



Guildford Development Framework

Statement of Community Involvement



GUILDFORD DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK GUILDFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL'S

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

One of the Core Values of Guildford Borough Council is to focus on 'providing what the community needs'. This can only be effectively achieved through ensuring that the community are given a voice and are involved in all areas of decision-making that could affect their lives.

Our aim is to give community groups and stakeholders an active involvement in the development of planning policies and proposals. Community involvement is essential for the production of a successful Local Development Framework. There will be different levels of public involvement at various stages of the process. The aim is to have continuous community involvement and to produce consensus, if possible, on the form and content of Local Development Documents.

The community includes local residents, groups, businesses, and organisations. Stakeholders are the national and regional organisations. This document was adopted on 21 February 2007 and is one of the Council's statutory Local Development Documents.

ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

A summary of the draft Statement of Community Involvement can be made available in alternative formats. For more information please contact Planning Policy on 01483 444662.

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1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement for the purpose of ensuring greater and more effective public involvement in the production of Development Plans and in planning application consultations.
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2. WHAT IS A STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT?

- 2.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is the Council's policy for:
- Working continuously with all sections of the community, and with partner organisations and interested parties (often called 'stakeholders'), in the preparation and revision of planning policies and guidance that will make up the new Local Development Framework.
 - Engaging the community and other interested people in planning applications.
- 2.2 It sets out who will be involved and consulted, and how and when this will happen.
- 2.3 It shows how the Council will meet the minimum consultation requirements set by the Government and what the Council will do over and above these minimum standards when involving people.
- 2.4 It also sets out how the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) will be reviewed and improved.
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3. HOW DOES THE SCI FIT IN WITH THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK?

What is the Local Development Framework?

- 3.1 In comparison to Guildford's current Local Plan, which is a single document, the LDF will be a portfolio of the following Local Development Documents (LDDs):
- Development Plan Documents (DPDs) - which set out policies for the Borough
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) – to replace the Council's Supplementary Planning Guidance and expand policies in DPDs.

Please note that there is a glossary in Appendix 4 at the back of this document.

- 3.2 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for the production of the LDF on a rolling three-year basis. The LDS sets out the programme for the production of LDDs, further LDDs could be produced in future years. Guildford Borough has an approved LDS at the time of writing. GBC has requested that amendments are made to the LDS. The latest version of the LDS is available on the Planning Policy pages of the Council's website, hard copies are available at the Planning Helpdesk at the Council Offices.
- 3.3 The Council will be producing the following LDDs (these will be amended as the Local Development Scheme is updated):

Table 1: Local Development Documents

DPD	SPD
Core Strategy	Sustainable Development and Construction
Slyfield Area Action Plan	
Town Centre Area Action Plan	Infrastructure
Site Allocations	
Statement of community involvement	Woodbridge Meadows
	Thames Basin Heath Special Protection Area
	Vehicle Parking Standards

- 3.4 For the purposes of determining planning applications, reference should be made to retained Local Plan policies which form part of the Core Strategy. Development Control policies will be kept under review to evaluate if they need updating in the future.

The majority of development control policies in the existing Local Plan will be saved in the LDF process. Note that there is a glossary at the back of this document.

What are Development Plan Documents?

- 3.5 Development Plan Documents are spatial documents prepared by the relevant plan making authority, and are subject to independent examination.

What are Supplementary Planning Documents?

- 3.6 Supplementary Planning Documents will provide further details of policies and proposals set out in Development Plan Documents. These could take the form of design guides, other guidance, development briefs, or issue-based documents. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) will not form part of the statutory development plan and will not be independently assessed by an Inspector.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 3.7 At different stages of the preparation of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents, progress reports on how far the proposed policies contribute to sustainable development will be prepared and published for public consultation alongside the documents. A Sustainability Appraisal will be part of the Local Development Framework from the start. It will consider the likely social, economic and environmental effects of policies. A Sustainability Appraisal is not required as part of the preparation of the SCI.

4. THE COUNCIL'S AIM FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 4.1 In producing its SCI the Council wishes to promote effective public participation on the planning system. This will ensure that all sections of the community (local residents, businesses, landowners, amenity groups etc) and stakeholders (at a local and national scale) have an opportunity to be involved at an early stage of the planning process. This involvement will continue through the preparation and revision of LDDs and significant development control decisions. This Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council will involve the local community and stakeholders.

5. LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY PLAN

- 5.1 The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) prepares the Community Plan for Guildford. It comprises faith representatives, health representatives, Guildford Association of Voluntary Services, the Council, Business Forum, Community Learning Partnership, Environmental Forum, Youth Council, Surrey County Council and Surrey Police. The Community Plan can be read on the Council's website www.guildford.gov.uk > Home > Council > Corporate Performance > Real – time Plans > Community Plan.
- 5.2 The Community Plan is a plan for the future of Guildford Borough and sets out the kind of place that people who live and work in Guildford would like it to be. The plan was launched in May 2003 following consultation with residents, businesses, voluntary and community groups and public service providers.
- 5.3 Guildford's Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) brings together, at a local level, different parts of the public sector, private, business community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together to achieve results. The LSP has adopted the priorities and targets set out in Guildford's Community Plan and has committed to working together on them.
- 5.4 The LDF will give a spatial dimension to the elements of the Community Plan that relate to the use and development of land. The LSP will help to effectively represent key stakeholders' requirements and expectations.
- 5.5 The overall strategy for consulting on the production of LDDs is similar to the production of the Guildford Community Plan, as the community will be consulted from a very early stage in order for them to decide upon their own needs and priorities. The Council will enable the community to inform them of concerns and solutions rather than taking a traditional approach where the Council identifies issues and solutions and asks for comments.

