

Southend Statement of Community Involvement

SCI

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Introduction

1. This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the community and other stakeholders will be consulted on local planning policy documents (including the Southend new Local Plan) and planning applications.

General Principles of Planning Consultations

2. We will apply some general principles to our planning consultations. Where consultations are being undertaken by others, we will expect them to apply these too:
 - Involvement will be open to all regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex/gender, and sexual orientation.
 - We will continue to co-operate with neighbouring Councils and public bodies to ensure that strategic matters are appropriately addressed.
 - We will seek views of interested and affected parties as early as possible.
 - 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 issue.
 - We will inform those who respond to a consultation of later stages in the process, where required.

Planning Policy Consultation Database

3. Over time, we have built up an extensive database of organisations and individuals wishing to be involved in our consultations.
4. Any individual or organisation wishing to be included may be added to the database at any time. Please contact: planningpolicy@southend.gov.uk.

Development Plan Documents (DPDs) (including the Southend new Local Plan)

5. Development Plan Documents contain policies to manage and guide development. They must be supported by evidence, generally accord with national policies and be subject to an on-going process of sustainability appraisal, to ensure that the policies are soundly based on economic, social and environmental grounds.
6. Consultation is required at various stages in their preparation, including “Publication” stage, after which they are submitted to the Government. An independent Planning Inspector then carries out an Examination into the document, considering the views of

interested people, before making recommendations on the document that can be put before the Council for adoption.

The following approach applies to Development Plan Documents.

7. Who we will consult:

- Statutory organisations including councils, infrastructure providers and government bodies as legally required or otherwise appropriate.
- Based on the subject of the document we will consult the following groups as we consider appropriate:
- Groups representing place, communities or other special interests;
- Local businesses, voluntary and other organisations;
- Planning and development industry stakeholders;
- The general public;
- Others who have expressed an interest in the issue or matter.

8. When we will consult:

- We will consider the need for targeted engagement with organisations and key stakeholders in developing the Plan, in addition to legal requirements;
- We will consult for a minimum of 6 weeks;
- We will consider the need to prepare documents for additional consultation stages setting out further options, greater detail or preferred options;
- Once we think there has been an appropriate level of community involvement, we will formally publish the “Publication Version” of the Plan and invite representations before submission to Government for independent examination.¹

9. How we will consult:

- 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 and joining with other consultations where feasible and appropriate;

¹ In certain circumstances and following this it may be necessary to engage further with the community on part of, or on the overall document before submission of a revised version to Government. This may be owing to specific matters raised in representations or changes to government policy.

- We will make consultation documents available at council offices and public libraries where appropriate;
- Consultation documents will be made available for download via the Council's website;
- Consultees are encouraged to respond to all consultations online via our consultation portal as this is the quickest and most effective method of responding. We shall accept other forms of response, for instance letter or email, although at Publication stage comments must be made online or using our prescribed response form;
- We will publish comments received or a summary as soon as it is feasible. We will explain how consultation comments have been taken into account when decisions are made. This is not required for the Publication stage of DPDs as representations made at this stage will be considered during Examination;
- Each iteration of the Plan will be presented alongside an evidence base and a statement setting out the role that the previous consultation had in its production.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

10. We prepare Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) to provide guidance and more detailed advice, and to supplement information contained in a Development Plan Document. Again, they must be supported by appropriate evidence and generally accord with national policies.
11. We will carry out at least one stage of consultation before we adopt. A Planning Inspector is not involved as an Examination is not required as part of the process. SPDs may not require Sustainability Appraisals where they are not site specific or relate to a DPD that has undergone a Sustainability Appraisal.
12. The same general methods of consultation, described for DPDs, as set out above, will be used for SPDs. However, the criteria for 'When we will consult' will be as follows:
13. When we will consult:
 - We will consider the need for targeted engagement with organisations and key stakeholders in developing the SPD;
 - We will consult on a draft version of the SPD for a minimum of 4 weeks.
 - After considering the responses to the draft, we will consider the need for further consultation.
 - Once we consider that there has been an appropriate level of community involvement we will adopt the SPD.

Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders

14. Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are taken forward by

qualifying bodies and communities themselves. They are not prepared by the Council therefore this SCI does not prescribe what methods of community engagement they must follow. It will be for the qualifying bodies and communities to decide an appropriate level of community engagement in relation to the size and complexity of the Plan.

