

Sefton Council

Local Development Framework

Statement of Community Involvement

February 2011



[page left intentionally blank]

Table of Contents

| | | |
|-----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 | Introduction | 2 |
| 2 | Purpose | 2 |
| 3 | What will we consult people about? | 2 |
| 4 | Our commitment to consultation | 3 |
| 5 | Working with existing structures and organisations | 4 |
| 6 | Involving seldom heard groups | 6 |
| 7 | Consultation on planning policy (Sefton’s Local Development Framework) | 8 |
| 8 | How we assess the likely effects of our planning documents | 15 |
| 9 | How we involve people in planning applications | 16 |
| 10 | Resources and management | 20 |
| 11 | Feedback | 20 |
| 12 | Review | 21 |
| | Glossary | 22 |
| | Appendices | |
| A | Locations where documents can be viewed | 23 |
| B | Development Plan Documents - Tests of Soundness | 24 |
| C | How our consultation principles match the Public Engagement and Consultation Framework Standards | 25 |
| D | List of Consultees | 26 |
| E | Summary of Involvement Techniques | 30 |
| F | Code of Practice for Notifying the Public on Planning Applications | 34 |
| G | North West Planning Aid Information Note | 37 |
| H | Other Sources of Information | 38 |

1. Introduction

1.1 This document is Sefton's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). It describes how we intend to meet the requirements for consultation set out in planning regulations. This includes:

- Our commitment to consultation
- The range of groups and interests we intend to involve when preparing planning documents and considering planning applications
- How we intend to do this
- Timescales for the different stages of consultation.

1.2 This update of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) replaces the previous version, which was adopted in 2006. The Council took the decision to revise the SCI due to the Government changes to the development planning process through legislation in the Planning Act 2008, associated revised regulations and revised guidance in PPS 12 'Local Spatial Planning'.

2. Purpose

2.1 We believe that communities will benefit if local people are more involved in preparing the plans for their areas. They have a range of knowledge and local expertise and involving the community will make sure that this is used, leading to better plans and decisions.

2.2 From experience gained from previous consultations, we recognise that:

- We need to continue to try harder to involve people who don't normally make comments on planning issues
- We must ensure we continue to involve people at an early stage
- We need to let people know clearly how their views can affect the content of documents and proposals for development.

3. What will we consult people about?

3.1 There are two key areas in which we set out our approach to involving people:

- **The preparation of policies and plans.** More information is given in Section 7
- **Planning applications.** This approach is covered in Section 9

3.2 The Local Development Framework⁶ is made up of policies and plans known as Local Development Documents (LDD). Figure 3.1 below illustrates this. The documents that we intend to include in our Local Development Framework are listed in our Local Development Scheme⁶, a three-year project plan that is updated every year. This may be viewed on our website at www.sefton.gov.uk/ldf or at the locations listed in Appendix A. The documents vary in type – they range from guidance on topics such as building new homes to how particular areas should be developed (such as Southport town centre).

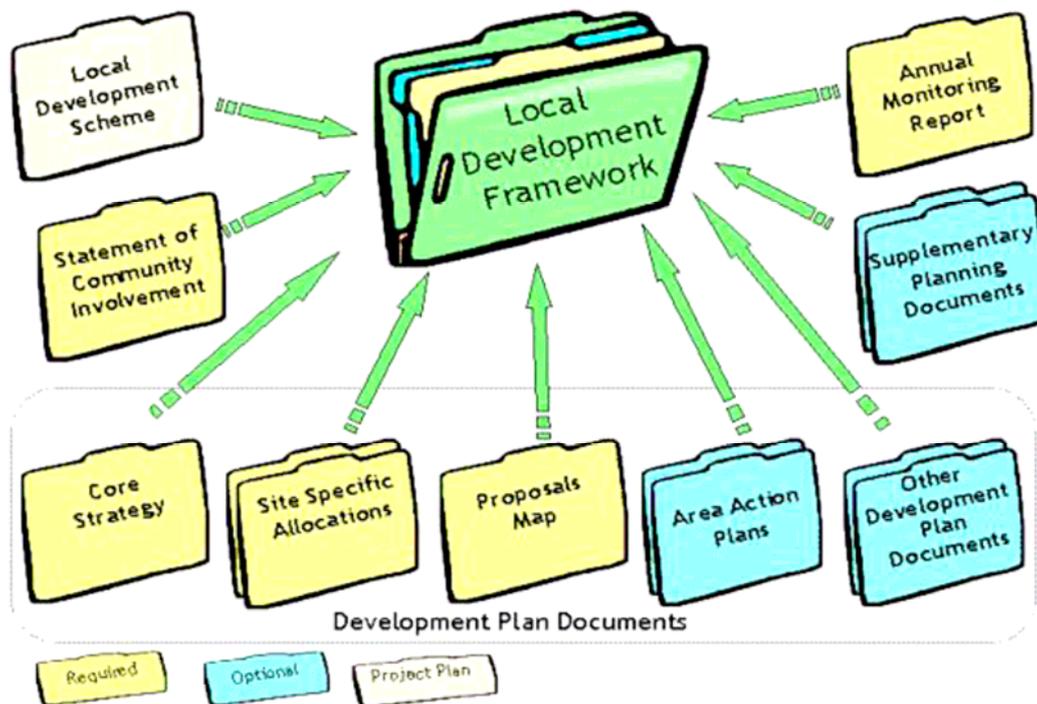


Figure 3.1 Documents that make up Local Development Framework

3.3 An independent Inspector will examine all Development Plan Documents. This examination will consider whether the document is 'sound', by using a number of tests (see Appendix B). The Inspector will report their conclusions on the examination in a binding report, the details of which the Council must accept.

3.4 Supplementary Planning Documents will also have to comply with the consultation requirements as set out in Section 7.

4. Our commitment to consultation

4.1 We want to work with all sections of the community so that anyone who has an interest in, or is affected by, the planning process, is able to contribute to making decisions. To achieve this commitment to community involvement, we will try to follow the principles below. However, these must also be balanced by the need for the Council to make decisions on planning applications within tight timescales set by Government.

Timely

- We will involve people from the outset so their views can be fully considered.
- We will aim to allow sufficient time to enable all those who wish to participate in the planning process to do so. We will do this by clearly setting out the timescales for people to get involved.

Open and accountable

- We will aim to share relevant information, make staff available to help people understand documents and proposals, and provide information in plain English.

Working in partnership

- To involve the community effectively, we need to co-operate with other departments, agencies and a wide variety of groups. Where we can, we will co-ordinate our consultation with those of our partners.

Inclusive

- We will choose techniques that best fit with the groups and individuals we wish to involve, and are relevant to the type of document or application.
- We will seek to make sure that everyone who is affected by planning proposals or documents has an opportunity to become involved, and make at least the statutory effort to reach those groups within the community who do not normally get involved.

Continuous

- We will ensure that involvement is continuous, rather than during 'one-off' events, by providing plenty of opportunities for involvement. This will include replying to those who have made comments on the policy documents we are preparing, and letting people know what is happening next.

Learning from experience

- We will seek to improve our approach as we learn from our experience of consultation.
- We will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques we use.

5. Working with existing structures and organisations

Corporate commitment to consultation – the Public Engagement and Consultation Framework

5.1 In 2009 Sefton Borough Partnership developed a Public Engagement and Consultation Framework, which set standards for how the wider Council (including the Planning Department) will work with the community. These standards have been developed to ensure:

- The way we want to speak with and listen to our communities is clear
- We identify all local people who are likely to be effected or interested
- We have a public engagement and consultation plan that is value for money
- All relevant information is available in appropriate formats and written in plain English for people who want to see it
- We record all responses accurately and fairly
- We have a clear plan for giving feedback on the results from our work with community representatives
- We show the results of our work with the public and how it has influenced our policies and plans
- We assess how effective our work is

5.2 A Public Engagement and Consultation Panel made up of Local Councillors, a Young Advisor, community, emergency services and health representatives, meets regularly to examine consultation proposals, to ensure they are carefully thought through and meet the standards.