- 5.6 Unlike the Community Plan, it must be realised that there are limitations as to the issues and solutions available, and LDD consultation will operate within boundaries of operation, such as within government guidance and the Council's overall priorities set by the Community Plan.
- 5.7 The Community Plan priorities can be used to support issues and solutions which will be subject to consultation and, as they have been formed by community representatives give a general indication of what will be desired from future consultations.
- 5.8 The Community Plan is updated on an ongoing basis with key partners, with a formal annual review culminating in a Community Plan. The Community Plan covers a 5-year period. The Community Plan is to be reviewed in 2007.
- 5.9 Both DPDs and SPDs should have regard to the Community Plan by ensuring that land-use requirements arising from it are addressed. In turn, as it is updated, Guildford's Community Plan is expected to address issues that arise from those development requirements driven by the Regional Spatial Strategy/Regional Planning Guidance and ensure that partners have their plans in place to support development requirements.
- 5.10 There are economies of scale in synchronising community and stakeholder engagement for both the Community Plan and LDDs, provided statutory requirements for LDD consultation are met. Joined-up working will help to reduce consultation over-load with the community.
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6. WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED?

- 6.1 The Regulations from the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) require that certain specific consultation bodies must be consulted. The minimum requirement for pre-submission consultation is outlined in Regulation 25. It requires the Local Planning Authority to consult with:
- a) each of the 'specific consultation bodies' to the extent that Local Planning Authority thinks that the proposed subject matter of the Development Plan Document affects the body; and
- b) such of the general consultation bodies as the Local Planning Authority consider appropriate.
- 6.2 The 'specific consultation bodies' include:
- The Regional Planning Body The South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)
 - Surrey County Council and neighbouring Local Authorities
 - Parish Councils
 - Countryside Agency (part of Natural England)
 - Environment Agency
 - Highways Agency
 - English Heritage

- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Regional Development Agency – The South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)
- Owners/controllers of telecommunications apparatus
- Strategic Health Authority
- Organisations that provide electricity, gas, water and deal with sewage

6.3 The 'general consultation bodies' include community groups and other stakeholders such as:

- Voluntary bodies whose work benefits any part of the Borough
- Bodies representing the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the area
- Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the area
- Bodies representing the interests of the business community in the area

The Council will also consult with the various government departments as appropriate. A more specific list of stakeholders and consultation groups is contained in Appendices 1 and 2.

6.4 Through examining the results of previous consultation exercises we have been able to identify 'hard to reach' groups who do not generally get involved in consultation on planning matters. These groups may change over time. They are:

- People from ethnic minority groups
- Faith groups
- Gypsies, Travelling Showpeople and other Travellers
- Disabled people
- Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender groups
- Younger and some older people
- Learning disabled
- Lone parents
- Carers
- People living in areas of deprivation or on a low income
- People living in remote rural areas

6.5 A significant proportion of the Borough's residents live in rural areas, some with limited access to public transport, shops and other services. There are relatively low numbers of people from ethnic minority groups.

6.6 In order to engage with 'hard to reach groups' the Council has begun to use alternative consultation techniques. For example, in the Town Centre Area Action Plan consultation, Officers distributed leaflets to commuters at Guildford train station and were available to discuss town centre matters. The Council also used simple questionnaires that include an easy to understand summary of the main issues and will seek to proactively engage with these groups rather than expect them to get involved in the process.

6.7 The Council will make every endeavour to meet the requirements of the Race Relations Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

7. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN DPD AND SPD PRODUCTION

Process for preparing DPDs and SPDs

7.1 The main types of Local Development Documents in which people will be involved are Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The process for preparing Development Plan Documents, highlighting the opportunities for community involvement, can be summarised as follows:

Table 2: The Process for Preparing DPDs

Stage	What's involved?
Pre Production	Evidence Gathering and survey to work out the area's needs, constraints and opportunities. Statutory bodies are consulted on a scoping report, which sets out how sustainability appraisal will be carried out.
Production	Issues and Options ('pre-submission consultation'). The Council identifies issues and looks at the different options for dealing with them through informal consultation with the community, stakeholders and others. It will publish an Issues and Options paper to focus debate and work towards developing preferred options. This includes carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal of the different options.
	Preferred Options ('pre-submission public participation'). Formal public participation on the Preferred Options (draft policies) and the Sustainability Appraisal Report. The Council takes into account all the views received before publishing final versions.
	Submission Formal public consultation on the final versions of the document and Sustainability Appraisal Report when they are submitted to the Secretary of State. For the Submission of the Site Allocations DPD, send to each DPD body, the address to which the site allocation representation relates, together with notice of consultation details, in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations.
Examination	The independent public examination of the document's soundness by an Inspector.
Adoption	The Council adopts the document following the Inspector's binding report.

7.2 The preparation process for Supplementary Planning Documents is simpler, comprising the following main stages:

Table 3: The Process for Preparing SPDs

Stage	What's involved?
Pre Production	Evidence Gathering and survey work. Statutory consultees are consulted on a scoping report, which sets out the scope and level of detail of sustainability appraisal.
Production	Draft Supplementary Planning Guidance, formal public participation on draft supplementary planning guidance and the Sustainability Appraisal Report
Adoption	The Council adopts the document after taking into account all the views received and making changes.

Which Techniques to Use and When?

7.3 Informal engagement with the community will ensure that awareness of LDF issues is maintained. The community will be regularly informed about current planning issues as part of an ongoing programme of awareness raising whether or not a decision is being sought. The Council will use all opportunities for displays in public places, will continue to produce newsletters and ensure the Council website is regularly updated.