Nevertheless, the Council will expect this to meet the requirements set out in appropriate legislation and to follow wherever possible the general principles and techniques set out in this SCI.

15. The Council will assist/ advise, as appropriate, on the Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order process in line with relevant Regulations.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

16. The Local Development Scheme, available online, provides a 'live' timetable for preparing Development Plan Documents, including the Southend new Local Plan.
17. For the latest information on Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Community Infrastructure Levy please visit the relevant planning pages on the Councils website www.southend.gov.uk/planning.

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

18. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which allows the Council to raise funds for infrastructure to support new development. CIL rates are set out in a Charging Schedule:
 - Consultation on the Draft Charging Schedule will be for a minimum of 4 weeks.
 - We will consult stakeholders, interested bodies and where appropriate, the wider community.
 - We will publish comments received or a summary as soon as it is feasible.
 - An independent inspector will examine the Draft Charging Schedule, having considered the representation made prior to making recommendations for the Council to consider in adopting the Charging Schedule.

Planning Applications

19. We are keen to encourage developers and people generally to discuss their proposals with planning officers before submitting an application. This can confirm whether the principle of development is acceptable and clarify the format, type and level of detail required to enable us to determine an application. Pre- application advice is currently provided on request and its procedure and associated cost is available on our planning website. Where an applicant has not taken pre-application advice the Council will usually decide the proposal in its submitted form.

20. On receipt of a planning related application the Council will, as a minimum, carry out consultation in accordance with the requirements of the relevant legislation and take account of any relevant consultation responses. This may involve displaying a site notice or sending notifications to neighbours (adjoining the site) by letter or email or placing an advertisement in the local press.
21. To ensure early public involvement on major development proposals or locally sensitive schemes the applicant will be encouraged to carry out public consultations before making a planning application. Before making a major planning application (10+ dwellings or 0.5+ ha residential site area, or 1000+ sqm of floor space or 1.0+ ha of development land of non-residential uses), prospective applicants should:
- Talk to the Council planning officers about their application through making use of the Council's pre-application advice service;
 - Talk directly with relevant statutory consultees to minimise technical objections to their application;
 - Consult the local community on overall and specific aspects of the proposal;
 - Consider the matters raised in the consultation responses received and take them into account before making their planning application.
22. Before making other types of planning application, prospective applicants should also consult both the Council planning officers and people likely to be affected and consider their views before finalising the proposal. The latter may be as simple as talking over plans with a neighbour or making use of the Council's preapplication advice service.
23. Where applicable planning applications should be accompanied by a document explaining what consultation has been carried out by the applicant, including technical and public involvement and how it has influenced the planning application proposals.
24. In addition to the site notice and/or neighbour notifications the Council will publicise a weekly list of planning applications on our website and in other public places as appropriate.
25. Planning applications are public documents and can be viewed at the Council offices and on the Council's website via Public Access our online service that allows you to view and comment on planning applications whether or not you have been directly notified:
www.southend.gov.uk/publicaccess.
26. The Council will consider the submitted consultation statement in addition to any comments received on the planning application.
27. The Council will by arrangement allow applicants and objectors to make a short statement on planning applications which are considered by the Planning Committee in certain circumstances. Where an objector uses that opportunity, the applicant will have a right of reply. A guide to commenting on planning applications and Planning Committee is available on the Council's website.

28. The Council will publish the decisions on all planning applications on its website which will, where required, include the reasons for the decision. Please refer to the relevant planning pages on the Council's website: www.southend.gov.uk/planning.

29. Planning legislation inevitably is amended and updated. The current relevant Planning Acts and regulations can be found at the official home of UK legislation: www.legislation.gov.uk

Please contact the Strategic Planning team at Southend-on-Sea City Council for further information regarding current legislation planningpolicy@southend.gov.uk.

Independent Planning Advice

30. Independent advice on planning is available from the Planning Aid website (<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid/>). Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay planning consultant fees. It complements the work of local planning authorities but is wholly independent of them. Planning Aid can assist people with their own planning applications or can help them to comment on planning applications or planning policy consultation documents.

31. If you have a query regarding the information set out in this Statement of Community Involvement or a specific question relating to a specific consultation or other planning policy matter please contact us – via email at planningpolicy@southend.gov.uk, by phone on 01702 215000, or you can write to us at: Planning Policy, Department for Environment and Place, Southend City Council, PO Box 6 Civic Centre, Victoria Avenue, Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6ER.