5.3 This SCI has been prepared in parallel with the Public Engagement and Consultation Framework and will help contribute to its overall aims. Appendix C provides an illustration of how our principles mentioned in the previous section fit in

with Sefton's corporate commitment to consultation. Also the first stage of our Core Strategy consultation was assessed by the Panel and commended.

5.4 Consultation on Local Development Documents will be programmed into the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel's 'Consultation Calendar' to raise awareness amongst partner organisations. They will also be added to Sefton Council's Consultation Finder website which acts as a central hub for all Council engagement.

Neighbourhood Management

5.5 An approach to neighbourhood management is being developed Borough wide. Within this, new structures are being developed to ensure that both the Community and Voluntary Sector and residents are involved. These structures will be in line with the Sefton Public Engagement and Consultation Framework, and will include more direct access to those who have traditionally been hard to engage. They will link into the existing Council structure of Area Committees.

5.6 Area Committees comprise representatives from the local authority, public services and local residents. These can play a greater role as a forum for consultation for particular types of planning application and policy document.

Involving Our Partners

5.7 The Sefton Borough Partnership (SBP) is responsible for preparing Sefton's Sustainable Community Strategy. It is made up of representatives from the public sector, business, voluntary groups and residents.

5.8 The Core Strategy should help to fulfil the land-use objectives of the **Sustainable Community Strategy**. To ensure the closest possible links, the Sefton Borough Partnership, as a statutory consultee, has been fully involved from the outset in the development of the Core Strategy. The individual groups within the Borough Partnership will be consulted on different Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents, dependent on the subject area.

5.9 The **voluntary and community sector** in Sefton embraces a wide range of groups who should have a say in the preparation of plans and documents. The Sefton Compact is a document that sets out how this sector and the Council will work together. The principles of this agreement are contained in the SCI. The first point of contact with the voluntary and community sectors will be with our links in the Sefton Council for Voluntary Services (Sefton CVS).

5.10 Business networks in Sefton, such as the South Sefton Business Forum and Business Village Partnerships, are well established. We will consult them when we produce documents or receive planning applications that are likely to affect commercial or business interests. The SBP represents an extra route to reach these interests, through its related business support and low carbon economy groups.

5.11 In Sefton there are ten **Parish Councils**. These Parish Councils, together with Sefton Council, have signed up to Parish Charter which sets standards for how we work with the Parish Councils. The principles contained in that Charter are reflected in this SCI. The ten Parish Councils in Sefton, and a further eight in West Lancashire which adjoin Sefton, are statutory consultees for the Local Development Framework. We will continue to work with the Parish Councils to ensure that the relevant parts of any Parish Plans can be fully integrated with the LDF. This could

include working with the Sefton Area Committee of Local Councils ('Ten Parishes Partnership') and individual Parish Councils.

6. Involving seldom heard groups

6.1 There are some people who very rarely get involved with what is happening in their local area. These may be people who do not know anything about what is happening, are not confident or able to get involved, may not wish to be involved or may be happy with the decisions being made. These people are called seldom-heard groups. Examples of these groups are young people, black and racial minorities, gypsies and travellers, and disabled people.

6.2 People do not fall into the 'seldom heard' category simply because they belong to a certain group but perhaps because we fail to understand their requirements. We need to monitor and identify those who are not involved and take steps to make sure that they have the opportunity to do so if they wish. This is particularly important where a specific community may be directly affected by the decisions made.

6.3 Table 6.1 below identifies reasons why people may be deemed 'seldom heard'. Against each reason is our approach to address these issues. This underpins our basic principles to consultation set out in Section 4.

| Problems with written information | |
|------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Literacy problems | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make information accessible in different formats on request. We may need to speak to other organisations or departments about the best way of doing this. • Make officers available to explain information and to help fill in comments forms. |
| Physical disability, such as vision impairment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid 'fussy' documents. • Use a clear font. • Use simple diagrams where possible. • Make documents available in large print/Braille when requested. • Use computer packages if appropriate. |
| English not first language | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure documents can be made available in other languages and/or have interpreter available. • Work with partners to ensure needs are anticipated. |
| Intimidated or alienated by approach | |
| Lack of confidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid situations where people express their views publicly. • Use telephone surveys if possible. • Use invitation only meetings. • Use anonymous means of collecting information. • Make people aware of North West Planning Aid (see Appendix G). |
| Hostility towards Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider using intermediaries, such as the Council for Voluntary Services or local representatives. • Use the same officers as far as possible to help build trust. • Use officers with local knowledge. • Be helpful and courteous. |
| Consultation 'fatigue' | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear what consultation is intended to achieve. • Check results of previous events. • Check if other departments are carrying out similar consultation. |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be realistic at outset as to what can be achieved. |
| Sceptical that views are important | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be clear about outcomes of consultation. • Set clear boundaries. • Respond in set timescales. • Give clear responses to comments with reasons for decisions. |
| Can't attend consultation events | |
| No transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan meetings in locations which are easy to get to. • Vary locations. • Provide documents at different places throughout the borough. • Consider providing transport in extreme cases. |
| No child minders | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have facilities for children. • Hold events during school times as well as evenings. • Enable children to be involved in consultation. |
| Meetings clash with other commitments | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid events in holiday period/ religious festivals. • Vary timing of events/ meetings. |
| Physical difficulties in accessing venues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose venues with disabled access. |
| Lack of time and money | |
| Can't spare time to attend meetings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider other methods of consultation, such as web and postal surveys. • Consider more flexible times for public displays – e.g. later in the evening. |
| Consultation period restricts responses | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give enough time for written responses. • Be aware of timetable of meetings for community and other groups. • Circulate documents before the start of consultation period. |
| Documents too expensive to purchase | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider price reduction for residents' groups, students etc. • Provide all relevant documents on website and at libraries/planning office. • Produce documents which can be reproduced in black and white to reduce printing costs where possible. |
| Not reached by normal publicity material | |
| Live in rural area | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Parish newsletters and village notice boards where appropriate. • Work with Parish Councils to ensure people in rural areas are reached. • Provide phone numbers and email addresses for further information. |
| Material not in accessible format | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research target groups and assess best means at reaching them. • Explore more innovative ways of reaching different groups, such as young people, in discussion with groups such as Planning Aid. |
| No access to internet | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not use internet as sole means of consultation. • Make people aware that libraries provide free internet access. |

Table 6.1 Tackling difficulties with consultation

7. Consultation on planning policy (Sefton's Local Development Framework)

How are decisions made?

7.1 Consultation and individual comments are only a part of the information used to produce planning policy documents. Creating policy requires consideration of all the information available, which often requires understanding conflicting opinions. There is a range of research and information collected from a variety of sources, including advice from experts in related fields that is referred to as the evidence base. This should be made public so that everyone has a chance to see what information there is and how it is being used to influence a decision. This includes responses to people's comments and an explanation of how they have been considered.