7.4 The following table proposes how 'specific' consultation bodies and other groups will be involved at the formal stages of LDD production. All groups are welcome to participate in the production of all documents as the Council wants as many comments as possible but the involvement of all groups will not always be required.

7.5 A combination of informative and interactive consultation techniques will be applied to LDD production. The type of document being produced, the target audience and the different stages in the production of LDDs will be considered when applying a technique. The following engagement techniques set out in Table 5 will be used by the Council at Stages 1 and 2 of DPD production and Stage 1 of SPD production, where the Council has discretion.

7.6 In order that members of the public, community groups and stakeholders do not suffer from 'consultation fatigue' DPD consultation events and publicity will take place at the same time, where appropriate. For example, this may involve sending out questionnaires for two or more DPDs at the same time. Linking consultation exercises is also more resource effective.

Table 4: How consultation bodies will be involved in DPDs and SPDs
(note that these will be amended as the Local Development Scheme is updated.)

Consultation Body	Development Plan Documents				Supplementary Planning Documents			
	Core Strategy	Slyfield Area Action Plan	Town Centre Area Action Plan	Site Allocations	Sustainable Development	Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area	Infrastructure	Vehicle Parking Standards
Specific bodies	As required							
Business Community	Required			Recommended	Req.	Recommended		
Councillors	Required							
Conservation Groups	Recom- mended	Required	Recommended			Required		
Development Industry Professionals	Required							
Housing Associations	Recommended		Req.	Recom- mended	Required	Recommended		
LSP	Required							
General Public	Recommended							
Minority Groups	Recommended							
Religious groups	Recommended							
Transport groups	Recommended							
Young People	Recommended							
Disabled Groups	Recommended							
Elderly People	Recommended							
Health groups	Recommended							
Leisure groups	Recommended							
Residents Associations	Recommended							

These are the groups that the Council is likely to consult for future consultations. This is not a final list of DPDs and SPDs that the Council will be producing, please refer to the latest Local Development Scheme.

Key
As required = as per Regulations
Required = input required from this group
Recommended = groups are welcome to comment

Table 5: Engagement Techniques that can be used during DPD and SPD Consultations

Technique	Description
General Letters	To ensure relevant people and groups are kept informed and are aware of where consultation documents are available.
Leaflets/ Fact sheets	To ensure the whole community is kept informed during plan preparation the distribution of leaflets or fact sheets can be an effective way to raise awareness. However, it has been noted that leaflets can be dismissed as unwanted junk mail.
Provision of info for public viewing	The Council's Planning Reception is a beneficial place to provide copies of LDF documents for viewing.
Electronic communication – Email and the website	<p>The use of email to communicate and the website to publish documents is one of the methods to be used as per the Regulations.</p> <p>Guildford Borough Council's website regularly receives approximately 50,000 visitors per month so it is an effective tool for information provision. Interaction with the public through electronic methods is encouraged in line with the Council's ambitions to provide services electronically and all documentation relating to the LDF will be made available on the website.</p> <p>Guildford's website already holds information on the LDF process. Regular website updates will report on LDF progression.</p> <p>Paper versions of documents will also be provided to target those without IT facilities.</p>
Displays	These can be in Guildford's libraries, the Council's Reception and at exhibitions. They are beneficial for raising awareness of current LDF issues, allowing the Council to interact with the community and encourage them to comment on issues that may affect them.
Press Releases	Advertisements in local newspapers will be continuous throughout the DPD and Advertisements production process to inform the community of various key consultation dates and the publication of documents. News articles will also help to publicise the LDF. Although advertising in local papers is costly, it is an effective way to target a large proportion of the Borough's population.
General Questionnaires	Questionnaires are a traditional method involving the collection of information in the form of written responses to a set of standard questions.
Targeted Questionnaires	General questionnaires will be sent to all households, while targeted questionnaires will be used when consulting on documents.
Interviews	In targeting different groups it is beneficial to go to them. A questionnaire can be used as a guide for an interview.
Meetings	These can take place with selected stakeholders who may have a specific interest/ knowledge in a DPD topic. Meetings allow for targeted engagement as a Council representative can go out to stakeholders.
Focus groups	These are small groups who are brought together to discuss a specific issue.
Workshops	This is a meeting at which small groups, perhaps aided by a facilitator, explore issues and develop ideas. For example, a topic workshop focuses on specific issues.
Participatory design techniques	These methods are visual and often use models and pictures to help stimulate peoples' imagination helping them put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area can be improved. People of all abilities and backgrounds often find it easy to engage.
Public meetings	These are traditional methods for informing the public. They can allow any number of interested people to attend and learn about a topic. Meetings can be an interactive method of engagement when questions are asked.
Media	Local press, TV and radio. Articles and stories about proposals. Raises the profile of the LDF.

8. MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

8.1 In order to arrive at a consultation plan for DPDs and SPDs it is beneficial to evaluate each method and therefore whether it is appropriate to use one or a combination of methods. Table 6 sets out some criteria to consider when designing a consultation plan. When evaluating using these criteria, the most appropriate techniques are those that are low in resource implication with maximum benefits.

