considerations including consultation responses to the proposal.
  - Contactable for advice on pre-application enquiries and general planning enquiries through the planning mailbox and/or duty planning officer service.
3. You may also wish to contact your local councillor, to discuss your views, or seek their help with a planning proposal in your area. Contact details of local ward councillors are available at: <https://democracy.dacorum.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

### **What other support for planning is available to me?**

4. Useful websites that provide information on the planning system include:
  - Planning Portal – [www.planningportal.co.uk](http://www.planningportal.co.uk)
  - National Planning Practice Guidance - <http://planningguidance.communities.gov.uk>

- Plain English Guide to the Planning System – [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/391694/Plain\\_English\\_guide\\_to\\_the\\_planning\\_system.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/391694/Plain_English_guide_to_the_planning_system.pdf)

## **Planning Aid England**

5. Planning Aid England is an independent voluntary organisation linked to the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI). This includes a network of professional Chartered Town Planners. The organisation offers impartial advice and independent support. For further information, contact them online by visiting [www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid) or call 020 7929 9494.
6. Occasionally you may feel the need to be professionally represented on a planning issue that affects you. The RTPI keep a list of accredited planning consultants who may be able to help.

## **What other support is available to help with Neighbourhood Planning?**

7. Planning Aid England has produced guidance to help communities with Neighbourhood Planning that can be accessed at: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/neighbourhood-planning/>
8. You can also read case studies and find information about how support is being provided for Neighbourhood Planning through Locality, which is the national network of community-led organisations, at: <http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/neighbourhood-planning/>
9. If you are interested in finding out if your parish or town has prepared, or is preparing a Neighbourhood Plan, please take a look at the information on our website at: <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/regeneration/neighbourhood-planning>
10. There is further information about Neighbourhood Plans on the Council's website: <https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/regeneration/neighbourhood-planning>

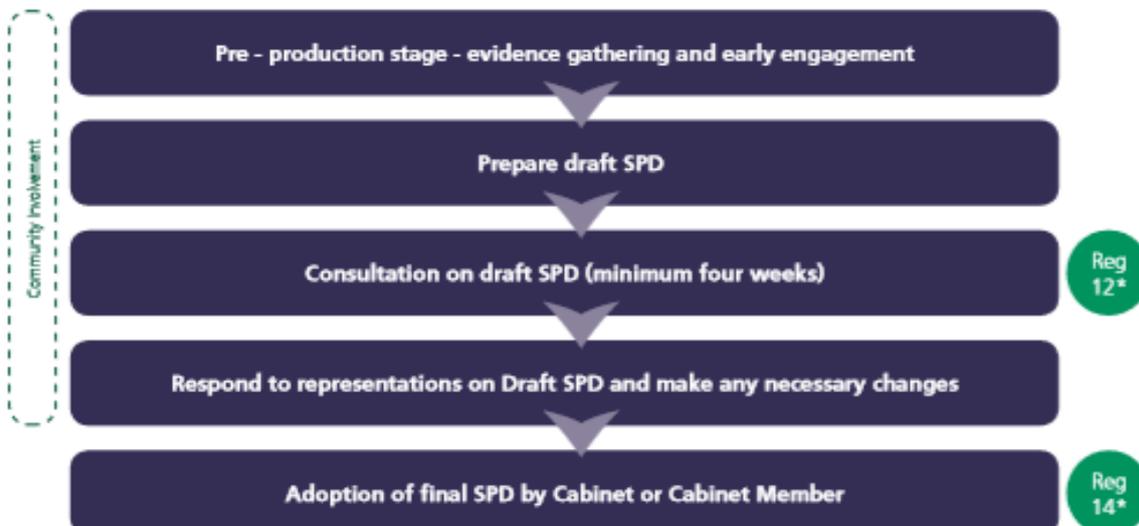
## Appendix 3: Key stages in preparing policy documents

### Local Plan



\* The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

### Supplementary Planning Document



\* The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012

## Neighbourhood Plans or a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)



\* Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012

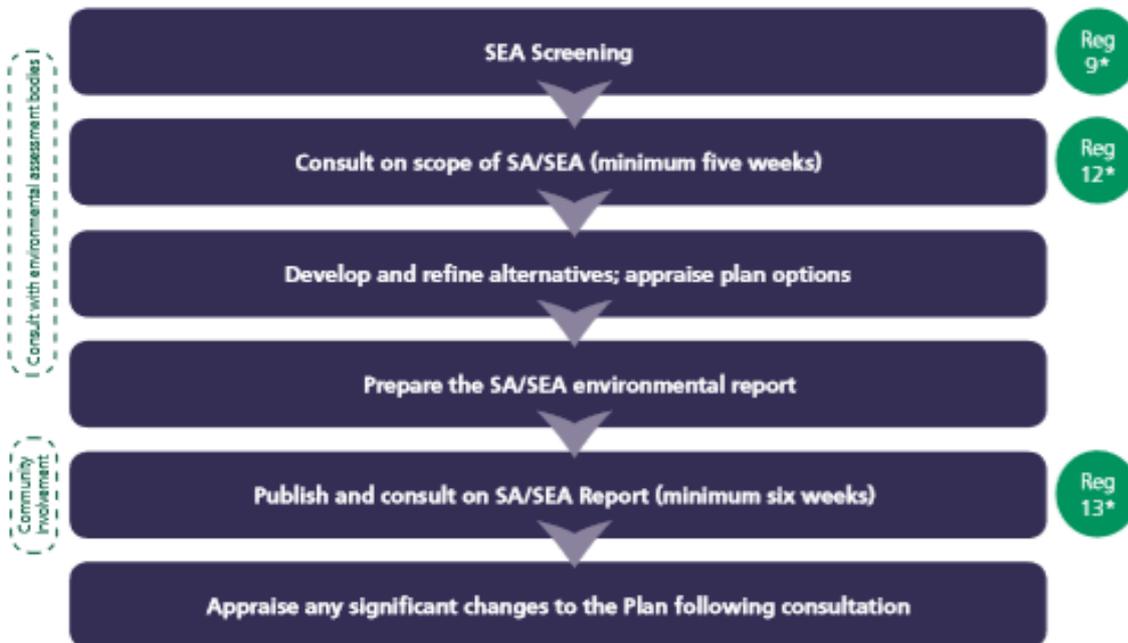
\*\* If more than 50 per cent of people who voted in the referendum supported the plan/order, the council must adopt it

## Community Infrastructure Levy



\* The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010

## Sustainable Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment)



\* Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

## Local Development Orders



\* The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015