7.2 Figure 7.1 below shows the range of opinions that that need to be considered:

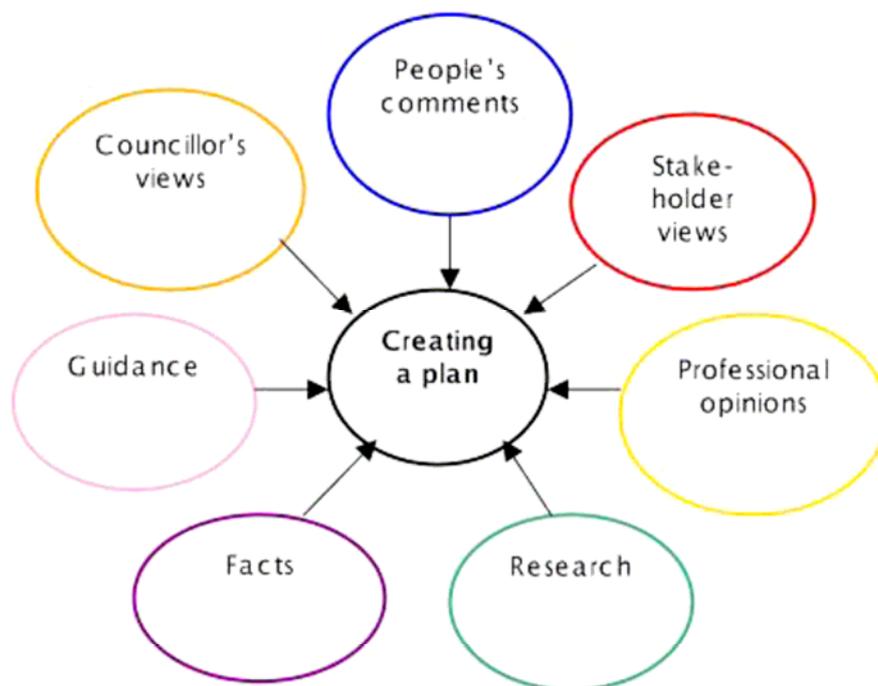


Figure 7.1 Opinions and information required to make a plan

7.3 Public consultation will help us to make decisions on the content of our Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. However, we also need to take other matters into account e.g. national planning guidance, funding, physical constraints and recommendations from the Sustainability Appraisal (see later). At the start of any consultation we will also make it clear exactly which issues are being consulted upon.

Different Methods for Different Plans

7.4 There are two main types of Local Development Documents that will be produced

- Development Plan Documents, which includes the Core Strategy, and
- Supplementary Planning Documents.

Each has its own requirements for consultation. Figures 7.2 and 7.3 show how consultation fits into the overall process of preparing planning documents and also shows the links to the process of Sustainability Appraisal (see Section 8).

Figure 7.2 Stages in SPD Production

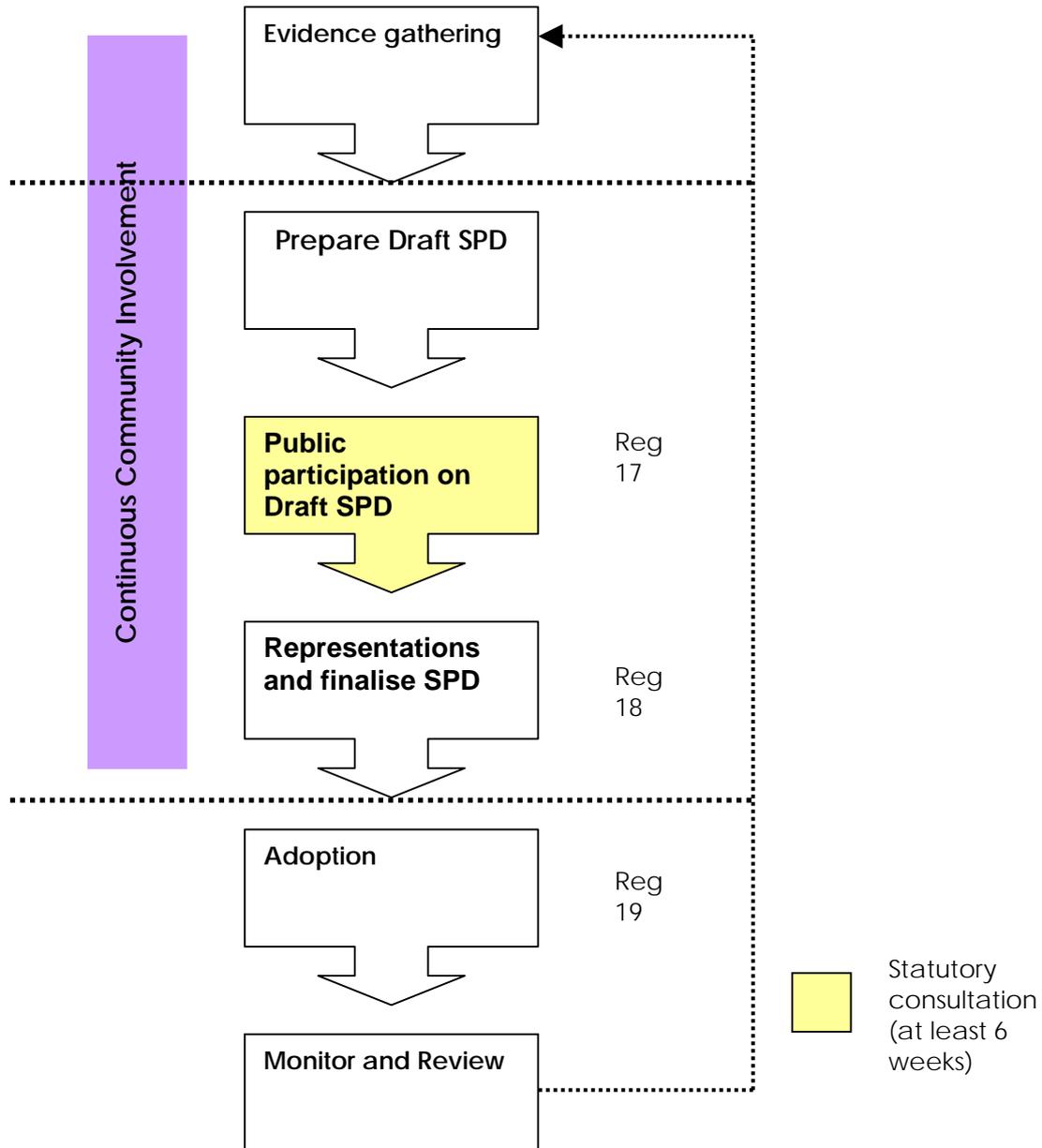
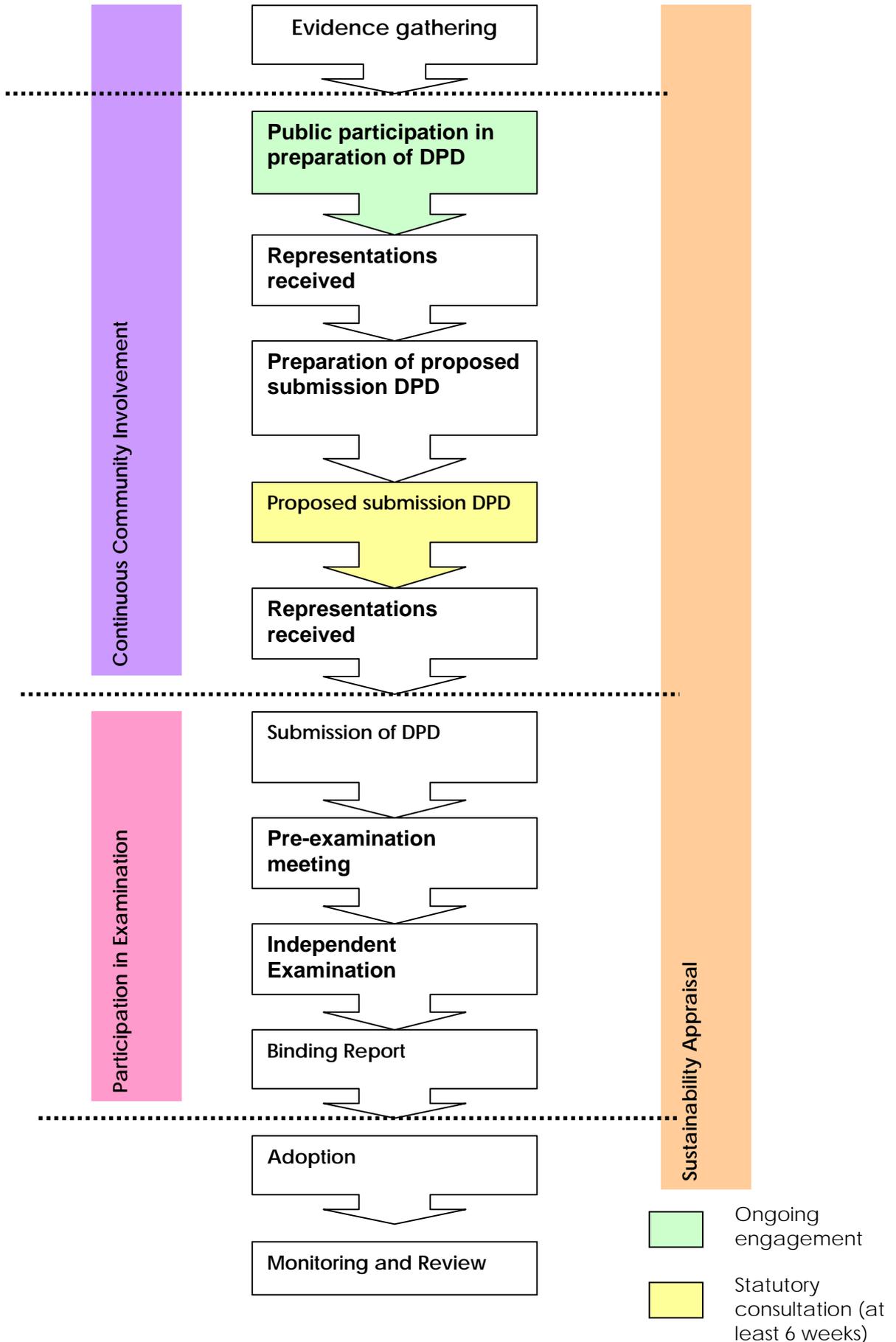