Table 6: An evaluation of consultation techniques

Technique	Consultation Benefits				Resource Implication		
	Information giving	Allows interaction	Target all groups	Target hard to reach	Previous experience	Staff Time	Financial Cost
General Letters	x		x		x	Low	Low
Leaflet/ fact sheets	x		x			Low-med	Medium
Information for Public viewing	x		x	x	x	Low	Low
Website	x	x			x	Low	Low
Displays	x		x		x	Low	Low-med
Press Releases and Advertisements	x		x		x	Low	High
General Questionnaires	x	x	x		x	Medium	Medium
Targeted questionnaires	x	x	x			Medium	Medium
Guildford's Citizens' Panel	x	x	x		x	Medium	Low-Med
Interviews	x	x	x	x	x	Medium	Low
Meetings	x	x		x	x	Medium	Low
Focus groups	x	x	x	x	x	High	High
Workshops	x	x	x	x	x	High	High
Participatory design techniques	x	x	x			High	High
Public meetings	x	x	x			High	Med-High
Media	x		x	x		Low-med	Low

8.2 Accessibility to the planning system

- **Provision of documents for hard to reach groups** – The Council will ensure an accessible planning system by making all LDF documents available, on request, though the translation of documents (into different languages, large print, Braille or audiotape, where necessary).
- **Limited Internet access** – the Council acknowledges that not everyone has access to the Internet and the Council’s website for information. Paper versions of all documents will therefore be produced.
- **User-friendly documents** – consultation documents will be written in plain English in order to make them as accessible to as many people as possible. The Council’s Communications team will be involved in checking that documents are user-friendly.

Provision of documents for hard to reach groups – The Council will ensure an accessible planning system by making all LDF documents available, on request, though the translation of documents (into different languages, large print, Braille or audiotape, where necessary. To access this service please contact:

Planning Policy on 01483 444662.
email planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk or write to:

Planning Policy Team
Environmental Policy & Design Services
Millmead House
Guildford
Surrey
GU2 4BB

Table 7: The application of consultation techniques to DPDs and SPDs.

Required	Optional
General Letters	Leaflet/ fact sheets
Public viewing	Displays
Website	Guildford’s Citizens’ Panel
Press Releases and Advertisements	Interviews
General Questionnaires	Meetings
Targeted Questionnaires	Focus groups
	Workshops
	Participatory design techniques
	Public meetings
	Media

- 8.3 The first stage of LDD production is interactive, qualitative and open-ended to ensure issues and solutions are considered. As the stages progress engagement is less open-ended, and instead, the Council will consult with the community on proposed solutions and have regard to the views of the community. The techniques may include the following:
- Focus groups will enable discussion between groups with common specialist knowledge or interest in the document being produced.
 - Public workshops will be available to all groups to enable open discussions to gather views from a range of backgrounds
 - Meetings will be arranged with knowledgeable groups when specific issues are to be targeted.
- 8.4 The first formal stage of SPD production requires consultation on the draft SPD, however where the Council needs to gain a better understanding of how issues affect people it will undertake early consultation with the community, to help the Council in preparing the draft. The techniques to be used will be dependent on the type of SPD and Table 9 includes details of the early engagement. If specific groups have comments on the draft SPD at the Pre-submission consultation stage it may be necessary to arrange meetings with them to deal with their comments.

Reporting back

- 8.5 The Council considers it important for those who participate to receive appropriate feedback so that they know what is happening to their comments.
- 8.6 The Council will acknowledge any written comments in respect of the preparation of Local Development Documents. The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations set out the formal procedure for the Local Authority to follow upon receipt of any site allocation representations on the Submission DPD. The Council is bound to follow this procedure for formal publicity on these representations.
- 8.7 After each round of consultation the Council will present the results by summarising and collating similar responses, e.g. those supporting the document, those wanting changes to the document and suggested changes. This summary report will be made available for public viewing at the Council Offices, in libraries and on the website. The Council will also provide a written statement on how, and the extent to which, it has taken these views into account. This will also be made available for public viewing at the Council Offices, in libraries and on the website.

Table 8: How the Community may be Involved at Each Stage of DPD Production

Consultation Body	Stage of Production					
	Pre-submission consultation	Pre-submission public participation	Submission to SoS	Handling of General Representations	Examination	Adoption
Specific bodies	Meetings	Letters, Questionnaire, Public viewing, Local advertisement, Website, Displays	Letters, Questionnaire, Public viewing, Local advertisement, Website, Displays, Meetings, if required	Letters Public viewing Website Local advertisement	Public viewing, Website	Website, Letter to those who make representation, Local advertisement
Business Community	Meetings					
Councillors	Workshop					
Conservation Groups	Focus groups, Workshop					
Development Industry	Meetings,					
Professionals	Focus Groups					
Disabled Groups	Meetings, Workshop					
Elderly People	Workshop, Interviews					
Health groups	Workshop					
Housing Associations	Workshop					
Leisure groups	Workshop					
Residents Associations	Workshop, Focus groups					
LSP	Meeting, Workshop					
General Public	Workshop					
Minority Groups	Focus group/ Workshop					
Religious groups	Workshop					
Transport Groups	Meetings, Workshop					
Young people	Workshop, Interviews					

Table 9: How and When the Community will be Involved at Each Stage of SPD Production

Consultation Body	Early stage of engagement	Initial Sustainability Report consultation	Pre-submission consultation (includes Sustainability Report)	Adoption (includes Statement of Sustainability)
Specific bodies	Depending on the SPD - meetings, focus groups, workshops, or participatory design techniques to be used.	The SA will be sent to relevant Specific bodies, other interest groups and those who request a copy. An advertisement will be placed on Guildford's website and in local newspapers.	Public viewing	Public viewing
Business Community			Website	Website
Councillors			Letters	Letter to those who ask for notification
Conservation Groups			Local advertisement	
Development Industry Professionals			Questionnaire	
Disabled Groups			Meetings where necessary	
Elderly People				
Health groups				
Housing Associations				
Leisure groups				
Residents Associations				
LSP				
General Public				
Minority Groups				
Religious groups				
Transport groups				
Young people				

9. FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION DURING THE PREPARATION of the SCI

- 9.1 A letter was sent on 25 November 2004 to local residents, amenity groups, stakeholders to name but a few, informing them that the Council was starting to prepare the SCI, and where it fits in the LDF process. In order to develop the Council's database for consultation, the recipient was asked to post back a form highlighting areas of interest. Letters were also sent to Specific Consultation Bodies, in order to establish the post holder and correct address. We now have a database with nearly 1800 individuals and organisations that wish to be involved in the LDF process. The Council regularly updates and maintains the database.
- 9.2 On 8 April 2005 questionnaires were sent to almost 500 community groups and organisations seeking their views as to how their organisation should be consulted on future DPD and SPDs. Also how their group would like to be notified and consulted on planning applications.
- 9.3 120 responses have been received from across the Borough. Comments from people included: use less jargon, put more information on the website, there should be a referendum for controversial matters, the views of the Parish Council are paramount, encourage the views of young people, email mailshots and updates and use the views of amenity groups.

- 9.4 The responses received have been used to inform the preparation of this Statement of Community Involvement.
- 9.5 The Submission draft SCI was submitted to the Secretary of State (represented by the Government Office for the South East and Planning Inspectorate) on 31 May 2006. A six week consultation period followed where groups and individuals could evaluate if they considered that the Submitted document met the Tests of Soundness (included at Appendix 3.) The SCI was subsequently Examined via the written representations procedure.

10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Statement of Community Involvement must also set out the Council's policy for involving the community in planning application decisions.
- 10.2 This section sets out how the community and stakeholders can be involved in planning applications at the pre-application, application and post-application stages. Remember that there is a glossary at the back of this document.

Planning Register

- 10.3 We register all planning applications we receive and also all the decisions that are made. You can look at the list at our Planning Helpdesk during office hours or on our website at www.guildford.gov.uk
- 10.4 You will be able to look at copies of applications three working days after we have received a valid application and to look at copies of decisions two working days after the decision date at our Planning Helpdesk.
- 10.5 You can get a copy of the planning register from local libraries and parish councils.
- 10.6 You can also look at the planning applications we have accepted since 1 September 2004 at www.guildford.gov.uk/guildfordweb/environment/planning

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the title 'Guildford Borough Council'. The page content includes a navigation bar with 'Guildford Planning Application Search' and a 'FAQ' link. Below the navigation bar, it says 'Welcome to the Guildford Online Planning Application Search - Updated Daily'. A prompt reads 'Please use one of the search methods below'. There are two search options: '1 Case Number Search' with a text input field, a dropdown menu for 'P', and a 'Submit' button; and '2 Case Officer Search' with a dropdown menu containing 'Carol Humphrey', another dropdown menu containing '2005', and a 'Submit' button.

- 10.7 You may find it helpful to look at other Council publications in hard copy form where they are provided in Planning Helpdesk at the Council Offices or on the Council's website.

Pre – Application Discussions

- 10.8 We are committed to providing a swift and effective planning service and endeavour to determine planning applications in line with government targets (8 weeks for the majority of applications and 13 weeks for major applications). The majority of applications are dealt with in this time frame, however, delays can occur when applications: are submitted with inadequate documentation; fail to reflect planning policies or detailed advice on design and layout; or when legal agreements are required.
- 10.9 We therefore welcome and encourage all applicants to seek advice before submitting a planning application either in writing or meeting with the duty Planning Officer. The Council wishes to work with applicants to secure compliance with relevant policy and pre-application discussions are the best way of achieving this.
- 10.10 The Council expects that for larger developments applicants undertake early consultation with the community (including members of the public, statutory bodies, special interest groups, Parish Councils and local amenity groups) to inform the design process for their development proposal. In addition it may well be appropriate to engage in one, or a series, of public exhibitions. This provides the local community with an opportunity to participate in the evolution of proposals. The benefits are that early input from the community may reduce delays when the application is submitted, as the applicant will already have the opportunity to incorporate the suggestions of the community, or explain why this is not possible. Table 10 on the following page sets out how the Council recommends applicants should consult during the pre-application stage.

Table 10: Proposals for consultation on the pre-application stage

	IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT THE APPLICANT UNDERTAKE THE FOLLOWING MEASURES PRIOR TO SUBMITTING A PLANNING APPLICATION: -			
DEVELOPMENT TYPE	Letter* to and/or discussion with neighbours about plans*	Surgery or drop in event to discuss proposals with interested neighbours and community/amenity groups	Exhibition and/or public meeting with neighbours, community/amenity groups and appropriate consultation bodies	Enquiry by design exercise/ Planning for real exercise. Should include media advertisement to publicise the event and development.
Householder and Other ¹	Yes	-	-	-
Minor development ²	Yes	Yes	-	-
Major developments ³	Yes	Yes	Yes	-
Large Scale Major Development ⁴	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 10 continued:

Definitions:	
1.	Householder and other small developments fall within PS2 Code 11-18 (11, Minerals is a County Matter) e.g. Change of use, Householder developments, advertisements, Listed Buildings consents to alter/ extend, Listed buildings consent to demolish, Conservation area consents etc. For more information refer to the Governments Planning Statistics Returns – PS2
2.	Minor developments fall within PS2 codes 6-10 e.g. Dwellings of 1-9 units or 0.49ha and under. Office/Research & Developments, Heavy industry/storage/warehousing, Retail, distribution and servicing, All other minor development of 999Sqm and under or 0.99ha and under.
3.	Major developments falling within PS2 codes 1-5 e.g. Dwellings of 10+ or >0.5ha area. Offices/research & development/ light industry, heavy industry/storage/warehousing, Retail, distribution and servicing, All other major development of 1000sqm + or >1ha area.
4.	Large Scale Major developments Over 300 dwellings or over 7.5ha and/or other types of development as in 3 above over 5,000sqm or over 5ha.
Notes: The local authority will notify immediate neighbours upon the receipt of any formally submitted planning application. Depending on the scale/impact of the proposal a wider consultation may be undertaken on the discretion of the case officer.	