Figure 7.3 Stages in DPD (including Core Strategy) production



7.5 Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents are usually one of two types:

- Those specific to a local area, such as a regeneration area or business park
- Those on a specific topic, such as affordable housing or transport, which are relevant throughout Sefton.

7.6 Those that are specific to a local area usually deal with a range of issues. Consultation for these documents will focus on any organisations or groups that represent people in that area. Examples are Parish Councils, Residents' Associations and Civic Societies. Consultation on documents that are based on a topic will usually focus on groups or organisations with a specific interest. Examples include Housing Associations, business groups or Merseytravel. However it is important to stress that contributions will also be welcomed from all groups and individuals at each consultation stage.

7.7 To ensure we reach as wide a range of groups as possible for each of our Local Development Documents, we will regularly update our consultation database. Groups or individuals can request to be added to our consultation database by emailing planning.localplans@sefton.gov.uk or writing to the Local Planning Team (Magdalen House, Trinity Road, Bootle L20 3NY).

7.8 The following three tables outline the consultation that will take place for the Core Strategy, all other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. They set out the methods we will use at each stage along with others we may use if opportunities arise. This is to ensure that we meet the minimum requirements for consultation, but are also flexible enough to respond to the different needs of the various groups and individuals that have an interest. The consultation strategy we choose will often go beyond that set out below. More information about the proposed consultation methods is set out in Appendix E.

| CORE STRATEGY | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage | Consultation Methods | Groups Targeted |
| Stage One Early Consultation (issues) | Leaflets or Newsletter or Letter/email and Internet | All statutory consultees (see Appendix D) |
| | Workshops sessions or public display/drop in event (at least 1 in each Area Committee Area) | All general consultees on our database (see Appendix D) |
| | Presentations and discussions to groups (including Area Committees, Parish Councils and other representative groups) | Other identified general consultees (see Appendix D) particularly voluntary sector, young people, residents groups General public |
| NO SET TIMESCALE BUT LIKELY TO BE OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS | | |
| Outcome: Report of early consultation summarising all comments received during this stage and how these have influenced identification of issues | | |

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage Two Options Consultation | Leaflets or Newsletter or Letter/email and Internet | All statutory consultees (see Appendix D) |
| | Newspaper advert in local press | All general consultees on our database (see Appendix D) |
| | Consultation document available at planning offices and main libraries (see Appendix A) | Other identified general consultees (see Appendix D) |
| | Presentations, public displays or workshops throughout Sefton | Those that made comment at previous stage General public |
| MINIMUM 8 WEEK CONSULTATION | | |
| Outcome: Report of consultation setting out comments made and how these will influence the submission document | | |
| Stage Three Publication of draft document | Leaflets or Newsletter or Letter/email and Internet | All statutory consultees (see Appendix D) |
| | Consultation document available at planning offices and main libraries (see Appendix A) | All general consultees on our database (see Appendix D) |
| | Newspaper advert in local press | Other identified general consultees (see Appendix D) |
| | | Those that made comment at previous stage General public |
| MINIMUM 6 WEEK CONSULTATION | | |
| Outcome: Comments received will be submitted to Secretary of State along with the draft Core Strategy. Core Strategy will be examined and an Inspector's Report will assess whether it is 'sound'. | | |
| ADOPTION OF CORE STRATEGY | | |

| DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| Stage | Consultation Methods | Groups Targeted |

| | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Stage One</p> <p>Early Consultation (issues)</p> | <p>Leaflets or Newsletter or Letter/email and Internet</p> <p>Presentations and discussions to groups and/or workshops and/or public display/drop-in event (as requested or identified as relevant to topic/area)</p> | <p>All statutory consultees (see Appendix D)</p> <p>All general consultees on our database (see Appendix D)</p> <p>Other identified general consultees (see Appendix D) particularly groups specific to topic or geographic area of document</p> <p>General public</p> |
| <p>NO SET TIMESCALE BUT LIKELY TO BE OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS</p> | | |
| <p>Outcome: Report of early consultation summarising all comments received during this stage and how these have influenced identification of issues</p> | | |
| <p>Stage Two</p> <p>Options Consultation</p> | <p>Leaflets or Newsletter or Letter/email and Internet</p> <p>Newspaper advert in local press</p> <p>Consultation document available at planning offices and main libraries (see Appendix A)</p> <p>Presentations and discussions to groups and/or workshops and/or public display/drop-in event (as requested or identified as relevant to topic/area)</p> | <p>All statutory consultees (see Appendix D)</p> <p>All general consultees on our database (see Appendix D)</p> <p>Other identified general consultees (see Appendix D) particularly groups specific to topic or geographic area of document</p> <p>Those that made comment at early stage</p> <p>General public</p> |
| <p>MINIMUM 8 WEEK CONSULTATION¹</p> | | |
| <p>Outcome: Report of consultation setting out comments made and how these will influence the submission document</p> | | |

¹ This does not apply to Development Plan Documents produced in conjunction with neighbouring authorities. We will ensure a minimum of 6 weeks at this stage so that we are able to fit in with their timescales.

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage Three Publication of draft document | Leaflets or Newsletter or Letter/email and Internet Consultation document available at planning offices and main libraries (see Appendix A) Newspaper advert in local press | All statutory consultees (see Appendix D) All general consultees on our database (see Appendix D) Other identified general consultees (see Appendix D) particularly groups specific to topic or geographic area of document Those that made comment at early stage General public |
| MINIMUM 6 WEEK CONSULTATION | | |
| Potential Extra Stage (required if new sites come forward as a result of stage 3) Additional Site Allocations | As above | As above |
| MINIMUM 6 WEEK CONSULTATION | | |
| Outcome: Comments received will be submitted to Secretary of State along with the draft Development Plan Document. DPD will be examined and an Inspector's Report will assess whether it is 'sound'. | | |
| ADOPTION OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT | | |

7.9 An additional consultation stage may be required when, as a result of the previous consultation, new information has become available that requires a significant change to a policy or a change to a site allocation is proposed.

| SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Stage | Consultation Methods | Groups Targeted |
| Stage One Early consultation (issues) | Internet Survey and/or presentation and/or drop-in event and/or consultation document (this could include using consultation carried out previously for a relevant DPD or study) | All statutory consultees (see Appendix D) All general consultees on our database (see Appendix D) Other identified general consultees (see Appendix D) particularly groups specific to topic or geographic area of document |
| NO SET TIMESCALE BUT LIKELY TO BE OVER A PERIOD OF MONTHS | | |
| Outcome: Report of consultation setting out comments made and how these will influence the draft document | | |
| Stage Two Draft Document | Letter/email and internet Consultation document available at planning offices | All statutory consultees (see Appendix D) All general consultees on our |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | and main libraries (see Appendix A) Newspaper advert in local press Consultation document available at planning offices and relevant libraries (see Appendix A) | database (see Appendix D) Other identified general consultees (see Appendix D) particularly groups specific to topic or geographic area of document Those that made comment at early stage General Public |
| MINIMUM 6 WEEK CONSULTATION PERIOD | | |
| Outcome: Comments received will influence content of final SPD. Final SPD and list of comments received will be reported to Planning Committee and Cabinet | | |
| ADOPTION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT | | |

7.10 At the end of the three main stages of consultation (two for Supplementary Planning Documents), as set out in the above tables, we will report back. See Section 11, which sets out how we will do this.