- 10.11 The Council strongly advise that prospective applicants consider the benefits of carrying out pre-application consultations, which must be done at their own expense, and to consider holding any such consultations at times of day to suit all those who might be interested. This will normally include afternoons, evenings and weekends. The Council cannot refuse to accept valid applications because they disagree with the way in which an applicant has consulted the community. However, failure by the applicant to consult could lead to objections being made which could be material to the determination of the application and also lead to delays.
- 10.12 The Council seeks to place an emphasis on the role of the applicant during the pre-application stage. This is to ensure that impartiality of the Council is maintained. Applicants will need to provide the Council with reasonable access to all information relating to community involvement undertaken to ensure that procedures followed are in accordance with this SCI. Preferably a full statement of community involvement will be submitted with all applications where such activities have taken place.
- 10.13 The results of any pre-application consultation with the community should be reported as part of the submitted application and should indicate:
- The methods of consultation used to engage community participation;
 - Who was consulted and the level of involvement; and
 - How matters raised in consultation were addressed by the development proposals.
- 10.14 Where Councillors are interested in pre-application processes they will not be permitted to give an opinion at community involvement activities, as this would prejudice them from taking part in the decision making process. However, Councillors are free to attend discussions, seek clarification and question applicants about a proposal.

The Application Stage

10.15 Government guidance currently only advises on the means by which local planning authorities should publicise planning applications once they have been submitted. Table 11 below indicates the statutory requirements that exist for different types of application:

Table 11: The Statutory Requirements for Different Types of Applications

Application	Statutory Requirements
Planning permission	Article 8 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended)
Listed Building and Conservation Area consent	Regulation 5 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990
Development affecting the setting of a listed building or conservation area	Section 67 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Development affecting the character or appearance of a conservation area	Section 73 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
Applications with an Environmental Impact Assessment	Town and Country Planning Environmental Impact Regulations 1999

10.16 These statutory requirements use three basic methods of publicity:

- Advertisements in local newspaper (and on website where possible);
- Site notices; and
- Neighbour notification by letter.

10.17 It is the Council's practice to notify neighbours by letter giving them 21 days to comment on the application, the Council writes to any relevant groups and organisations such as Parish Councils. Bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation. Site notices and advertisements are used where they are required by legislation (see above).

10.18 For development proposals that are large-scale major developments (as defined at the bottom of Table 10), the Council may choose to prepare a development brief and/or hold a public exhibition or public meeting. This provides an opportunity for the public to discuss the proposal with Council Officers and gives the Council an appreciation of the public's concerns. Bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.

10.19 In addition to the above the Council publishes a weekly list of planning applications received and decisions made which is available from the Council's Planning Helpdesk in Millmead and on the Council's website www.guildford.gov.uk

- 10.20 Planning applications can be made online through the Planning Portal. All current planning applications, including plans can be viewed on the Council's website. It is also possible to submit comments on applications by e-mail through the website. Any representation that an individual, group or organisation wish to make on an application must be in made in writing; the representation can be via fax, email or letter.
- 10.21 The Council may have to consult various statutory bodies such as Surrey County Council, the Environment Agency or the Health and Safety Executive. The bodies consulted depends on the type and location of this development proposed. Consultations with Surrey County Council will be undertaken in accordance with paragraph 16, Schedule 6 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Attention will be given to planning guidance such as that produced by Surrey County Council and the Surrey Local Government Association, 'Infrastructure –A Good Practice Guide.' The results of any such consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, the Council.
- 10.22 The Council's general practice with respect to revisions to planning applications of a significant nature would be to re-consult. If the height of a development increased or the floorspace were greater the Council would reconsult. However, if it is a significant amendment a new application may be required. If a minor amendment is made to a planning application, for example the design is altered during the course of the application, the Council would reconsult. If it were a minor alteration to the scheme such as a small reduction in size or removal of a window the Council would not reconsult. A new planning application is required for all proposals where the floor area increases, or there is any increase in height.
- 10.23 The Head of Planning Development decides over 90% of applications. The Planning Committee will make a decision on applications:
- Where we have received 10 or more letters or e-mails contrary to the officers recommendation for the site;
 - That will have a considerable effect on the Borough (for example, a large housing or retail development, type 3 and type 4 applications);
 - That we have made (for example, developing a building we own);
 - That a Councillor or Council employee has made;
 - That the Director or Head of Planning Development ask the Committee to decide;
 - and that a Councillor asks the Committee to determine for planning reasons.
- 10.24 Agendas for Planning Committee are published five working days before a meeting, and can be viewed at main reception or on the Council's website on the Committee pages. The Planning Committees are normally held on a Tuesday evening starting at 7.00 p.m. Free copies of the Agenda are available at each committee meeting. Members of the public can speak at Planning Committee meetings, more information on this is available in our leaflet, "Guide to Planning Committee meetings".
- 10.25 Applicants sometimes undertake interactive consultation events as part of their application; however, it is advisable to do this as part of the pre-application stage.