8. How we assess the likely effects of our planning documents

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment

8.1 We will carry out appraisals of all the documents we prepare, at each different stage. The purpose of this is to help create development that is more sustainable, ultimately creating sustainable communities that are economically viable, meet social needs and do not adversely effect the environment. In other words, this means aiming to ensure a better quality of life for everyone, now and for future generations.

8.2 These appraisals are also subject to public consultation and will take place in parallel with consultation on the planning documents. There are two different types of appraisal - Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). We will always seek to make the information we consult on sustainability appraisals relevant and understandable. We will also stress the connection and importance that this process plays in the content of the planning document.

8.3 As Sustainability Appraisals include an environmental dimension, it is possible to carry out both of these requirements within the Sustainability Appraisal. This will make it simpler to produce the reports, and easier to obtain people's views on the findings. The Sustainability Appraisal will generally contain a number of recommendations on how to improve the planning document.

8.4 People will also have the opportunity to comment on the Sustainability Appraisal 'Scoping Report'. This is an initial document that will set out how the Sustainability Appraisal will be carried out, and will be produced at the beginning of the process. We will publish any comments on the Sustainability Appraisal within the consultation report produced for the planning document. We will aim to respond to comments made to the Sustainability Appraisal within 4 weeks of the end of the consultation period (see Section 11).

Habitats Regulations Assessment

8.5 European legislation, and Government regulations that relate to it, have introduced the need to carry out Habitats Regulations Assessments (HRA) for most of our Local Development Documents in order to protect our internationally important nature sites.

8.6 HRA assesses the likely effects of a plan's policies on these sites (including the possible effects 'in combination' with other plans, projects and programmes). It allows us to assess whether there are likely to be any impacts, how significant they are likely to be and whether any mitigation measures can be taken to protect the sites.

8.7 We must carry out HRA reports for all our DPDs and SPDs. In some cases there will be more than one report, but in other cases, a HRA screening report may be all that is needed.

8.8 We are required to consult Natural England about the HRA documents and process, and to make the public aware of the documents.

9. How we involve people in planning applications

9.1 We already have a process of notifying people about planning applications that works well. (Our approach to this is set out in the flowchart in Fig 9.1). Thousands of letters are sent out each year informing people of planning applications submitted in their neighbourhood. Some planning applications are also advertised in the local press, (see Appendix F) together with notices posted near the site. The Sefton website can be used to submit, or comment on all planning applications. Decisions may be viewed here too (see Appendix A).

9.2 Planning Officers are available to explain the impact of proposals on the surrounding area if required.

Household applications

9.3 The majority of planning applications we receive are for 'household' development - mainly extensions to homes. These applications are generally straightforward and do not attract much comment. We think that our current approach to notification for these applications is adequate (Appendix F provides more information). If applications are amended in a way that significantly changes the nature of the proposed development, a new application must be submitted, and the application process started again.

Major or contentious development

9.4 Proposals for major development, on the other hand, require a different approach to consultation. (For these purposes major development is defined in the GDPO and set out below). Other proposals, which are of more than local interest or are likely to be contentious, but which are not defined as major development, may also benefit from a similar approach to consultation.

Major Development

- The winning and working of minerals or the use of land for mineral-working

deposits

- Waste development
- Housing development where:
 - The number of dwelling houses to be provided is 10 or more; or
 - The development site is 0.5 hectare or more and the number of dwellings is not known
- The provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more
- Development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more

9.5 In each of these cases, developers must consult in the local area before making a planning application, and a Guidance Note has been produced to advise on the best way of doing this (available on the Sefton planning website: www.sefton.gov.uk/planning).

9.6 Developers should show how they followed this guidance by producing a 'Consultation Statement' which outlines what consultation has been carried out, the results and changes made to proposals (if any) to take account of people's views. Evidence of this should be provided to us as part of the planning application and will be able to be viewed alongside the application.

9.7 We do not expect all concerns about a development proposal to be resolved through consultation. However, a planning application is more likely to be determined quickly if the community and other key stakeholders have been adequately consulted and if issues raised have been taken account of before the application is made.

9.8 There may be scope to use the local press more creatively to provide information about major applications by issuing, and encouraging developers to issue, press releases. This will be done in addition to more formal press notices.

9.9 We may also produce 'concept statements' which are short documents setting out development principles for a site. These provide a basis for consulting with people on the type of development that may be suitable on, for example, sensitive or large sites before an application is made. These may offer more certainty to developers on the type of development that is likely to be approved. The consultation procedure for concept statements will be similar to that for Supplementary Planning Documents but will usually be completed in one stage.

Who will we consult?

9.10 How widely we notify local residents will depend on the scale, type and likely interest in the proposed development. In addition, depending on the scale of the development, we will consider directly notifying relevant community groups, Parish Councils, or Area Committees.

Planning Committee

9.11 Residents have the right to ensure that planning applications are referred to Planning Committee to be determined, and may also address the Committee. The flowchart in Fig 9.1 sets out the approach to this.

9.12 Residents can raise concerns about planning applications with local Councillors. They can also request Councillors to refer applications to be considered at Planning Committee. In the case of major or contentious schemes, developers will