The Post Application Stage

- 10.26 The consultation process at the post-application stage is informative. The Council currently distributes lists of planning decisions on a weekly basis. We also notify all those who commented on the proposal and you can see the decisions on the website.
- 10.27 If a planning application is refused, the applicant is unhappy with a planning condition or if the Council does not determine it within the statutory time period, the applicant has the right to appeal against the decision or non-determination. Only the applicant can appeal. The Planning Inspectorate in Bristol deals with appeals. The appeals received from the Planning Inspectorate are placed on weekly list on the Councils website. Everyone who was consulted and who gave their views on the original planning application will be advised that an appeal has been received and told how they can make their views on the appeal known directly to the Planning Inspectorate.

Summary and Evaluation of Consultation on Planning Applications

Table 12: Evaluation of possible consultation techniques for planning applications

	Technique	Consultation Benefits					Resource Implication	
		Information giving	Allows interaction	Target all groups	Target hard to reach	Degree of 'public ownership' of proposals	Staff Time	Financial Cost
Pre-application	Letters (applicant)	x					Low	Low
	Discussions with neighbours (applicant)	x	x	x	x	Low	Low-Med	Low-Med
	Surgery or drop-in event (applicant)	x	x			Low	Low	Low
	Exhibition (applicant)	x		x			Med	Med-High
	Public meeting (applicant)	x	x	x		Med	Med-High	Med
	Enquire by design (applicant)		x	x	x	High	High	High
	Planning for Real (applicant)		x	x	x	High	High	High
	Development Brief (Council)	x		x		Med	High	Med-High
Application	As at present to meet the statutory requirements (Council)							
	Public meeting for large scale major development (Council)	x	x	x		Med	Med	Med-High
	Exhibition for large scale major development (Council)	x		x			Med	Med-High
Post-application	Notification on the website	x					Low	Low

Resources for Community Involvement in Planning Applications

- 10.28 The main staff resource for community involvement in planning applications is the Council's Planning Development Services. Resources are available to deliver the statutory planning requirements for processing applications.
- 10.29 At the pre-application stage the onus is on the applicant to undertake effective consultation. The applicant will need to provide the resources to deliver this.
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11. MONITORING AND REVIEWING THE SCI

- 11.1 Once adopted the Statement of Community Involvement will be kept under review as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.
- 11.2 The Annual Monitoring Report must assess the progress of the Local Development Framework against the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme. It must also assess the effectiveness of Local Development Documents such as the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 11.3 The Council must comply with the Statement of Community Involvement when preparing subsequent Local Development Documents. When it submits a Development Plan Document it will have to produce a 'statement of compliance' showing how this has been done. The Annual Monitoring Report will be used to check whether the appropriate community involvement has taken place for the stage of preparation reached for each Local Development Document and identify any difficulties experienced.
- 11.4 If an individual or group does not think that the SCI has been followed, please write to the Planning Policy Manager outlining concerns, for complaints regarding planning applications please write to the Head of Planning Development Services who will investigate any complaints.
- 11.5 It may also be possible to make some assessment of how successful the methods used have been by getting participants to evaluate their effectiveness at appropriate points in the process. Where methods used clearly have not worked, it may be necessary to consider refining them to better fit their purpose, or replacing them altogether.
- 11.6 It will be necessary to review the Statement of Community Involvement if the Council proposes to introduce different methods of engaging with the community, or when significant changes have occurred in the type of groups the Council wishes to involve. Changes in the level of resources available to the Council may also trigger the need to review the Statement of Community Involvement, either by expanding the community involvement programme or by paring it back.
- 11.7 The need to review the Statement of Community Involvement will be identified in the Annual Monitoring Report and will then be earmarked in the subsequent review of the Local Development Scheme, which will set out the timetable for review.

12. RESOURCES

- 12.1 The Government recommends assessing resources for managing community involvement. The members of the Council's Planning Policy team working on the SCI are the Planning Policy Manager and a Senior Policy Officer. Other members of the Council's Planning Policy Section may be able to assist with stages of public engagement.
 - 12.2 Consultants will be used where there is a lack of expertise or capacity in-house for specific projects.
 - 12.3 An LDF Working Group consisting of Council Members will review evidence and results of consultation for LDDs and make recommendations to the Council's Executive. Reports may also be examined by the Council's Environment and Scrutiny Committee.
 - 12.4 In accordance with the regulations, marketing of LDDs is necessary. The Council's Communications Service will be involved in the production and design of documents.
 - 12.5 The 2005/06 Budget made provision for resources to cover the first year's programme. Future years Planning Policy and Planning Development Services budgets will have financial resources in place for compliance with the SCI.
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13. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 13.1 In preparing the SCI, it is considered that the main areas of risk relate to:
- 13.2 Staff turnover - This has been reduced as far as reasonably practical by the fact that the Council's stated aim is to pay well, that is at or above the market median, reflecting the Council's need to recruit, retain and motivate staff.
- 13.3 Major community or stakeholder opposition to a preferred option – The risk of this occurring will be minimised by effective community engagement with key community/stakeholders in the early stages of the process.
- 13.4 Delays due to volume of representations - In the event that the Council receives a voluminous response to consultations, to the extent that the timetable for preparing the LDD would be delayed, the Council has resources in place to enable it to employ temporary staff to assist in dealing with the representations, if required.
- 13.5 Legal Challenge - The Council will minimise this by ensuring the SCI is "sound" and founded on a robust evidence base and well-audited stakeholder & community engagement systems.
- 13.6 The Community Plan is reviewed regularly. The impact on the preparation of LDDs will be minimised through close liaison and involvement in the preparation of the new Community Strategy (Plan) so the implications are clear at an early stage.

14. FURTHER INFORMATION AND HELP

- 14.1 Please contact the Planning Policy team at the address in Appendix 5 or ring 01483 444662.
- 14.2 Further information about the Guildford Local Development Framework can be found on the Councils website www.guildford.gov.uk then click on planning>planning policy>LDF.



List of Specific Consultation Bodies

The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 specify that the following bodies must be consulted if the Council considers that body will be affected by what is proposed to be covered in a development plan document (DPD). (Please note, this list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations occur.)

- Government Office for the South East (GOSE)
- Regional Planning Body – South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)
- Regional Development Agency – South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)
- Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- County Council (Surrey County Council)
- Adjoining Authorities (Waverley BC, Surrey Heath, Elmbridge DC, Woking DC, Mole Valley DC, Rushmoor BC, Hampshire CC)
- Town and Parish Councils - including those adjoining the Borough
- Environment Agency (EA)
- Countryside Agency (part of Natural England)
- Natural England
- Highways Agency
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage)
- Strategic Rail Authority
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- Strategic Health Authority
- Relevant gas and electricity companies
- Relevant sewerage and water undertakers
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Local Airport operators

Government Departments

- Department of Education and Skills (through Government Offices)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Transport (through Government Offices)
- Department of Health (through relevant Regional Public Health Group)
- Department of Trade and Industry (through Government Offices)
- Ministry of Defence
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport

General Consultation Bodies

2.1 General Consultation bodies as defined in the 2004 Regulations:

1. Voluntary bodies some or all whose activities benefit any part of Guildford Borough Council's area.
2. Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the Council's area.
3. Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the Council's area.
4. Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the Council's area.
5. Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying out business in the Council's area.

2.2 Using the above information the Council has created a database that is constantly updated. The database is made up of interested groups and individuals divided into the following categories:

- Business Community
- Councillors
- Countryside and Conservation Groups
- Development Industry Professionals
- Disabled groups
- Elderly people
- Health Groups
- Housing Associations
- Leisure
- Residents Associations
- Local Strategic Partnership
- Members of the General Public
- Minority Groups
- Members of Parliament
- Religious Groups
- Adjoining Authorities
- Transport Groups
- Young People

Tests of Soundness

Upon submission for independent examination, the SCI was tested for soundness using the following criteria:

- SCI must show that the LPA is meeting legal requirements
- Must set out LPA's Strategy for community involvement and its links with other community involvement initiatives;
- Must identify in general terms which local community groups and other bodies need to be consulted;
- Show how local people, community groups and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
- Show that the methods to be used to involve people, community groups and other bodies are suitable for the different stages in the preparation of the LPA's local development documents and for particular communities;
- Shows that the LPA can resource and manage the process effectively;
- Shows how the results of the community involvement are to be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
- Sets out the mechanisms for reviewing the procedures in the SCI.
- Describes the policy for consulting on planning applications.

Glossary

Area Action Plans (AAP): A planning framework for areas of change or conservation.

Core Strategy: Local Planning Authorities long term spatial vision for area and the primary strategic policies and proposals to deliver that vision.

Development Plan Document (DPD): Spatial planning documents prepared by the relevant plan-making authority. Subject to independent examination.

Enquiry by Design: consultation technique, action planning workshop process involving urban designers and local stakeholders. Devised for developing plans for new urban villages.

Local Development Documents (LDD): Comprises of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and Statement of Community Involvement i.e. both statutory & non-statutory documents.

Local Development Framework (LDF): A portfolio of Local Development Documents that provides the framework for delivering the spatial strategy of the area.

Local Development Scheme (LDS): Three-year project plan for the production of Local Development Documents.

Planning for Real: a consultation tool, using simple models as a focus for people to put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area can be improved.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS): New title for Planning Policy Guidance, issued by Central Government.

Proposals Map: Illustrates policies and proposals in the development plan documents.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS): A statutory document that replaces Regional Planning Guidance. It is a broad development strategy for the region. It is part of the development plan and new local development documents must be in accordance with it.

Site specific allocations: Allocation of sites for specific or mixed-use development.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): Sets out standards for involving the community in the preparation, alteration and review of local development documents & significant development control decisions.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD): To replace Supplementary Planning Guidance. Non-statutory documents that expand upon policies and proposals in development plan documents.

CONTACTS

For further information regarding this document please contact the Planning Policy Team:
Tel: **01483 444662** or e-Mail: **planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk**

Alternatively write to:

**Planning Policy
Environmental Policy and Design Services
Guildford Borough Council
Millmead
Guildford
Surrey
GU2 4BB**

For enquiries relating to planning applications get in touch with Planning Development Services:

Tim Dawes Principal Planning Officer, East Team
Tel: **01483 444 650**
e-Mail: **tim.dawes@guildford.gov.uk**

Joanna Bell Principal Planning Officer, West Team
Tel: **01483 444 630**
e-Mail: **joanna.bell@guildford.gov.uk**

David Barton Principal Planning Officer, Major Projects Team
Tel: **01483 444 630**
e-Mail: **dave.barton@guildford.gov.uk**

Or alternatively e-Mail: **planning enquires@guildford.gov.uk**

Surrey County Council: **www.surreycc.gov.uk** or telephone: **08456 009 009**

The Planning Inspectorate (PINS): **www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk**

Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG): **www.dclg.gov.uk**

Join Our Contacts List

Many individuals and organisations are already on our contacts list to receive regular information about the Guildford Development Framework by email, or post. If you would like to be added to the list to be contacted by email or letter please provide your name, organisation, specific areas of the Guildford Development Framework that would be of interest, email and postal address details. If you would prefer to be contacted by post please ensure that you include a postal address. Please write or call the Planning Policy Team:

Planning Policy Team

Guildford Borough Council

Millmead House

Millmead

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Tel: 01483 444662

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Email: planningpolicy@guildford.gov.uk