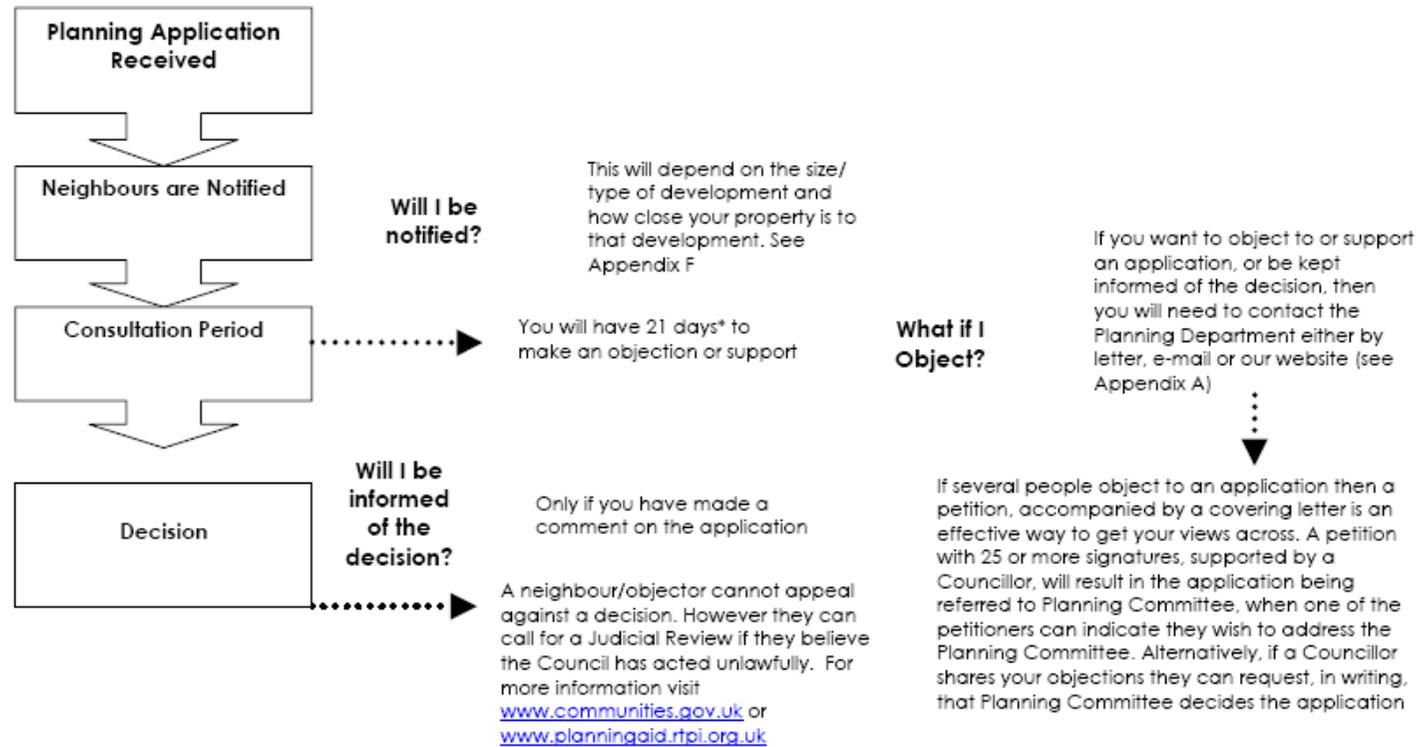
be encouraged to inform Councillors of any consultation they carry out before making their application, so Councillors can understand the issues that their constituents may raise. To assist Councillors in making decisions, site visits may also be arranged. If requested we will notify residents of any such site visits, though there will be no opportunity at these visits to discuss the proposal. The only formal discussion of planning applications takes place at Planning Committee.

Decisions

9.13 All responses to consultation on planning applications will be considered before we make a decision. For most applications we will produce a Delegated Report, which will contain a summary of the comments received together with our response. All those who make comments on an application will be informed of the decision notice and may request a copy of the relevant report. All these decisions may be viewed on the Sefton website, and notices of decisions may be sent out on request, at a small cost to cover administration.

9.14 For those applications considered by Planning Committee, we will summarise comments in a report which will be available to view on our website

Steps for notifying neighbours on planning applications



*In addition bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.

10. Resources and management

10.1 We need to make sure that we identify appropriate resources to put the Statement of Community Involvement into practice. Consultation can be expensive, both in terms of time and money. Appendix E gives an indication of the level of resources required for each type of consultation.

10.2 The Local Planning team will deal with consultation issues. They will be assisted by technicians who will help produce planning policy documents. The Development Management team already has its own technical staff who deal with consultation on applications. We will also draw on other staff within the Planning and Economic Development Department where necessary.

10.3 Our Local Development Scheme (LDS) helps us to manage the production of our documents effectively by identifying the key stages when we expect documents to be produced. It will enable us to plan for staff and other resources to be available at the times we need to involve the community and stakeholders. Our Annual Monitoring Report reports on the production of the documents outlined in the LDS.

10.4 We will try to combine our consultation with that on other departments where feasible. We will also co-ordinate work with adjoining local authorities on 'cross border' issues, such as housing or employment land. Opportunities for co-operation will be identified in the Local Development Scheme. We will consider commissioning local voluntary and community groups to carry out consultation on our behalf.

10.5 Developers will be expected to fund and manage any consultation they carry out before making an application.

11. Feedback

11.1 If people are to feel involved, and that their views are valued, then we need to have a clear process of responding to comments. At each new stage of producing a Local Development Document we will produce a report on the consultation carried out. This will include:

- Who we consulted
- How we carried out consultation
- The number of representations received
- A summary of the main issues raised
- How those issues have been addressed in the amended document, and if not, why not
- An outline of the next stages of the process, particularly any further consultation or examination

11.2 We will also respond individually with similar information to each person who makes comments on planning policy documents or the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal, and will make these available on our website. We will do this within 4 weeks of the end of the consultation period, but this will depend on the number of responses we receive and the issues raised.

11.3 Unfortunately, we are unable to make the same commitments in relation to planning applications, as the Council must make decisions on these within a tight timescale set by Government.

12. Review

12.1 We do not envisage that this Statement of Community Involvement will need to be revised frequently. However it may be important to review it in a number of circumstances e.g:

- If we find that people are not involved in the planning process as much as we had hoped
- If the process of consultation is causing severe delay or cost in producing planning documents
- If new guidance on consultation is produced.

12.2 We will monitor how effective our approach to consultation is through our Annual Monitoring Report, the Sefton Citizens' Panel, responses to our consultation and feedback from the partner organisations with whom we work.

Glossary

Core Strategy

Development Plan Document (see below) which sets out the strategic policies and vision for Sefton.

Development Plan Documents

A range of documents which set out the general and specific policies guiding development in the District and are subject to independent examination. They form part of the Local Development Framework (see below). Development Plan Documents we must produce include the Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations and the Proposals Map.

Local Development Framework

A range of documents which will replace the Sefton Unitary Development Plan. It is made up of Development and Supplementary Planning Documents, the Statement of Community Involvement, Local Development Scheme (see below) and Annual Monitoring Report.

Local Development Scheme

A three-year project management document which sets out which Development Plan Documents we will produce and when.

Neighbourhood Area Panels

These bring together key local representatives to discuss and agree common issues and priorities for their neighbourhoods and to work with local agencies to address these issues.

Planning For Real©

A consultation tool where participants make a 3D model of their local area and add suggestions of the way they would like to see their community to develop. They then prioritise these in groups and create an action plan for decision-makers to take away.

Sefton Borough Partnership

This is the Local Strategic Partnership for Sefton. It comprises voluntary, private and public organisations and residents. It has a responsibility to promote the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of the borough. The Sefton Borough Partnership produces the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Supplementary Planning Documents

These give detailed guidance on how the policies contained in the Development Plan Documents, or the Unitary Development Plan will be implemented. SPDs are not subject to independent examination, as they do not form part of the development plan.

Sustainable Community Strategy

Document produced by the Sefton Borough Partnership. This provides a vision for the borough for improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing for Sefton's

Unitary Development Plan (UDP)

The development plan under the previous planning system was adopted in 2006. It contains strategic and detailed policies for land use.

Further definitions and information can be found on the Planning Portal website www.planningportal.gov.uk.

Appendix A Locations where documents can be viewed

Sefton Web Site

www.sefton.gov.uk/planning

Sefton Council Planning Department

Magdalen House
Trinity Road
Bootle
L20 3NJ
0151 934 3598
9.0 – 5.0pm Monday to Friday

Main Sefton Libraries

Check with individual branches for opening times. Internet access is available at all these locations.

Bootle Library
220 Stanley Road
Bootle
L20 3EN
0151 934 5781

The Meadows Library & Leisure Centre
Hall Lane
Maghull
L31 7BB
0151 288 6727

Crosby Library
Crosby Road North
Waterloo
L22 0LQ
0151 257 6400

Southport Library *
Lord Street
Southport
PR8 1DJ
0151 934 2118

Formby Library
Duke Street
Formby
L37 4AN
01704 874177

We will also provide documents on request at the other Sefton libraries. Please contact us to arrange this.

* Southport Library will be closed for refurbishment until 2012. During this time there will be a temporary Library available on Tulketh Street, Southport. We will make documents available here or at the One Stop Shop facility in Cambridge Walks. Please contact us for further details.

Please note: Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents will be available at selected libraries.

B Development Plan Documents - Tests of Soundness

Taken from 'A Brief Guide to Examining Development Plan Documents' (The Planning Inspectorate)

Independent planning inspectors must look at all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) that local authorities in England prepare. The examination is the last stage of the process for producing a DPD. The process should have fully involved everyone who has an interest in the document and they should have had the chance to comment.

In carrying out the examination, the inspector will check that the authority has prepared the DPD in compliance with the legal requirements and consider whether it is sound. There is no legal definition of 'sound' but in this context, to be sound, a DPD should be justified, effective and consistent with National Policy.

In order to comply with legislation the inspector will check that the plan: Has been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme and in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal has regard to any Sustainable Community Strategy for its area meets the procedural requirements involving publicity and availability of the Development Plan Document and related documents.

The inspector will consider the soundness of the document in the context of whether it is:

1. 'Justified' - this means that the document must be:
 - founded on a robust and credible evidence base
 - the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives
2. 'Effective' – this means that the document must be:
 - deliverable
 - flexible
 - able to be monitored
3. Consistent with National Policy

C How our consultation principles match the Public Engagement and Consultation Framework Standards

* = denotes a match

| Public Engagement & Consultation Framework standards | Our Consultation Principles | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|-----------|------------|--------------------------|
| | Timely | Open & accountable | Working in partnership | Inclusive | Continuous | Learning from experience |
| The way we want to speak with and listen to our communities is clear | | * | | * | | |
| We identify all local people who are likely to be affected or interested | | | * | * | | |
| We have a public engagement and consultation plan that is value for money | | * | * | | | * |
| All relevant information is available in appropriate formats and written in plain English for people who want to see it | | * | | * | | |
| We record all responses accurately and fairly | | * | | | | |
| We have a clear plan for giving feedback on the results from our work with the community | * | * | | | * | |
| We show the results of our work with the public and how it has influenced our policies and plans | | * | | | | |
| We assess how effective our work is | | | | | | * |

D List of Consultees

Statutory Consultees

The Coal Authority
English Heritage* (SEA and SA only)
The Environment Agency*
Government Office North West
Halton Borough Council
The Highways Agency
The Homes and Communities Agency
Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Lancashire County Council
Liverpool City Council
Merseyside Police Authority
Natural England*
Network Rail
Northwest Regional Development Agency
St Helens Metropolitan Borough Council
Town and Parish Councils (in Sefton and those adjoining Sefton)
Telecommunications companies (with interests in Sefton)
Relevant electricity and gas companies
Relevant sewerage and water undertakers – United Utilities
The Secretary of State for Transport
Sefton Primary Care Trust
Sefton Borough Partnership**G**
West Lancashire Borough Council
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council

* Statutory consultees on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

General consultees

Groups/Individuals that have requested to be added to our consultation database.

A group or individual may be added to our list of consultees by emailing planning.localplans@sefton.gov.uk or writing to Local Planning, Magdalen House, Trinity Road, Bootle L20 3NJ

Other groups from the following list (note many of these may be on our database and therefore will be consulted as a matter of course in line with the requirements set out in table 7.2 –7.4)

National

Age UK
British Waterways
The Church Commissioners
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE)
Commission for Racial Equality
Conservation societies, such as the Georgian Group
Crown Estate Office
Forestry Commission
Freight Transport Association
Friends of the Earth
The Gypsy Council
The Health and Safety Executive
HM Prison Service
Home Builders Federation
The National Trust
National Playing Fields Association
National Grid
North Western Sea Fisheries
Other environmental organisations
Relevant Government Departments
Royal Mail Property Holdings
RSPB
Sport England
The Theatres Trust
Young People's Learning Agency

Local

Area Committees

Business Groups - including:

- Altside Business Village
- Bootle Town Centre Management Partnership

- Crosby & Waterloo Business Village
- Southport Business Enterprise

Community Empowerment Network

Community Safety Officer

Developers & Housebuilders

Higher and Further Education institutions

Land & Planning Agents

Landowners

Local Chambers of Commerce

Local Civic Societies

Local environmental groups

Local faith groups

Local racial/ethnic groups

Local Registered Social Landlords

Merseytravel

Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS)

Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service

MPs/MEPs with constituencies in Sefton

Port of Liverpool

Public Transport Operators, including Arriva, Merseyrail, CMT & Stagecoach

Neighbourhood Area PanelsG (or equivalent)

Residents/ Community Groups

SBP Thematic groups

Sefton CVS

Sefton Councillors

Youth Groups

Plus others who have requested to be added to our consultation database.

Sefton Borough Partnership Membership

Community Empowerment Network

Chamber of Commerce

Sefton CVS

Primary Care Trust Board

The Mersey Partnership

Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service

Merseyside Police

Merseyside Probation Board

Merseyside Sports Partnership

Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority

Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority

One Vision Housing

NHS Sefton

Merseytravel

Further Education sector

Director of Public Health, joint Sefton Borough Council and NHS Sefton

Strategic Director of Children, Schools and Families, Sefton Borough Council

Parish Councils Representative

E Summary of Involvement Techniques

Indication of resources: ***** = most resources required, * = least resources required

| Method | Description | Advantages | Disadvantages | Resources |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Internet | <p>Make consultation and background documents available on the Sefton web pages.</p> <p>Comments on planning documents or applications can be made by email or through the 'Consultation Portal' pages.</p> | An easy and cheap way to allow access for people to view a lot of information. Can be updated reasonably quickly. | Not everyone has internet access. Dependant on people searching for information – not able to alert people to events or information. | * |
| Presentation | For example, a planning officer may attend an organisation's meeting to outline issues around a specific topic. | Face to face contact with groups who may have an interest in planning. Provides an opportunity for questions to be asked. | May require officers to attend meetings outside normal office hours. Organisations may have meetings infrequently. | ** |
| Public Display | A display - normally consisting of graphics and text in publicly accessible places to show a range of potential development or policy options. A Planning officer would usually staff this. Comments forms would be provided to record views. | Face to face contact with members of the public, allowing planning staff to explain proposals or plans. Enables people to 'drop in' and browse at their own convenience, and offers a chance to ask questions. Graphics can provide an easy means of showing the public how proposals may look in 'real' terms. | Can take a lot of time to organise and would usually require wide advertising (which may be expensive). A suitable venue would also be required and producing graphics would have resource implications. | *** |
| Letters/ Leaflets/ Newsletters/e-mail | A direct way of informing people of proposals and asking for comments. | Can give precise, up to date, information. Can be used to provide detailed information to specific groups or individuals, or general information to a wide range of people. | If these are to be sent out in hard copy, it requires large cost or time resources if done on a large scale. Will require regularly updated lists of addresses. | *** |

| Method | Description | Advantages | Disadvantages | Resources |
|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| Key Issues paper | Short document or flyer which sets out the key issues for a particular area or topic. | Quick and easy way to get information out to a lot of people. | May be confusing if information is presented in too much detail. | *** |
| Newspaper Advertisements/ Press Releases | An advert or story in local press which outlines the proposal, or informs people of documents which are available for comment. | Has the potential to reach a wide audience and stories can be presented in an interesting way. | No guarantee that all members of community will receive a copy of the newspaper. Can be costly to advertise and features are only be printed at the discretion of the newspaper's editor. A week's notice is usually required before an advertisement can be placed in press so details must be prepared in advance. | ** |
| Questionnaire | A series of questions designed to gain views on an issue or place. | A way of obtaining detailed evidence for an action or decision. People may feel more comfortable giving their opinions in this indirect way. | Response rates can be low. Can be time consuming to complete. Can be restrictive in the information they gather. Questions can be misunderstood – must be very carefully worded. | *** |
| Workshop | An informal discussion between people who have a particular interest in a specific issue or area. | Can obtain a great deal of valuable information. Issues can be discussed and explained in detail and from different perspectives. | Attendance would need to be limited, usually to recognised groups, and by invitation only. People may find it difficult to commit time to this kind of event – e.g. work or childcare pressures. Therefore may appeal more to a smaller section of the community – e.g. retired people. Some people may not be confident in sharing their opinions in group situations. | **** |
| Public Participation Events | An event which uses practical exercises and models of buildings to give the public the chance to identify areas of action, e.g. Planning for Real [®] | Can present complex ideas and issues in a way that helps a wide range of people to understand. Communities can easily give their views using a variety of creative methods. This approach can capture wide interest, as the | Involves people giving up their own time. May only attract those people who are already active in their local community. Can be costly and time consuming to run. Takes a lot of staff time. | ***** |

| Method | Description | Advantages | Disadvantages | Resources |
|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| | | <p>process can be made entertaining. People who may normally feel intimidated at public events are able to give their views in an anonymous way. Can be flexible in content to match the target audience.</p> | | |
| Sefton Citizens' Panel | <p>Sefton Citizen's Panel is a group of 3600 Sefton residents who are surveyed quarterly on a whole range of Council issues.</p> | <p>Already established means of consultation that can be tapped into when required. Provides a large cross section of people throughout the borough, from different age groups, class, and location.</p> | <p>While the Panel represents a cross-section of Sefton's population, the responses are not necessarily from a cross-section. Results are produced in statistical form and may be difficult to interpret. A few months' notice is needed to get questions included within the survey, and it takes a number of weeks to receive the collated results.</p> | ** |

F Code of Practice for Notifying the Public on Planning Applications

The notification procedures set out below are subject to the proviso that they will not apply when the Planning and Economic Development Director considers that the circumstances of the proposed development warrant less or even no notification. It is very rare for no notification to take place whereas it is common for much wider notification to take place than as specified below. It should be stressed that this is a Code of Practice to guide the staff of the Planning and Economic Development Department on the extent of notification normally required.

Repeat applications on the same site

Where an alternative scheme is submitted for a site, notification of neighbours should include at least those notified of previous applications, plus people who submitted written comments on the previous scheme.

The Legal Requirement

Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995, paragraph 8 sets out the statutory requirements for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) in publicising planning applications. As a minimum the LPA must either:

- a. erect a site notice for 21 days; or
- b. serve notice on adjoining owner or occupiers.

It has long been Sefton's practise to send letters to neighbours as this is considered to be a fairer approach. Site Notices are erected when these are required by the regulations, for example, to advertise major development, a departure from UDP₆ policies or where an Environmental Statement has been submitted with the application.

Sefton Council's approach (set out below) to notifying neighbouring occupiers and owners of applications goes well beyond that which is statutorily required.

1. Extensions

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| i) Residential | All curtilages abutting the application site would be notified, including non-domestic uses. |
| | Where the application involves extensions at the side or front of a dwelling, those curtilages directly facing the application site would be notified. |
| ii) Industrial/ Commercial Cultural / Other | In wholly industrial areas, adjoining occupiers would be notified. |
| | When the application site adjoins residential property, all adjoining curtilages would be notified. Where applications involve extensions at the side or front, the curtilages facing the application site would be notified. |

1. New Buildings

The extent of consultation will relate to the scale of the proposed development.

- i) An infill house: All curtilages abutting the application site would be notified, together with those adjacent to and facing a proposed access.
- ii) New Housing (including Redevelopment): As in (i) above. Because of potential traffic and amenity implications, at least 5 properties either side of the proposed access should be notified, together with a similar number facing a proposed access.
- iii) Industrial / Commercial / Recreational/ Cultural / Other Uses: Within a wholly industrial area, adjoining occupiers would be notified. Wider consultation may be justified if particular traffic/amenity issues are identified. Within a mixed or predominantly residential area, all properties abutting the site and at least 5 properties either side, and a similar number opposite the proposed access should be notified.

3. Change of Use

- i) A House into flats: Those adjoining and opposite the vehicular access should be notified.
- ii) Industrial/ Commercial/ Cultural/other Premises: In an established industrial area adjoining occupiers should be notified.

Within mixed-use areas, all curtilages abutting the site and at least 5 properties either side and a similar number opposite should be notified.

4. Advertisements

Properties abutting and opposite to the site of the proposed advertisement and those properties facing the advert should be notified.

5. Tree Works

Notify the occupiers of the properties abutting the site, where trees are in front/side gardens, those occupiers facing the site should be notified.

6. Listed Buildings and / or Conservation Areas

Local advertisements will be placed in the press and on site. In addition, the Code of Practice set out above will be applied.

7. Telecommunications

Applications for prior approval and full planning permission:

In all cases, schools and colleges within 200 metres of the proposal (including school grounds)

Residential/Commercial/ Industrial areas - All properties within 100 metres of the proposed equipment

Countryside Areas - Known properties closest to the proposal

Where Occupier of Neighbouring Site(s) is Unclear

In these situations, for example, vacant land or land in agricultural use, a site notice will be erected notifying any interested party that an application has been submitted.

In addition to notifying neighbours, certain planning applications will also be publicised more widely through the local press. The categories of planning application which need to be notified through the local press are:

- a. 'major development';
- b. those subject of an Environmental Assessment Schedule 1 or Environmental Assessment Schedule 2 application accompanied by an environmental statement;
- c. those which are departures from the Development Plan;
- d. those which would affect a right of way to which Part III of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (public rights of way) applies; and
- e. those in a Conservation Area or to a listed building.

G North West Planning Aid Information Note

How does Planning affect me?

Planning and development in towns and cities affects everyone who lives and works in them, from the building of major retail and housing developments to the refurbishment of a local street or playground. However, if faced with a planning issue or problem many people would not know where to start due to uncertainty or unfamiliarity with the planning system, procedures or legislation. Also, many might not be in a position to be able to pay a planning consultant to help them to resolve it.

Planning Aid can help!

Free, independent town planning advice is available from **North West Planning Aid** (NWPA) for people who cannot afford to pay a planning consultant. Although it helps people with their immediate concerns, a key aim of Planning Aid is to build people's confidence with the planning system so that if any future issues arise they have a better chance of dealing with it themselves.

How does it work?

Professionally qualified volunteers can give advice on a wide range of planning issues either in person (by making site or home visits) or by telephone – depending on the type of enquiry. In some cases they can attend meetings or public enquiries on behalf of clients. Because it is independent of local or central government Planning Aid can give impartial, practical advice and information, in addition to that provided by the Local Authority.

What about communities?

The NWPA Community Planning programme helps communities to understand and play a role in the planning process, particularly on issues affecting local areas and neighbourhoods. Volunteers can simply give advice to groups or can get involved in a wide range of activities to help them improve their areas.

Key elements of the Community Planning programme include:

- Information events and presentations.
- Advice and assistance on contributing to local development plans.
- Helping communities to develop their own strategies, including parish plans.
- Training on the planning system and development plans.
- Educational projects with school children and young people.

How can I find out more?

By calling the Advice Line on 0870 850 9804

By e-mailing your name and phone number to nwadmin@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

By going to: <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planningaid/>

H Other Sources of Information

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

The government department responsible for planning and regeneration. This website contains government guidance on planning, sustainability appraisal, sustainable communities and consultation:

www.communities.gov.uk

Planning Portal

The Planning Portal is the UK Government's planning resource. Use this site to learn about the planning system, apply for planning permission, find out about development near you, appeal against a planning decision and research the latest government policy:

www.planningportal.gov.uk

Sefton Council

Contains a range of useful information from viewing and submitting planning applications to how to set up a tenants' association:

www.sefton.gov.uk

Sefton Council for Voluntary Services

Sefton CVS exists to assist and promote voluntary and community sector activities in Sefton:

www.seftoncvsvoluntaryservices.gov.uk

Planning Aid

See Appendix G

www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

The Planning Inspectorate

The Planning Inspectorate carries out appeals and similar casework governed by planning and environmental legislation in England and Wales. Provides information on how the Statement of Community Involvement and Development Plan Documents will be examined:

www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk