

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT REPORT OF EXAMINATION INSPECTOR AND ADOPTION

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As part of the new Local Development Framework (which will eventually replace the Local Plan) the Council is required to produce a document called a Statement of Community Involvement. This document sets out how the Council will involve people and organisations in preparing its LDF, and when dealing with planning applications.
- 1.2 The Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared in three stages:
- Pre-Production, including evidence gathering and informal consultation.
 - Production, including a 6-week consultation on a draft document.
 - Submission, of a revised document to the Secretary of State and a further 6-week period for representations.
- 1.3 The Pre-Production stage began in the early spring and included two focus groups which examined issues of community involvement in the planning process. These were well attended by representatives of 30 organisations including town & parish councils, local businesses, agents, amenity societies, statutory consultees, councillors and officers. The feedback and ideas from the groups were excellent and informed the drafting of the SCI, and also provided the concept for the drafting of an "Easy-Read" summary document.
- 1.4 Once an early draft document was produced, it was circulated to a number of statutory consultees including town and parish councils, adjoining councils, the regional assembly and the National Park Authority. Some limited comments were received at this stage.
- 1.5 Some revisions were made to the documents, and they were then published for a period of public consultation from 30th June to 12th August 2005. A total of 40 representations were received at this stage. The document was then revised and submitted to the Secretary of State in October 2005, with a further representation period until December. A total of 30 representations were received at submission stage, 18 objections and 12 in support.

2. PURPOSE OF TAKING REPORT TO CABINET

- 2.1 The Secretary of State appointed an Inspector to examine the soundness of the SCI, and his report has been received. Under the new planning system, this report is binding on the Council.
- 2.2 This report summarises the issues raised by the examination and report, and seeks Cabinet approval to adopt the Statement of Community Involvement.

3. THE SCI EXAMINATION AND INSPECTOR'S REPORT

- 3.1 The Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State is required to examine the soundness of the SCI, as opposed to addressing objections to the document. The SCI is required to meet 9 tests of soundness:
- i. local planning authority has complied with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in Regulations;¹
 - ii. local planning authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the community strategy;
 - iii. statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;
 - iv. statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
 - v. methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents;
 - vi. resources are available to manage community involvement effectively;
 - vii. statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
 - viii. authority has mechanisms for reviewing the statement of community involvement; and
 - ix. statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.
- 3.2 In overall terms, the Inspector has concluded that this Council's Statement of Community Involvement is sound.
- 3.3 The Inspector considered that the SCI fully met tests i); ii); iv) & vi.
- 3.4 In test iii), the Council suggested some additions to the list of groups in Annex C which would be consulted. This change was endorsed by the Inspector.
- 3.5 The Council proposed a section on Equalities in the SCI, which set out arrangements for copying documents in large print, Braille and languages other than English. Again, the Inspector endorsed this change.
- 3.6 The Inspector asked for further clarity as to how comments received on the LDF would be made available and fed into the process of production. The Council suggested further text and this was endorsed by the Inspector to meet test vi).
- 3.7 The Inspector has recommended that the review of the SCI be part of the Annual Monitoring Report. This approach appears acceptable.
- 3.8 Finally, the Inspector sought clarification on how major planning applications are advertised. In practice however, this Council operates similar consultation procedures for all types of applications. Additional text has been added to the SCI to explain this.

- 3.9 Under the new planning system, the Council cannot accept or reject individual recommendations by the Inspector. It may not to adopt the SCI, or it may adopt it including all recommendations from the Inspector. In the case of the SCI, almost all of the Inspector's recommendations merely endorse wording proposed by this Council prior to examination. The report is uncontentious and officers agree with its conclusions.
- 3.10 Members are therefore invited to adopt the SCI including all of the Inspector's recommendations.

4. DOCUMENTS FOR SUBMISSION

- 4.1 The Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations required that certain procedures are followed to adopt the SCI, including making the Inspector's report available at the same time. These include making the documents available on the Council's website, at the main offices, and publishing a notice in the local press.
- 4.2 The following documents will be made available at adoption:
- The Statement of Community Involvement
 - The Easy Read Summary SCI, in leaflet form.
 - The Inspector's report.
 - An adoption statement as required by the regulations.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Production of the Statement of Community Involvement is provided for within existing budgets, including the costs of examination.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The aim of the SCI is to encourage greater community interest and involvement in the future planning of the District.

7. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None are relevant to this report.

8. PORTFOLIO HOLDER COMMENTS

- 8.1 I am happy that the Inspector has concluded that this Council's Statement of Community Involvement is sound, subject to some minor amendments he has proposed. I believe that the document should now be adopted.

9. RECOMMENDATION

9.1 It is recommended that:

- 1) The Inspector's report is accepted.
- 2) The Statement of Community Involvement, as amended by the Inspector, is adopted.

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Background Papers:

SCI Inspector's Report April 2006

Annexes

Annex 1 - Inspector's report on the SCI (Excluding Appendices)

Annex 2 - Adopted Statement of Community Involvement.

Annex 3 - Adopted Easy Read summary SCI.

**New Forest District Council Statement of Community Involvement
(October 2005)**

INSPECTOR'S REPORT

Introduction

- 1.1 An independent examination of the New Forest District Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been carried out in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Following paragraph 3.10 of Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, the examination has been based on the 9 tests set out (see Appendix A). The starting point for the assessment is that the SCI is sound. Accordingly changes are made in this binding report only where there is clear need in the light of tests in PPS12.
- 1.2 A total of 30 representations were received all of which have been considered. The Council proposed a number of amendments to the SCI in response to representations received, and these have been taken into account in the preparation of this report. Further information was requested from the Council in relation to Tests vii and ix and this information is contained in Appendix B to this Report.

Test 1

- 2.1 The Council has undertaken the consultation required under Regulations 25, 26 and 28 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
- 2.2 This test is met.

Test 2

- 3.1 Section 4 acknowledges that the LDF is a way of delivering the aims of the Community Strategy. This is called 'Changing Lives' and states that the Council will work with the Local Strategic Partnership to make sure that the content of the two documents complement each other and that duplication of the consultation exercises is avoided. The SCI also makes reference to other community strategies in Paragraphs 4.7 – 4.18, such as the Consultation Strategy, Town and Village Plans and Market Town Healthchecks. The document states that consideration will be given to how these will be linked in terms of objectives and consultation.
- 3.2 This test is met.

Test 3

- 4.1 The Council has set out, in Annexe B and Annex C of the SCI, those groups which will be consulted. Annex B includes the statutory bodies from PPS12 Annex E. It is stated through an amendment of Paragraph C4 (which is given in Appendix C of this report) of the SCI that the Council holds a database of consultee details, and that this will be updated when necessary. Furthermore, the Council state in Paragraph C1 that they will consult with additional local stakeholders where appropriate.
- 4.2 However, Annex C fails to mention certain generic groups defined in PPS12. In response to representations received, the Council have provided a new version of Annex C and I recommend that it replaces the submission version of Annex C.

(R1) Replace Annex C with the following version:

- "Residents associations
 - Amenity and conservation societies.
 - Sports & recreation organisations.
 - Schools & colleges.
 - Disability organisations and groups.
 - Older persons groups
 - Ethnic minority groups
 - Gypsies and travelling show people, including the Traveller Education Service.
 - Churches and other religious organisations
 - Housing associations and registered social landlords.
 - Tourism organisations.
 - Youth groups and organisations.
 - Businesses and chambers of trade/commerce.
 - Developers and planning agents/architects.
 - New Forest Verderers, Commoners and other representative organisations
 - Port operators and harbour authorities at Southampton and Lymington
 - Coastal interests including commercial, leisure and amenity organisations
 - Major estates
 - The Ministry of Defence
 - Southampton and Bournemouth Airports
 - Other Government organisations not already listed in Annex B"
- 4.3 A number of objectors request inclusion as consultees through inclusion in the lists contained at Annex B and Annex C. I am content that by cross referencing the electronic database described at Paragraph C4 to the specific lists in Annex C, then these concerns are overcome.

(R2) Insert the following to paragraph C4:

“These database entries include those which represent the categories of consultee identified at Annex C.”

(R3) Given the impending abolition of the Strategic Rail Authority, references to the Strategic Rail Authority as a consultee should be removed from Annex B of the SCI. As a consequence of this abolition consultations should be carried out with Network Rail in place of the Strategic Rail Authority.

4.4 Subject to the recommendations above this test is met.

Test 4

5.1 Paragraphs 7.1 – 7.18 explains that the Council will involve and inform people from the early stages of Local development Documents (LDDs) preparation and these paragraphs describe the range of methods the Council will employ to do this. Paragraph 7.13 explains that informal consultation will take place with the key stakeholders such as Parish Councils and local developers, at the issues and options stage of DPD production in accordance with Regulation 25. I am satisfied that the consultation proposed will be undertaken in a timely and accessible manner.

5.2 This test is met.

Test 5

6.1 Paragraphs 7.1 – 7.18 also set out the methods that the Council proposes to use to involve the community and stakeholders, the stages at which consultation will take place and who will be consulted at these stages. These cover a range of recognised consultation techniques that will present information via a range of different media. The Council indicates at what stages of LDD preparation the various methods might be employed. This makes reference to consultation with the “specific and general consultation bodies” as required by Regulation 25. Annex F also provides a summary of these consultation methods.

6.2 The SCI acknowledges that the Council may have to provide extra support to facilitate consultation with certain groups or individuals, and proposes at Paragraph 7.3 how they might do this. As a result of representations received the Council propose additional text to explain how they will make their information accessible to all members of society, and sets out how they will meet requirements

of the Race Relations Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, I recommend that this text be inserted into the SCI.

(R4) Insert the following text as a new Paragraph 10.6:

"Equalities

10.6 The Council offers a service to provide documents in the following formats:

- Braille
- Large print
- Tape
- CD
- A language other than English

Those requesting this service can contact the Equalities Unit on 023-8028-5491, or equalities@nfdc.gov.uk"

(R5) Display prominently on the inside front cover the following statement:

"This document is available in large copy prints, audio cassette, CD, Braille or languages other than English. If you require the document in one of these formats please contact the Equalities Unit on 023-8028-5491, or equalities@nfdc.gov.uk"

- 6.3 Otherwise I am satisfied that the methods of consultation proposed in the SCI are suitable for the intended audiences and for the different stages in LDD preparation.
- 6.4 Subject to the recommendations above this test is met.

Test 6

- 7.1 Section 10 of the SCI explains how the Council will seek to ensure that sufficient resources are put in place to achieve the scale of consultation envisaged.
- 7.2 This test is met.

Test 7

- 8.1 The submitted SCI was insufficiently clear with regard to how the results of community involvement will be taken into account by the Council and used to inform decisions. The Council were asked to provide additional text to conclude Sections 7 and 8 in order to provide clarity on this issue. The text received is given below and I

recommend that the following paragraphs be inserted into the report.

(R6) Insert the following as new Paragraphs 7.19 and 8.9:

“Community involvement goes beyond simply making people aware of Council plans and proposals, and consulting on these. It also means allowing people the chance to influence policy development and decision making, and to provide information to support this process.”

(R7) Insert the following as new Paragraphs 7.20 and 8.10:

“The Council will carefully consider all comments received on Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. A summary schedule of all comments received at Production and Submission stages of the document will be published on the Council's website, and made available at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, and any other of the Council's office as is appropriate. The outcome of all consultation stages will be reported to the Council's members, and will identify how the comments received have been regarded, including any changes proposed as a result.”

(R8) Insert the following as new Paragraphs 7.21 and 8.11:

“A schedule of comments and any changes to documents proposed as a result, will be displayed on the Council's website, and at any of the Council's offices as are appropriate.”

8.2 Subject to the above recommendations this test is met.

Test 8

9.1 Section 9 of the SCI explains the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and its role in evaluating the methods of involvement and consultation exercises for all consultation documents. Paragraph 3.10 is concerned with the review of the SCI itself.

9.2 It would be helpful if the link between the SCI and the AMR was more specific and I recommend accordingly.

(R9) Move Paragraph 3.10 to become a new Paragraph 9.3 (subsequent paragraphs should be re-numbered accordingly) and amend the first two sentences to read:

“The SCI will need to be reviewed. This will not necessarily be based on set time periods, as it can triggered by an assessment of the following:”

Also add after the sixth bullet point of this new Paragraph 9.3:

"The success and effectiveness of the SCI will also be considered through the Annual Monitoring Report."

9.3 Subject to the recommendations above this test is met.

Test 9

10.1 The SCI at Section 11 and Annex D clearly describe the Council's policy for consultation on planning applications. Paragraphs D4 – D10 meet the minimum requirements for consultation and provides details of additional methods.

10.2 The Council were asked to clarify their publicity strategy for planning applications and in response they have provided an amended Paragraph 11.5, I recommend that this be inserted into the report:

(R10) Amend Paragraph 11.5 as given below:

*"11.5 The Council's publicity strategy applies to all types of planning applications from small householder developments to major development proposals. Details of the way the Council will operate these policies is set out in Annex D to this Statement. In very exceptional circumstances, ~~For major applications of more than local interest,~~ the Council may consider additional publicity such as the publication of publicity leaflets *as was undertaken to publicise the Dibden Bay container port applications in 2000.* The Council will also notify adjoining authorities where ~~these~~ applications are close to the boundary with an adjoining District."*

10.3 Neither Section 11 nor Annex D of the SCI contain reference to the issue of planning applications and SSSI's. In the case of SSSI's the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000) provides for English Nature to have 28 days to respond to applications for development potentially affecting a SSSI.

(R11) Add to Paragraph D9:

"Notify consultees by letter giving them 21 days, or for English Nature 28 days in the case of a planning application potentially affecting a SSSI or in a SSSI consultation area¹, in which to comment."

Also add the following as a footnote to Paragraph D9

¹ "in accordance with Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000."

10.4 Subject to the recommendations above this test is met.

Conclusions

11.1 The Council have set out in their 'Representations and Responses at Regulation 28 stage' a number of proposed changes to the SCI in response to representations received on the submission document. These suggested amendments do not affect the substance of the SCI but they do improve the clarity and transparency of the submission SCI. I therefore recommend that they be included and I set out the recommendations below.

(R12) Add a new Paragraph 4.19 to read:

"Other arrangements

4.19 In certain cases, the Council has also committed to formal or informal arrangements for consulting certain groups and organisations. Examples are the Compact with the voluntary sector and the AONB Protocol with the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB. To include all of these arrangements would overcomplicate this SCI document, however the Council will have regard to these arrangements when producing its LDF. These documents are available for inspection at The Council's Offices, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst."

(R13) Amend the first phrase of Policy SCI-9 to read:

"In preparing Supplementary Planning Documents, including those which are reviews of old style Supplementary Planning Guidance, the Council will involve the community using some or all of the following methods:..."

(R14) Amend the first phrase of Policy SCI-10 to read:

"The Council will consult on draft Supplementary Planning Documents, including those which are reviews of old style Supplementary Planning Guidance, using some or all of the following methods:..."

(R15) Add the following additional text to the end of Paragraph 2.3:

"This will influence the Local Development Framework in this District, for example by setting strategic targets for housing and employment development. Development Plan Documents produced as part of the LDF must be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy."

(R16) Add a final bullet point to Policy SCI-5 Core Strategy:

- "Parish or community seminars."

11.2 The Council have proposed a number of editorial changes to the submission document in order to remove text that will become irrelevant once the document is adopted. These changes are provided in Appendix C to this report and I recommend that they be inserted into the SCI.

(R17) Implement the editorial changes detailed in Examination Response Paper 5, which is given as Appendix C of this report.

11.3 The SCI reflects the necessity for a close working relationship with the emerging New Forest National Park Authority. Paragraphs 3.6 – 3.8 confirm that the principles of the New Forest District Council's SCI are acceptable to the New Forest National Park Authority.

11.4 The New Forest National Park Authority was asked to provide a written statement to express it's views on the New Forest District Council's SCI and does so in a letter of 4th April 2006 which confirms that until the New Forest National Park Authority produces it's own Statement of Community Involvement the New Forest District Council's SCI will be applicable within the National Park area. A copy of this letter is provided as Appendix D to this report.

11.5 Subject to the implementation of the recommendations given above the New Forest District Council SCI (October 2005) is sound.



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New Forest District
Local Development Framework

MAKING AN IMPACT

Statement of Community
Involvement
Adopted July 2006



New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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1. Statement of Community Involvement - Consultation process.

- 1.1 The Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires local planning authorities to produce a Statement of Community Involvement. This document sets out how the authority will consult and involve the local community and other groups and organisations in the preparation of the Local Development Framework for the District.
- 1.2 This Statement of Community Involvement was itself subject to consultation. This process helped to gather ideas for involving the public in the planning process, and to identify problems associated with consultation in the past, so that lessons could be learned.
- 1.3 The process had three stages, a pre-production stage including evidence gathering to inform preparation of a draft SCI document, a production stage including a 6-week consultation on a draft document, and a further 6-week consultation stage following submission of the SCI to the First Secretary of State.
- 1.4 In the first stage, two focus group meetings were held in March 2005. These comprised around 30 organisations who have regular involvement in the planning process.
 - Town & Parish Councils
 - Statutory consultees
 - The voluntary sector.
 - Planning consultants.
 - Local business interests.
 - Interest groups.
 - Elected members.
 - Council officers.
- 1.5 The groups considered issues of consultation and involvement in the planning process, including barriers to involvement, and possible ways of encouraging people to get more involved in the planning process. A full list of group members, and a summary of findings is attached as Annex E.
- 1.6 Also during the pre-production stage, an advance copy of the draft SCI was sent to local and parish councils in and adjoining the District, to the National Park Authority, and to SEERA and the Highways Agency. A total of 6 comments were received from this circulation.

- 1.7 At production stage, the Council followed the arrangements set out in Regulation 26 of the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, and published draft documents for public consultation. A total of 40 representations were received on the documents. These were analysed and reported, together with response, to the Councils Cabinet on 5th October 2005.
- 1.8 The document was submitted to the Secretary of State for his approval in October 2005, and, in accordance with Regulation 28 of the above regulations, was published for a second consultation period. A total of 30 representations were received at this stage.

2. A new planning system for New Forest District

- 2.1 The Government introduced significant reforms to the development planning system in England and Wales through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2.2 These reforms are aimed, primarily, toward achieving the following:
 - Speeding up the development plan process.
 - Making the process more transparent.
 - Keeping the development plan up to date.
 - Increasing public involvement in the process.
- 2.3 The new system replaces the Structure Plan and Local Plan with a Regional Spatial Strategy and a Local Development Framework. The Regional Spatial Strategy covering this District is the South East Plan, and is being prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly. This is in preparation and will set the strategic spatial planning framework for the whole region covering the period 2006-2026. This will influence the Local Development Framework in this District, for example by setting strategic targets for housing and employment development. Development Plan Documents produced as part of the LDF must be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- 2.4 New Forest District Council is responsible for preparing the Local Development Framework which will set out the local planning policies for New Forest District outside the National Park. From 1st April 2006 parts of the District within the New Forest National Park became the planning responsibility of the National Park Authority.
- 2.5 A Local Development Framework is really a folder of different documents and might contain the following:
 - Development Plan Documents including perhaps a Core Strategy and Area Action Plans.
 - Supplementary Planning Documents.
 - A proposals map.
 - A Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.6 The Council has produced a Local Development Scheme which sets out the programme for the preparation of the different parts of the LDF, and this will be updated as changes occur.
- 2.7 The Core Strategy will set out the broad planning strategy for the District, indicating the general approach to matters such as housing and employment provision, protection of sensitive environments, town centres, and transportation. This will be supported by other Development Plan Documents which deal with specific issues, and the Proposals Map which shows these allocations and other designations throughout the District.

- 2.8 The procedure for involving the local community, and stakeholder groups, in the new planning system is set out in this document – the Statement of Community Involvement.
- 2.9 The Council is also required to produce an Annual Monitoring Report which examines the extent to which policies and objectives of the Local Development Framework are being achieved. This Council will produce such a report in December each year. Although it was not previously a requirement, this Council has produced monitoring reports in 2003 and 2004.

3. The role of the Statement of Community Involvement

- 3.1 Consultation and involvement of the local community in the new planning system are key objectives both of the Government and of this Council.
- 3.2 This Statement of Community Involvement sets out the Council's aims for such involvement, and then sets out the Council's policies for community involvement in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.
- 3.3 The document also includes policies for community involvement in the planning application process.

Relationship with the National Park Authority

- 3.4 The New Forest National Park Authority assumed its planning functions for the National Park Area from 1st April 2006. The diagram below shows the boundary of the District and the National Park.
- 3.5 The National Park Authority and the District Council are engaged in discussions aimed at exploring opportunities for joint working on LDF work, and to avoid unnecessary duplication and wasted resources.
- 3.6 The National Park Authority has been involved in the preparation of this Statement of Community Involvement. At its meeting of 20th September, the National Park Authority resolved to support this SCI in principle.



4. Links with other community consultations

- 4.1 Government advice on the preparation of the Local Development Framework strongly emphasises the need to establish links with other strategies and initiatives involving the local community. In particular, the Government requires that the Local Development Framework should take forward relevant issues identified in the Community Strategy. In New Forest District there are a number of other strategies which will feed into the LDF preparation process.

Changing Lives – The Community Strategy

- 4.2 The Community Strategy for New Forest District, “Changing Lives”, was adopted in June 2004. The strategy was produced by the Changing Lives Partnership, a local strategic partnership formed of a range of organisations in the District:

- Community First New Forest
- Hampshire Constabulary
- The Forestry Commission
- New Forest Business Partnership
- New Forest Primary Care Trust
- Post 16 Education
- New Forest District and Hampshire County Councils
- Hampshire Fire and Rescue
- New Forest Association of Local Councils
- New Forest Citizens Advice Bureaux
- New Forest Committee
- New Forest Tourism Association
- Registered Social Landlords

- 4.3 The vision of the strategy is that, by 2025 the New Forest District will be a place where:

- *“All people have opportunities to enjoy safe and healthy lifestyles develop as individuals and shape the communities in which they live;*
- *Businesses thrive within a local economy that harmonises with the special environment and provides everyone with sufficient resources to enjoy plenty of lifestyle choices; and*
- *The natural and built environment provides opportunities for diversity of nature, the health, education and enjoyment of everyone whilst making a significant contribution towards the local economy.”*

- 4.4 The Changing Lives Partnership and the resulting strategy provide an important context for the future preparation of other Council plans and policies, including the Local Development Framework. The preparation of the community strategy has involved a wide range of groups and organisations across the District, as well as the wider community.

- 4.5 There is a close relationship between the community strategy and the Local Development Framework. The Local Development Framework will address matters arising from the community strategy which have spatial or land use implications for the District. Furthermore, it is intended that the preparation and consultation on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy will be integrated into a review of the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy will also influence the work of the National Park Authority."
- 4.6 The Council will involve members of the Changing Lives Partnership, and groups responding to the consultation on the community strategy, in preparation of the Local Development Framework.

The Strategy for the New Forest

- 4.7 The Strategy for the New Forest was produced by the former New Forest Committee, in partnership with a wide range of organisations and individuals who have an interest in, or earn their livelihood within the New Forest.
- 4.8 The Strategy was published in April 2003 and was preceded by a consultation on a draft Strategy during 2002. The Strategy updates and expands upon an earlier document in 1996, and has also involved much wider consultation. Many of the issues which are raised by the Strategy for the New Forest will be relevant to the Local Development Framework.
- 4.9 In addition, the Strategy contains many proposals which will inform the Local Development Framework being produced by this Council.
- 4.10 The Council intends to explore with the National Park Authority the benefits of producing a joint Core Strategy covering the whole New Forest National Park Area and the whole of New Forest District. It is important therefore that the issues raised, and proposals set out in the Strategy for the New Forest also form part of the consultation and involvement process for the Local Development Framework.

The Council's Consultation Strategy

- 4.11 The Council's Consultation Strategy was published in December 2001. The strategy aims to provide the opportunity for stakeholders to influence Council decisions at both a strategic and service level. The strategy provides detailed guidance on the use of various consultation techniques including questionnaires, Internet based research, and focus groups.
- 4.12 The strategy is based on a number of principles which are aimed at ensuring that stakeholders have opportunities to participate in an effective way. These principles are set out in the table below.
- 4.13 The Council will follow the principles and detailed advice of its Consultation Strategy in implementing the methods set out in this Statement of Community Involvement.

CONSULTATION STRATEGY PRINCIPLES

- ✓ **Inclusive** of those having an interest in the subject matter – giving relevant people an opportunity to participate.
- ✓ **Open** to scrutiny by all, although the anonymity of participants will be protected where previously agreed.
- ✓ **Impartial** in the way that it is carried out and how results are reported.
- ✓ **Informative** where everyone involved learns from the process.
- ✓ **Understandable** with all involvement being in plain English or other formats as appropriate and that sufficient information is provided to enable informed responses to be made.
- ✓ **Strategic** in that it is part of a Council wide process.
- ✓ **Involving**, giving participants real choices and the opportunity to input fresh ideas not just respond to the Council's thoughts.
- ✓ **Joined up** with other Council services to maximise the benefits of the process, avoid duplication, save resources and reduce consultation fatigue.
- ✓ **Resourced** properly to enable efficient and effective involvement to take place.
- ✓ **Professional** in its approach to maintain and enhance the reputation of the Council amongst the public, the business community and other agencies.
- ✓ **Timely** to enable those involved to have sufficient opportunity to input to the decisions taken.
- ✓ **Appropriate** to those involved, which means a variety of methods and techniques will be used.
- ✓ **Reported and listened to.** Results from all exercises will be included in reports to Portfolio Holders, Cabinet and Council when decisions on the relevant subject are taken and will be fed back to those involved as opportunities arise.

Town & Village Plans

- 4.14 Parish and Town Councils play a vital role in all aspects of local life in New Forest District. The size and nature of the Councils varies from large Town Councils (e.g. Totton & Eling, population 27,900) to Councils representing small rural communities (e.g. Exbury & Lepe, population 150). There are 37 Town and Parish Councils within New Forest District.
- 4.15 The depth of local knowledge, and the community links which these Councils have can provide a very useful basis for community involvement on planning issues. Town and Parish Councils are actively involved in, and have a good understanding of, the planning system. Under the initiatives of Parish Plans, Market Town Healthchecks and Village Design Statements (sometimes referred to as community planning), many parishes are already engaging with local communities on the future of their area.
- 4.16 The Council recognises the value of this work, and will involve parishes at all stages of preparation of the Local Development Framework. Where survey information from Parish Plans is available, the Council will incorporate this into its evidence gathering.

- 4.17 The Council has appointed a dedicated Community Planning Officer to assist parishes with preparation of Parish Plans and Market Town Healthchecks, and to link these to District Council policy including the LDF. The officer will also raise the profile of parish planning in the District and outside.
- 4.18 It may be possible to adopt all or part of town and village plans as Supplementary Planning Documents, and the procedure for this is explained in Section 8.

Other arrangements

- 4.19 In certain cases, the Council has also committed to formal or informal arrangements for consulting certain groups and organisations. Examples are the Compact with the voluntary sector and the AONB Protocol with the Cranborne Chase & West Wiltshire Downs AONB. To include all of these arrangements would overcomplicate this SCI document, however the Council will have regard to these arrangements when producing its LDF. These documents are available for inspection at the Council's offices at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst.

5. Overall aim for Community Involvement

- 5.1 This Statement of Community Involvement sets out how the Council intends to involve the community in the preparation of the new Local Development Framework for the District and in the process of determining planning applications.
- 5.2 To avoid undue complexity, this document uses the term 'the community and other interests' in its consultation and involvement policies. In practice, this phrase covers a very diverse range of sectors, and will include:
- The general public
 - Town & Parish Councils
 - Amenity groups
 - Statutory Consultees
 - Landowners and landlords in both the private and public
 - Developers
 - Businesses
 - Planning and development professionals
 - Voluntary groups in the environmental, social and cultural sectors.
- 5.3 It must also be recognised that the term 'the community and other interests' will include individuals, businesses and organisations outside the District boundary but who have an interest in the future development strategy for the District.
- 5.4 The policies within this Statement of Community Involvement are based on the following aims:

The community and other interests will be fully involved in preparation of the Local Development Framework so that everyone has a chance to help shape the future of New Forest District

When dealing with planning applications, the Council will help the community and other interests to be aware of the proposal, to understand what is proposed, to express their views on the proposal, and to be informed of the Council's decision.

6. Community Involvement - Minimum statutory requirements

Local Development Framework

- 6.1 The general process of community involvement, and the detailed methods and techniques to be used are matters for the discretion of the local planning authority. However the Government has set some statutory requirements which every authority must comply with in preparing Local Development Documents. These are set out in the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
- 6.2 The 2004 Regulations set basic standards for making documents available and publishing them on the Council's website, and sending the document to certain organisations. The Regulations also set minimum requirements for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents and the Annual Monitoring Report. The Council must comply with these regulations.
- 6.3 This Council intends to go beyond these minimum requirements as appropriate to the type of document being prepared.

Sustainability Appraisal & Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 6.4 As part of the preparation of the Local Development Framework, the Council is required to undertake Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 6.5 Sustainability Appraisal examines the implications of the Local Development Framework for the community, the economy, the environment and natural resources. Strategic Environmental Assessment (required under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations 2004), measures the effects of the plan/ policy/ programme on the environment generally. The process aims to integrate environmental, social and economic considerations into the preparation of plans in order to promote sustainable development. The process involves minimum requirements to consult certain organisations, and the wider community as set out in regulations and advice.
- 6.6 All Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents must be subject to Sustainability Appraisal. The Core Strategy, site allocations, Area Action Plans, and any other DPDs that have significant environmental effects not appraised at a higher level, should also be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 6.7 Both processes are intended to be used throughout the plan-making process, informing the choice of plan objectives, issues and options, and the preferred option. The way this is done must be explained in a Sustainability Report (including an Environmental Report of the SEA). This will accompany the consultations on the preferred option and the submitted document.

- 6.8 The Council intends to combine consultation on Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment with the community involvement process for each Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document.
- 6.9 There will be consultation on:
- The objectives used to undertake the appraisal/assessment
 - The way alternative options have been appraised/assessed
 - The outcome of the appraisal/assessment
- 6.10 These will be explained in a Sustainability Report (which will incorporate an Environmental Report) that will accompany each DPD or SPD. A draft of this report will form part of the consultation on strategy and preferred options and a final version will be published for formal consultation with the submitted documents.

Planning Applications

- 6.11 For planning applications, the statutory requirements to publicise applications are set out in the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended). This sets out a requirement for a local planning authority to publicise planning applications it receives.
- 6.12 New Forest District Council has sought to improve upon these minimum standards over time, to provide an effective and up to date system of publicity for planning applications. This has included the introduction of a neighbour notification scheme, the ability to access planning applications on the Council's website, and most recently, the ability to accept comments on applications by e-mail.
- 6.13 The Council has also introduced a system to allow members of the public to address the Planning Development Control Committee on planning applications.
- 6.14 Certain forms of applications may require additional publicity, such as press notices. The Council will carefully examine the relevant statutory requirements in such cases to ensure that these are complied with.

7. Community involvement- Development Plan Documents

- 7.1 In the preparation of Development Plan Documents, the Council will undertake three separate stages of involvement:
- ✓ **Pre Production** (including evidence gathering & exploring issues and options)
 - ✓ **Production** (developing strategy and preferred options)
 - ✓ **Submission** (formal submission to the Secretary of State, and consultation on submitted document).
- 7.2 The methods and techniques used to involve the community will vary depending on the stage of preparation reached. They will also vary according to the type of the Development Plan Document being prepared. The following sections deal with the three stages, and any variations in involvement methods for different types of DPD.

Awareness Raising

- 7.3 One of the key issues coming out of the SCI Focus Groups was the need to raise awareness of the new planning system, including educating people on the jargon, and making sense of the issues. This exercise will also be integrated with publicity about the review of the Community Strategy.

Policy SCI-1 Awareness Raising

As part of the initial pre-production stage of the Local Development Framework process, the Council will use a range of methods to increase public awareness, including “hard to reach groups” in the process. These methods will include some or all of the following:

- ✓ **Articles in Forest News**
- ✓ **Press releases submitted to local newspapers covering the District.**
- ✓ **Production of a publicity leaflet**
- ✓ **Use of postal and electronic mailing to distribute this to the community and other interests, particularly identified hard-to-reach groups.**
- ✓ **Information displays**
- ✓ **Publicity on the Council's website.**
- ✓ **Presentations to local meetings and forums where requested.**

- 7.4 The Council will particularly attempt to inform groups representing ethnic minorities, the young and disability organisations in order to increase opportunities for these groups to become involved in the process. The Council’s awareness raising strategy is also framed on the basis that the term “hard to reach”, often extends to a majority of the community who have not previously had the time or inclination to be involved in the future planning of their area.

- 7.5 Where appropriate, the Council will also make people aware of organisations who can assist with understanding of planning issues. Organisations such as Planning Aid or Community Action Hampshire provide resources for the public and community groups seeking involvement in planning issues.
- 7.6 It will also be important to make the community and other interests aware of the national and regional policy framework within which the LDF must be drafted. Whilst not everyone will agree with the aims of national or regional policy, many policies in the LDF are constrained by the requirements of these higher policies.

Pre-Production

- 7.7 The Government is concerned that the community and other groups and organisations are involved in the preparation process for Development Plan Documents at the earliest stage. The initial phase of preparation will vary according to the nature of the document. However it will involve both establishing the policy issues which need to be addressed and collecting evidence or survey information to allow investigation of the issue. It will also allow discussion of potential options to address each issue.
- 7.8 At this stage it will be important both to seek a wide spectrum of opinion, and to engage with groups with expertise on particular issues. The Council will also engage with adjoining authorities where it considers issues will be of interest to neighbouring councils.
- 7.9 As a basis for community engagement, the Council will make use of information already obtained from the Changing Lives partnership, and from the Citizens and Young People's Panels, and from community involvement in the Strategy for the New Forest. Information already gathered during the preparation of Parish Plans and Market Town Healthchecks will also be valuable.

Policy SCI-2 Core Strategy DPD – Pre-Production

In preparing the Core Strategy DPD, the Council will use a series of specific methods to both raise awareness of the Core Strategy, and to generate debate about the issues. These methods will involve:

- ✓ **Stakeholder forums on Core Strategy topics.**
- ✓ **Targeted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and interest groups as appropriate.**
- ✓ **Citizen's Panel and Young People's Panel surveys.**
- ✓ **Evidence from the Community Strategy and from Parish Plans and Healthcheck studies.**

- 7.10 This represents the Council's most ambitious strategy of community involvement for any of the Development Plan Documents. The Council considers that the Core Strategy should provide the focus of community involvement, as this will provide a close link to the aims of the wider community strategy, and will provide an indication of how the community wishes to shape more detailed policies and allocations.

Policy SCI-3 Other DPDs – Pre-Production.

In preparing Development Plan Documents, other than the Core Strategy, the Council will gather opinions and evidence on issues to be addressed using some or all of the following methods:

- ✓ **Citizens Panel surveys.**
- ✓ **Young People’s Panel surveys.**
- ✓ **Other opinion surveys.**
- ✓ **Targeted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and interest groups as appropriate.**
- ✓ **Meetings with key stakeholders**
- ✓ **Focus groups**
- ✓ **Planning for Real and other community engagement exercises.**
- ✓ **Inviting submissions from stakeholders**
- ✓ **Evidence from the Community Strategy, and from Parish Plans or Healthcheck studies.**

- 7.11 The Local Development Scheme sets out the programme for preparing Development Plan Documents. These can range from topic based documents covering the whole District, to allocations or Area Action Plans relating to specific locations. The latter documents offer opportunities for active face-to-face engagement with the community, including perhaps Planning for Real exercises using models and visual presentations to discuss issues and ideas.

Production

- 7.12 The second stage of the preparation process for Development Plan Documents involves the Council in analysing the information received from its evidence gathering and producing a draft document for consultation. In order to make this process open and subject to scrutiny, Council members will consider the issues raised and options put forward in the first stage involvement.
- 7.13 The views and information received will be developed into a preferred strategy and policies which will aim to address the issues identified from public involvement. This will include a 6-week period of public consultation.

Policy SCI-4 Analysis and reporting

Prior to production of any Development Plan Document, comments and information received during the pre-production stage will be reported to Council Members and will be considered in developing strategy and preferred options.

Policy SCI-5 Core Strategy DPD - Production

The Council will consult on the Core Strategy DPD using some or all of the following methods:

- **Circulation of document to statutory bodies, interest**

- groups and town and parish councils as appropriate
- Notification of all those who have asked to be consulted or kept informed of progress in preparation of the Core Strategy.
- Publication of the document on the council's website.
- Making documents available for inspection and purchase at the council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood, Hythe, New Milton, Fordingbridge, Totton and Fawley.
- Publication of formal notices
- Press releases and general publicity
- Parish or community seminars

Policy SCI-6 Other DPDs - Production

The Council will consult on draft Development Plan Documents, other than the Core Strategy, using some or all of the following methods:

- Production of local publicity leaflets for distribution to local residents.
- Parish or community seminars.
- Targeted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and interest groups as appropriate .
- Targeted consultation with any promoters of alternative sites.
- Publication of formal notices.
- Circulation of document to statutory bodies, relevant interest groups and town and parish councils.
- Notification of all those who have asked to be consulted.
- Publication of the document on the council's website
- Making documents available at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst and any other local office or another location where more convenient.
- Press releases and general publicity

7.14 Other Development Plan Documents involve more specific proposals than the wider Core Strategy.

7.15 In all cases, there is a need for a targeted community involvement strategy to ensure that those most affected by the allocation or plan, or those with an interest in the issued covered by the document, can be engaged in the preparation of the document.

Submission

7.16 Once the Council has considered comments received on a draft document, it will produce a revised Development Plan Document for submission to the Secretary of State. Immediately following submission there is a formal period of six weeks during which representations are invited. Any representations made during this period which propose alternative sites for development, must be separately publicised by the Council. The Council will comply with

Regulation 32 of the T&CP (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 in publicising such alternative site proposals.

Policy SCI-7 Submission of Development Plan Documents

The Council will consult formally on a submitted Development Plan Document, the Council will formally consult on the document using some or all of the following methods:

- **Publication of formal notices**
- **Notification of consultees including statutory bodies, town and parish councils and interest groups as appropriate.**
- **Publication of the document on the council's website.**
- **Circulation of the document to statutory bodies and town and parish councils as appropriate.**
- **Documents made available at the council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood, Hythe, New Milton, Fordingbridge, Totton and Fawley, whichever are relevant to the content of the particular document.**
- **Press releases and general publicity**
- **Publicity for alternative site proposals in accordance with Regulation 32.**

- 7.17 This stage of the process will be carried out using members of the Council's Policy & Plans Team. It is intended that all who have participated in the consultation processes and the wider community will be made aware of the submission of the document and the opportunity to make formal representations.

Policy SCI-8 Handling and reporting representations on submitted documents

All representations received, together with a summary schedule of representations and the Council's response will be made available to the independent examination inspector.

- 7.18 Once the Council has submitted a Development Plan Document any comments received will be reported to members and presented to the Inspector appointed to carry out the examination into the soundness of the DPD. The Council already uses an electronic database to record and analyse comments received on its local plans, and will continue to use this system for Development Plan Documents.

Taking account of comments received.

- 7.19 Community involvement goes beyond simply making people aware of Council plans and proposals, and consulting on these. It also means allowing people the chance to influence policy development and decision making, and to provide information to support this process.

- 7.20 The Council will carefully consider all comments received on Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. A summary schedule of all comments received at Production and Submission stages of the document will be published on the Council's website, and made available at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, and any other of the Council's offices as is appropriate. The outcome of all consultation stages will be reported to the Council's members, and will identify how the comments received have been regarded, including any changes proposed as a result.
- 7.21 A schedule of comments and any changes to documents proposed as a result, will be displayed on the Council's website, and at any of the Council's offices as are appropriate.

8. Community involvement - Supplementary Planning Documents

- 8.1 Supplementary Planning Documents relate to policies in a Development Plan Document. Their purpose is to provide additional guidance to supplement the policy, and to provide further detail on how the policy is to be implemented. These documents do not however propose new policies or allocations.
- 8.2 Although supplementary to the main policies, it is just as important that the local community and interested organisations are involved in the preparation of these documents, and have a chance to comment. Supplementary Planning Documents are not subject to a formal examination by an independent Inspector. However by involving the community in the preparation of these documents, considerable weight will be attached to them in considering proposals for development.
- 8.3 A two-stage involvement process will apply to the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents:
- Pre-Production – including evidence gathering and discussion of issues.
 - Production – based on a draft document.

Policy SCI-9 Supplementary Planning Documents - Pre-Production

In preparing Supplementary Planning Documents, including those which are reviews of old style Supplementary Planning Guidance, the Council will involve the community using some or all of the following methods:

- **Meetings and written consultation with statutory bodies and interest groups and town and parish councils as appropriate.**
- **Discussions with invited focus groups**
- **Local exhibitions, seminars and workshops**
- **Targeted consultation letters or leaflets**

Policy SCI-10 Supplementary Planning Documents – Production

The Council will consult on draft Supplementary Planning Documents, including those which are reviews of old style Supplementary Planning Guidance, using some or all of the following methods:

- **Publication of formal notices;**
- **Notification of consultees including statutory bodies and**

interest groups and local residents as appropriate.

- **Circulation of document to statutory bodies and town & parish councils as appropriate.**
- **Publication of the document on the council's website;**
- **Documents made available at the council's offices at Lyndhurst and Lymington, and at any local office or other location relevant to the area to which the document relates;**
- **Press notices and general publicity.**

- 8.4 The methods and techniques used will vary according to whether the Supplementary Planning Document relates to an area or specific site (e.g. a housing allocation) or more generally supplements a topic based policy (e.g. design guidance). Where site or area specific documents are prepared there will be a concentration on consulting those who can provide local knowledge and information, and those most likely to be affected by the development proposed.
- 8.5 The Council retains a number of old-style Supplementary Planning Guidance documents where these remain up to date and relevant and have already been subject to public consultation. A list of these documents is contained in the Local Development Scheme. The Council does not propose to re-issue these guidance documents as SPD. Where any of this old style guidance is in need of review however, the Council will follow the procedures set out in policies SCI-9 and SCI-10.
- 8.6 It is possible that all or parts of town and village plans could be adopted by the Council as Supplementary Planning Documents. The Council has already adopted Village Design Statements in Milford-on-Sea and Breamore as "old-style" Supplementary Planning Guidance.
- 8.7 In order to be adopted as SPD, Parish Plans must however demonstrate the following:
- That they do not conflict with the policies of the LDF.
 - That they have been produced using consultation and involvement methods as set out in policies SCI-9 and SCI-10.
 - That they have undertaken a Sustainability Appraisal of the Parish Plan.
- 8.8 The Council will assist parishes with these requirements as much as possible.

Taking account of comments received.

- 8.9 Community involvement goes beyond simply making people aware of Council plans and proposals, and consulting on these. It also means allowing people the chance to influence policy development and decision making, and to provide information to support this process.
- 8.10 The Council will carefully consider all comments received on Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. A summary schedule of all comments received at Production and Submission stages of the document will be published on the Council's website, and made available

at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, and any other of the Council's offices as is appropriate. The outcome of all consultation stages will be reported to the Council's members, and will identify how the comments received have been regarded, including any changes proposed as a result.

- 8.11 A schedule of comments and any changes to documents proposed as a result, will be displayed on the Council's website, and at any of the Council's offices as are appropriate.

9. Community involvement - Annual monitoring report

- 9.1 As part of the Local Development Framework process, local authorities are required to review the effectiveness of policies towards meeting the vision and Core Strategy.
- 9.2 The authority is required to publish an Annual Monitoring Report which covers the period from 1st April in one year to 31st March in the next. This report is intended to assess:
- Whether the authority will meet the targets set out in the Local Development Framework.
 - The impact of the policies on other national, regional or local targets.
 - Whether any policies should be replaced or reviewed.
 - What action should be taken if policies need replacement?
- 9.3 As opposed to the Development Plan Documents or Supplementary Planning Documents, there are very few requirements to consult on the Annual Monitoring Report. The only legal requirement, set out in Section 48 (8) of the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, is that the authority should publish the report on its website before submitting it to the Secretary of State.

Policy SCI-11 Annual Monitoring Report Production

In preparing its Annual Monitoring Report, the Council will consult with relevant statutory bodies, stakeholders and the public using appropriate methods to enable them to input to the report.

When the Council then submits its AMR to the Secretary of State it will:

- **Issue a press release that the report has been published;**
- **Make copies available at the Council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood, Hythe, Totton, Fawley & Fordingbridge.**
- **Publish the report on its website.**

Reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement

- 9.4 The SCI will need to be reviewed. This will not necessarily be based on set time periods, but rather triggered by an assessment of the following:
- How successfully the consultation and involvement policies are being followed.
 - Consultation issues raised by the community and other interests.

- Changes to regulations.
- Changes to Council consultation or community strategies.
- Changes to the Local Development Scheme, for example where new documents are to be produced.
- The evolving situation regarding the extent of joint working between the Council and the National Park Authority.

9.5 The success and effectiveness of the SCI will also be considered through the Annual Monitoring Report.

10. Resources

Staffing

- 10.1 The Council will resource community involvement in the production of the Local Development Framework using existing resources within the Council, primarily within the Policy & Plans Team. Where appropriate, the Council may also use the services of external facilitators, for example to run forums or focus groups.

Information technology

Policy SCI-12 Information technology

The Council will make all consultation documents available on its website, and will accept comments by e-mail. The Council will ensure that all documents are placed on the Council's website as soon as possible following publication.

The Council will maintain appropriate contact databases to assist in production of reports and postal and electronic mailings. These databases will be kept up to date wherever possible.

- 10.2 The use of the Council's website to both display documents, and to allow feedback through e-mail, provides convenience for many consultees, and is an important facility for those unable to access documents at local offices, or to purchase a hard copy of the document. To safeguard against any technological difficulties, and changes in e-mail accounts, the Council will require all e-mail correspondence to provide a postal address.
- 10.3 The Council is currently working to achieve at least the minimum standards required by PARSOL (Planning and Regulatory Services Online). These standards aim to enable the public to access planning documents on line and to interact with and respond to these documents. Minimum PARSOL standards require that the public are able to submit comments on planning documents online.

Avoiding waste

- 10.4 Involvement in the development plan process can generate large volumes of paperwork and correspondence over an extended period. In some cases, receipt of repeated letters and consultations is unwelcome. The Council therefore considers it important to modify the level of involvement as appropriate to respect the views and wishes of those involved in the process, whilst avoiding the exclusion of anyone. The Council will therefore discontinue or reduce communications with specific organisations, groups or individuals on matters relating to the Local Development Framework where this has been requested by them, or where they have not responded when asked whether

they wish to continue to be involved.

- 10.5 The Council also has a duty to its residents not to waste resources and to recoup its costs where possible. In producing the Local Development Framework, including associated publicity, consultation documents and surveys, the Council will seek to minimise the cost of documents on sale to the public. Most, if not all documents will be available at Council offices, -on the Council's website, and circulated to town and parish councils free of charge. Where documents are produced for sale in hard copy form, charges will only be levied where this is essential to cover the printing costs of the document.

Equalities

- 10.6 The Council offers a service to provide documents in the following formats:

- Braille
- Large print
- Tape
- CD
- A language other than English

Those requesting this service can contact the Equalities Unit on 023-8028-5491, or equalities@nfdc.gov.uk.

11. Community involvement - Planning applications

- 11.1 For many people, the most visible impact of the planning system is the regulation of development through planning applications. Many people have experience of this process either as applicants for planning permission, or by making comments on development proposals which might affect them.
- 11.2 Although the process is quite complex, it is important that all sections of the community have an opportunity to express their views either in support of or objection to planning applications.
- 11.3 Minimum standards for planning application publicity are set out in the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995. This requires local planning authorities to publicise planning applications submitted to them.
- 11.4 This Council has developed an effective and up to date system of publicity for planning applications. This system forms the basis for community involvement policies in this section of the SCI. The system is expressed in more detail in Annex D of this document, and in the Council's advice booklets:
- Development Control, A User Guide – May 2003
 - Having Your Say – January 2004 (Revised)

Policy SCI-13 Publicity Strategy For Applications

In addition to the minimum statutory requirements, the Council will apply its own strategy for the effective publicising of planning applications, to include all or some of the following elements:

- **Posting of site notices**
- **Delivery of neighbour notification letters to relevant properties**
- **Making documents available at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, and additionally at a relevant local office if more convenient for the application site.**

Policy SCI-14 Use of new technology

The Council will make copies of current planning applications available on its website, and will maintain a facility to accept comments by e-mail.

- 11.5 The Council's publicity strategy applies to all types of planning applications from small householder developments to major development proposals. Details of the way the Council will operate these policies is set out in Annex D to this Statement. In very exceptional circumstances, the Council may consider additional publicity such as the publication of publicity leaflets as

was undertaken to publicise the Dibden Bay container port applications in 2000. The Council will also notify adjoining authorities where applications are close to the boundary with an adjoining District.

Policy SCI-15 Amended plans

Where the Council receives significant amendments to a current planning application it will re-publicise the amendments following the procedures set out in Policies SCI-13 and SCI-14 above, making it clear that amendments to the application have been proposed.

- 11.6 It is common for submitted applications to be changed during the process of determination. These changes may be a result of negotiation with the case officer, or following comments from consultees, or perhaps following objections from local residents. It is important that all those with an interest in the application are aware that amendments have been proposed. The Council has established detailed procedures for publicising these amendments, which are set out in Annex D.
- 11.7 As part of this process the Council has developed ways of avoiding confusion during re-publicity for example by the use of different coloured site notices for amended applications.

Policy SCI-16 Public speaking

In cases where applications are to be considered by the Planning Development Control Committee, opportunity will be provided for those who have already made written comments on the application, to address the Committee. A dedicated officer will be available to co-ordinate this process.

- 11.8 Although the determination of most applications is delegated to senior officers, applications must be determined by the Planning Development Control Committee where certain criteria apply, or where the applications are major or contentious. Arrangements for public speaking are available in this case, for the applicant and supporters, objectors, and parish councils. Although the time available must be limited, this has proved a worthwhile and popular system for involvement in the application process. Further detail is set out in Annex D.

Policy SCI-17 Pre-submission publicity

The Council encourages all applicants for planning permission to consult and involve local residents and organisations in their proposals at an early stage before submitting a planning application.

- 11.9 Although the Council will publicise all applications it receives, it is beneficial if the applicant or developer engages local residents and organisations in their proposals. If this is done at an early stage it may well assist in identifying concerns which can be overcome before the application is submitted. This in turn may smooth the formal assessment process of the application.

Annexes

A Glossary

B List of statutory consultees

C Other organisations to be involved

D Development control procedures

E The SCI Focus Groups

F Summary of involvement methods

Annex A

Glossary

A1 This annex provides supplementary information on some of the techniques mentioned in the Statement of Community Involvement, and on some of the acronyms found in the new planning system.

AMR

Annual monitoring report, produced in December each year, which monitors the effectiveness of policies in the Local Development Framework.

Citizen's Panel surveys (SCI-2& 3)

Generally conducted using questionnaire surveys to the 1003 members of the Council's citizen's panel.

Council Offices (SCI-5, 6, 7, 10, 11 & 13)

The Council's main offices are at Appletree Court Lyndhurst and the Town Hall, Lymington. Local information offices are also located at Christchurch Road, Ringwood; Provost Street, Fordingbridge; Spencer Road, New Milton; The Square, Fawley; St John's Street, Hythe; and the Civic Centre, Totton.

Council's website (SCI-1, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, & 14)

www.nfdc.gov.uk or www.newforest.gov.uk

DPD

Development Plan Document, the main planning policy documents in the Local Development Framework. These include the Core Strategy which sets out the main planning strategy for the District.

Focus groups (SCI-3 & 9)

These will be a smaller scale version of the stakeholder forums, and are likely to be convened where a range of organisations and interest groups wish to be involved in discussion on a particular topic (e.g. affordable housing) or on a development allocation. These events may take the form of a short meeting, or could be more formally structured.

Formal notices (SCI-5, 6, 7, & 10)

These generally fulfil minimum statutory requirements of the planning process and are submitted to local newspapers, and in some cases to national publications such as The London Gazette. The notices provide information on matters such as deposit of planning documents, or proposals for development, and set out arrangements for how and when to comment.

Information displays (SCI-1)

This will take the form of static display boards which will inform people of the LDF process, including issues which the Council will be examining. The display will inform people of the timetable for preparation of the LDF, and will tell people how they can find out more information. The display will be un-staffed. The Council intends to negotiate with local supermarkets, its recreation centres, and other local venues to site the display in order to achieve as wide an outreach as possible.

LDF

Local Development Framework, the new name for the Local Plan. Can be thought of as a folder of different planning policy documents, and includes Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.

LDS

Local Development Scheme, a sort of project plan for the preparation of the Local Development Framework. This sets out the timescales for preparing each part of the Local Development Framework, including when each document will be consulted on.

Neighbourhood notification letters (SCI-13)

Generally used for the advertising of planning applications, these inform property owners of planning applications submitted on adjoining property or land. The letters contain information about the proposed development, and explain how and when to comment.

Opinion surveys (SCI-3)

In addition to using the Citizen's Panel and Young People's Panel, there may also be a need to arrange additional opinion surveys, perhaps on a specific development proposal or issue. These might include postal or web-based questionnaires.

Parish or community seminars (SCI-6 & 9)

These may be used as a more informal or more targeted form of involvement than a stakeholder conference. The format of these events may vary from a specific local meeting, to perhaps simply a presentation or discussion at a scheduled parish council meeting.

Planning for Real and other community engagement exercises (SCI-3)

These will be appropriate for parts of the LDF which deal with development sites or small local areas. They take the form of more "hands on" discussions, often using models, maps and other visual aids to help articulate ideas and solve problems.

Press releases (SCI-1, 5, 6, 7, 10, & 11)

These are produced with assistance from the Council's public relations team, and usually take the form of short articles submitted to local newspapers in the area.

Publicity leaflets (SCI-1, 6 & 9)

Where specific new policies or proposals need to be explained or advertised, the Council may produce information leaflets which provide more detail of a proposal. A recent example has been the "New Look For Calshot" leaflet, distributed to local residents to explain proposals to regenerate the village.

SA/SEA

Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment, in simple terms, a process of assessing the environmental, social and economic effects of policies and proposals in the Local Development Framework.

SCI

Statement of Community Involvement, a document which sets out how the Council will involve and consult the public and other organisations when preparing the Local Development Framework, and when determining planning applications.

SPD

Supplementary Planning Documents, another part of the Local Development Framework, these documents contain detailed guidance which supplements policies contained in Development Plan Documents.

Site notices (SCI-13)

Planning applications are normally advertised using a notice posted in a convenient location near to the property or land to which the application relates. This notice both describes the proposed development, and gives details of how and when to comment.

Stakeholder forums (SCI-2)

These will be high profile events, taking place in local centres across the District. The events will be open to invited local groups and organisations and will be an opportunity to discuss a range of topics relating to the preparation of the Core Strategy. Workshop sessions may form part of these events.

Targeted consultation (SCI-2 & 6)

This can take many forms, including sending early drafts of documents to specific organisations, or holding meetings with individuals or groups to discuss relevant issues.

Town & Parish Councils (SCI-5, 6, 7, 9 & 10)

The District is made up of 37 Town and Parish Councils.

Young People's Panel surveys (SCI-2 & 3)

This is comprised of 790 young people aged 11-16. Consultations usually take the form of questionnaire surveys.

Annex B

Statutory consultees

B1 In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, this Council will consult the following organisations on parts of the Local Development Framework to the extent that it considers the document to be relevant to the organisation.

- ✓ The South East England Regional Assembly
- ✓ The South East England Development Agency
- ✓ The South West Regional Assembly
- ✓ The South West Regional Development Agency
- ✓ The New Forest National Park Authority
- ✓ Hampshire County Council
- ✓ Dorset County Council
- ✓ Wiltshire County Council
- ✓ Test Valley Borough Council
- ✓ Melchet Park & Plaitford; Nursling & Rownhams; Romsey Extra; Wellow parish councils.
- ✓ Salisbury District Council
- ✓ Bishopstone; Bower Chalke; Broad Chalke; Coombe Bisset; Downton; Landford; Odstock; Redlynch; Stratford Tony parish councils.
- ✓ Southampton City Council
- ✓ Christchurch Borough Council
- ✓ Burton; Hurn parish councils.
- ✓ East Dorset District Council
- ✓ Alderholt; Cranborne & Edmondsham; Pentridge; St Leonards & St Ives; Verwood parish councils.
- ✓ All town and parish councils within New Forest District.
- ✓ The Environment Agency
- ✓ The Countryside Agency
- ✓ English Nature
- ✓ The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
- ✓ The Highways Agency
- ✓ British Telecommunications PLC
- ✓ The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority
- ✓ Southern Electricity
- ✓ Powergen PLC
- ✓ The National Grid Company PLC
- ✓ British Gas/Transco
- ✓ Wessex Water
- ✓ Southern Water
- ✓ Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water PLC
- ✓ The following mobile telecommunications operators: Airwave, Dolphin Communications; Hutchinson 3G; Mercury; NTL; One2One; Orange; O2; T-Mobile; Vodafone;

Annex C

Other organisations

- C1 The list of Statutory Consultees in Annex B is only a minimum list, legally required by the Regulations. In practice this Council intends to consult a much wider range of groups and organisations who will have an interest in all of the Local Development Documents.
- C2 The list below is based on information already held by the Council from consultation on the previous Local Plan. It represents the type of different organisations which are likely to have an interest in the LDF process.
- C3 The list is not meant to be exhaustive. In particular, the Council has already identified that it has little contact with ethnic minority organisations.
- C4 The Council has created an LDF contacts database which will be kept up to date as much as possible. These database entries include those which represent the categories of consultee identified at Annex C. This will be used as a basis both of general notifications and targeted consultation with stakeholders. The Council is therefore keen to hear from other organisations who wish to be involved in the process, and will be happy to add these contacts to its database on request.
- C5 Organisations likely to have an interest in the LDF process will include:
- Residents associations.
 - Amenity and conservation societies.
 - Sports & recreation organisations.
 - Schools & colleges.
 - Disability organisations and groups.
 - Older persons groups.
 - Ethnic minority groups.
 - Gypsies and travelling show people, including the Traveller Education Service.
 - Churches and other religious organisations.
 - Housing associations and registered social landlords.
 - Tourism organisations.
 - Youth groups and organisations.
 - Businesses and chambers of trade/commerce.
 - Developers and planning agents/architects.
 - New Forest Verderers, Commoners and other representative organisations.
 - Port operators and harbour authorities at Southampton and Lymington.
 - Transport operators and managers including Network Rail, train and bus companies.
 - Coastal interests including commercial, leisure and amenity organisations.
 - Major estates.
 - The Ministry of Defence.
 - Southampton and Bournemouth Airports.
 - Other Government organisations not already listed in Annex B

Annex D

Development Control procedures

- D1 The following detailed procedures are intended to supplement the policies set out in Section 11 of this Statement. They reflect the arrangements set out in the document “Development Control – A Users Guide” published in May 2003, which explains the full development control process at New Forest District Council.
- D2 This Annex also provides supplementary detail regarding the procedures by which those wishing to comment on a planning application can present a statement direct to the Planning Development Control Committee. This reflects the information published in the Council’s booklet “Having Your Say” published in January 2004.
- D3 In both cases, the procedures summarised here relate only to those wishing to make comments on planning applications being considered by the Council. Further information for applicants for planning permission, or their advisers, is given in the documents above.

Planning Application Publicity

- D4 All planning applications received will be publicised by a site notice and a neighbour notification scheme. Certain types of major applications are advertised in the statutory notices section of a local newspaper circulating in the area where the application relates. All applications are scanned and publicised on the Council’s website.
- D5 **Site notices** are posted by the case officer, and usually one notice will be placed on the main entrance to the proposed development. The notice should be placed in a position where it can easily be read by the public without entering the application site. Site notices give a date by which comments should be made, the name and telephone number of the case officer, and the local office where the application can be inspected. A replacement notice will be posted where the original is removed or lost within three days of its original posting. Green site notices are posted for new applications, yellow notices for the receipt of amended plans on existing applications.
- D6 Applications which legally require **newspaper publicity** are publicised every week in the statutory notices section of one of four newspapers circulating in the District. The newspaper used depends on the Parish in which the application site is located, as follows:

Avon Advertiser (published Wednesday) – Breamore; Damerham, Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley; Fordingbridge; Hale; Hyde; Martin; Ringwood; Rockbourne; Sandleheath; Whitsbury; Woodgreen.

New Forest Post (published Thursday) – Ashurst & Colbury; Hythe &

Dibden; Fawley; Marchwood; Totton & Eling.

Southampton Advertiser (published Thursday) – Totton & Eling.

Advertiser & Times (published Friday) – Beaulieu; Boldre; Bramshaw; Bransgore; Brockenhurst; Burley; Copythorne; Denny Lodge; East Boldre; Exbury & Lepe; Hordle; Lymington & Pennington; Lyndhurst; Milford-on-Sea; Minstead; Netley Marsh; New Milton; Sopley; Sway.

- D7 Under the neighbourhood notification scheme, the Council will write to persons whose residential properties directly adjoin or are directly opposite (across the road) a planning application site. In addition, when a case officer visits the site, they will check whether they consider that any other neighbouring properties are particularly affected and should also be notified.
- D8 All those originally notified about an application, and everyone who has made comments on it, will be notified of amended plans that are received, and which require further publicity.
- D9 Planning applications cannot be decided until the publicity period has expired. This will be 21 days after the site notice has been posted, any statutory press advertisement was published, or the date on the neighbour notification letter. For English Nature, 28 days is given in the case of a planning application potentially affecting a SSSI or in a SSSI consultation area*, in which to comment.
- D10 The letter, notice and press advertisement explain where the public can view the planning application. The application file containing correspondence is always held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst. Persons wishing to view the file or seek more information about the application should contact the planning case officer.

Making Comments

- D11 Comments on applications should always be **made in writing**. Even where the publicity period has expired it may not be too late to comment, and this can be established by telephoning the case officer or clerical assistant. Written comments should be addressed to:

Head of Development Control
Community Services
New Forest District Council
Appletree Court
Lyndhurst
Hants SO43 7PA

- D12 Comments can also be **e-mailed** to dev.control@nfdc.gov.uk

- D13 All letters or e-mail should quote:
- ✓ The planning application number
 - ✓ The address of the property to which it relates

✓ Your own address

- D14 All comments will be **acknowledged in writing** and will be taken into account before a decision is reached provided they are received in time. All comments are placed on the application file and are available for public inspection.
- D15 If the application is to be considered by the **Planning Development Control Committee**, anyone making written comments will be notified of the date of the meeting and how they can address the Committee if they wish. Once a decision has been reached, people who have made comments will also receive a copy of the **decision notice**.

Amended Plans Publicity

- D16 Where publicity is considered appropriate for amended plans, it follows the same procedure as that for the original application. If a press advertisement was used for the original proposal, the new plans will also be advertised with a combination of the words – amended plans; additional plans or amended description.
- D17 A yellow site notice will be published by the case officer with the heading “Planning Application – Amended Plans”, and a further 21 day period for comments is available. Copies of the amended plans are available for inspection at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst or at the local office where the original application is displayed.

Addressing the Planning Development Control Committee

- D18 This Committee has the power to determine planning applications, although most applications are determined by the professional officers through delegated powers. The Committee consists of elected members, and meets at 9:00am on the second Wednesday of every month, in the Council Chamber at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst.
- D19 Where an application is to be determined by the Planning Development Control Committee, an opportunity is provided to address the committee. The opportunity to speak is provided for:
- ✓ The applicant or supporters of the application
 - ✓ Objectors to the application who have already made written comments.
 - ✓ Parish & Town Councils.
- D20 Each of these groups is entitled to speak for three minutes. Up to three people can speak in each group, and the time is therefore divided equally between them. The speakers will be the first three people from each group who register with the public speaking organiser. The Public Speaking Organiser can be contacted on 023-8028-5542.

* In accordance with Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

Annex E

The SCI Focus groups

E1 The following organisations were represented at the focus groups held to discuss community involvement in planning, and the SCI:

March 9th 2005:

Bournemouth & West Hampshire Water Company
Beaulieu Estate
The Lymington Society
Marchwood Motorways
New Forest Access For All
New Forest Commoners Defence Association
New Forest District Council (Cllrs Robinson; Heron & Holding).
Ringwood Town Council
Solent Protection Society
Tanner & Tilley

March 16th 2005:

Adams Hendry Consulting
Breamore Parish Council
Brockenhurst Parish Council
Cadland Estate
CPRE (Hants)
English Nature
Hampshire & IOW Wildlife Trust
Hampshire Constabulary
Hampshire County Council Estates Practice
Hoburne Ltd
New Forest Association
New Milton, Barton-on-Sea & District Residents Association
New Milton Town Council
Pennyfarthing Homes Ltd
Solent Protection Society
Sway Women's Institute

E2 The groups were provided with a briefing on the new planning system, and on the Statement of Community Involvement. The groups were then asked to consider and debate the following issues:

- *What problems occur when getting involved in the planning process and what are the barriers?*
- *How can we raise awareness of planning to the community and to business?*
- *What examples are there of methods that have worked well, or worked badly?*
- *What ways can the process be improved?*

E3 The main findings of the groups are set out below. The symbol (2) means that both groups made the same finding.

- Avoid jargon and educate people on the process and the issues. (2)
 - Educate people on Government planning policy, and on others points of view.
 - Explain how issues link together.
 - Define the community - it may include groups outside the area for specific issues.
 - Recognise the value of parish and town plans. (2)
 - Publicise parish and town plans more widely.
 - Continue to use the website, but put documents on quicker. (2)
 - Recognise that some organisations need more time to respond. (2)
 - Use more convenient venues to display information.
 - Allow more pre-application discussions. (2)
 - Keep databases up to date and make consultation letters more personal. (2)
 - Provide feedback on comments, and explain how they have influenced the issue.
 - Use business organisations more.
 - Make more use of the local press for providing information.
- E4 It is not practical to translate all of these comments into the Statement of Community Involvement. However a number of the points raised area are covered in the document.
- E5 A programme of awareness raising has been specifically included (see Policy SCI-1). This could be a useful opportunity to inform people more about the process, the issues, and to explain some of the jargon.
- E6 The value of Parish and Town plans is recognised (section 4), and the Council has appointed an dedicated officer part of who's role will be to help link these plans into the LDF process. The Council will also try to raise the profile of these plans to outside organisations.
- E7 Use of the website is an important part of the document, both for the LDF and for planning applications. The need to put documents onto the website more quickly is recognised. (Policy SCI-12 & 14)
- E8 Policy SCI-12 also refers to the need to keep accurate databases wherever possible.
- E9 Press releases form part of the involvement policies for the Core Strategy, other Development Plan Documents, and Supplementary Plan Documents.

Annex F

Summary of involvement methods

Stage in LDF process	Pre-Production	Production (6-weeks)	Submission (6-weeks)
Document			
Core Strategy DPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder forums on Core Strategy topics. • Targeted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and interest groups as appropriate. • Citizens Panel and Young Peoples Panel surveys. • Evidence from the Community Strategy and from Parish Plans and Healthcheck studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation of draft document to statutory bodies, town and parish councils and interest groups as appropriate. • Notification of all those who have asked to be consulted or kept informed of progress in preparation of the Core Strategy. • Publication of the document on the council's website • Documents made available at the council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood, Hythe, New Milton, Fordingbridge, Totton and Fawley. • Publication of formal notices. • Press releases and general publicity. • Parish or community seminars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of formal notices • Notification of consultees including statutory bodies, town and parish councils and interest groups as appropriate. • Publication of the document on the council's website. • Circulation of document to statutory bodies and town and parish councils as appropriate. • Documents made available at the Council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood, Totton, Hythe, New Milton, Fordingbridge and Fawley. • Press releases and general publicity. • Publicity for alternative site proposals in accordance with regulation 32.

Stage in LDF process	Pre-Production	Production (6-weeks)	Submission (6-weeks)
Document			
Other DPDs (including area action plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Citizens Panel surveys. ● Young People's Panel surveys. ● Other opinion surveys. ● Targeted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and key stakeholders as appropriate. ● Meetings with key stakeholders. ● Focus groups. ● Planning for Real and other community engagement exercises. ● Inviting submissions from stakeholders. ● Evidence from the Community Strategy or from Parish Plans and Healthcheck studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Production of local publicity leaflets for distribution to local residents. ● Parish or community seminars. ● Targeted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and interest groups as appropriate. ● Targeted consultation with any promoters of alternative sites. ● Publication of formal notices. ● Circulation of document to statutory bodies, interest groups and town and parish councils as appropriate. ● Notification of all those who have asked to be consulted. ● Publication of the document on the Council's website. ● Documents made available at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst and any other local office or other locations where more convenient. ● Press releases and general publicity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publication of formal notices. ● Notification of consultees including statutory bodies, town and parish councils and interest groups as appropriate. ● Publication of the document on the council's website. ● Circulation of document to statutory bodies and town and parish councils as appropriate. ● Documents made available at the Council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood, Totton, Hythe, New Milton and Fawley, whichever are relevant to the content of the particular document. ● Press releases and general publicity. ● Publicity for alternative site proposals in accordance with Regulation 32.

Stage in LDF process	Pre-Production		Production (6-weeks)
Document			
Supplementary Planning Documents -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Meetings and written consultation with statutory bodies, interest groups and town and parish councils as appropriate. ● Discussions with invited focus groups ● Local exhibitions, seminars and workshops ● Targeted consultation letters or leaflets 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publication of formal notices; ● Notification of consultees including statutory bodies, specific interest groups and local residents as appropriate. ● Circulation of document to statutory bodies and town parish councils as appropriate; ● Publication of the document on the council's website; ● Documents made available at the council's offices at Lyndhurst and Lymington, and at any local office or other location relevant to the area to which the document relates; ● Press releases and general publicity.

ANNEX 3

**New Forest District
Local Development Framework**

MAKING AN IMPACT

**Statement of Community
Involvement
Easy read summary
Adopted July 2006**



New Forest
DISTRICT COUNCIL

1 The Basics:

How has the planning system changed?

The new Planning Act has replaced the old Local Plan with a new Local Development Framework. It also replaces the old County Structure Plan with a Regional Spatial Strategy. You can think of the Local Development Framework as a folder of different documents. These documents include a general planning strategy for New Forest District, allocations of land and planning policies on specific topics like employment, open space and transport. There will also be a proposals map.

Why have the changes been made?

The Government decided to make changes to the planning system because:

- It was seen as very slow and needed to be speeded up.
- It was difficult to understand and needed to be simpler.
- It was not easy for people to get involved, and needed to be more accessible.
- It was seen as being too rigid, and needed to be kept up-to-date more easily.

What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

This document sets out how the Council will involve people in the preparation of the Local Development Framework, and on planning applications. Its production is a Government requirement. It is sometimes referred to as the SCI.

What other documents make up the Local Development Framework?

There are a few other planning documents in the new system which have strange names. They also can be abbreviated using initials and we have shown these as well:

Development Plan Documents (DPD) - these are part of the Local Development Framework and contain the main planning policies and allocations for the District. One of the most important is the Core Strategy which sets out the overall planning policy and strategy for the District.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) - these contain more detailed guidance to supplement existing planning policies. They do not propose new policies or allocations and again are part of the Local Development Framework.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) - This will be produced every December and will look back at how successful each policy or allocation has been.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) - A sort of project plan, where you can find out what planning documents are being produced and how long each will take.

2 The Aim

In future, when the Council consults and involves the community in preparing planning documents or dealing with planning applications, it will always try to stick to the following aims:

The community and other interests will be fully involved in preparation of the Local Development Framework so that everyone has a chance to help shape the future of New Forest District

When dealing with planning applications, the Council will help the community and other interests to be aware of the proposal, to understand what is proposed, to express their views on the proposal, and to be informed of the Council's decision.

The term 'the community and other interests' includes a very diverse range of sectors, and will include:

- The general public
- Town & Parish Councils
- Amenity groups
- Statutory Consultees
- Landowners and landlords in both the private and public sector
- Developers
- Businesses
- Planning and development professionals
- Voluntary groups in the environmental, social and cultural sectors.

Some of these groups will be based outside the District but will have interest in future development within it.

3 The Process

How will these new planning documents be produced?

Most documents which make up the Local Development Framework are prepared in three stages.

The first stage, known as pre-production, involves a discussion of issues, and gathering evidence. At this stage the Council will try to talk to a wide cross-section of people and

organisations to find out as much information and opinions on the particular issue as possible.

After this, the Council will prepare a draft planning policy document, such as a Development Plan Document. This is the production stage. The Council will then consult people again on the draft document for a minimum of 6 weeks.

The Council will examine the comments it receives and will make any necessary changes to the document. They then formally submit the document to the Secretary of State for approval, this is the submission stage. Another period of 6 weeks is provided for comments on the document at this stage. The Secretary of State will appoint a planning inspector to examine the "soundness" of the document, and he or she will also consider the comments people have made on it. The Inspector will issue a report which the Council must comply with. The document is then adopted.

Supplementary Planning Documents follow a two stage process with no formal submission to the Secretary of State.

How will I be involved?

People will be able to give their views right from the start of the process (pre-production), perhaps commenting on what planning issues they think are important in their local area. They will then have the opportunity to comment on the draft document, and to send more formal views on the submitted document for the Secretary of State to consider.

The table at the back of this document sets out the ways and means by which the Council might involve people. These cover things like questionnaire surveys, public forums and focus groups, placing documents in local offices and on the website, and issuing press releases. More detail is available in the main Statement of Community Involvement document.

What about planning applications?

This Council already operates a comprehensive publicity process for planning applications. Site notices are posted, and immediate neighbours receive publicity letters. The Council makes extensive use of its website to allow people to view and comment on current planning applications. Arrangements also exist for people to give their views on an application directly to the Planning Development Control Committee.

The Statement of Community Involvement sets out these arrangements in detail.

4 The Ways and Means

You can use this table to find out the sort of methods the Council will use to consult and involve you in preparing the different parts of the Local Development Framework. A full glossary of terms is available in the full Statement of Community Involvement.

Stage in LDF process	Pre-Production	Production (6-weeks)	Submission (6-weeks)
Document			
Core Strategy DPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder forums on Core Strategy topics. Targeted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and interest groups as appropriate. Citizens Panel and Young Peoples Panel surveys. Evidence from the Community Strategy and from Parish Plans and Healthcheck studies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circulation of draft document to statutory bodies, town and parish councils and interest groups as appropriate. Notification of all those who have asked to be consulted or kept informed of progress in preparation of the Core Strategy. Publication of the document on the council's website Documents made available at the council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood, Hythe, New Milton, Fordingbridge, Totton and Fawley. Publication of formal notices. Press releases and general publicity. Parish & community seminars. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of formal notices Notification of consultees including statutory bodies, town and parish councils and interest groups as appropriate. Publication of the document on the council's website. Circulation of document to statutory bodies and town and parish councils as appropriate. Documents made available at the Council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood, Totton, Hythe, New Milton, Fordingbridge and Fawley . Press releases and general publicity. Publicity for alternative site proposals in accordance with regulation 32.
Stage in LDF process	Pre-Production	Production (6-weeks)	Submission (6-weeks)
Document			
Other DPDs (including area action plans)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Citizens Panel surveys. Young People's Panel surveys. Other opinion surveys. Targetted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and key stakeholders as appropriate. Meetings with key stakeholders. Focus groups. Planning for Real and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of local publicity leaflets for distribution to local residents. Parish or community seminars. Targetted consultation and engagement with statutory bodies and interest groups as appropriate. Targetted consultation with any promoters of alternative sites . Publication of formal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publication of formal notices. Notification of consultees including statutory bodies, town and parish councils and interest groups as appropriate. Publication of the document on the council's website. Circulation of document to statutory bodies and town and parish councils as appropriate.

	<p>other community engagement exercises.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inviting submissions from stakeholders. • Evidence from the Community Strategy or from Parish Plans and Healthcheck studies. 	<p>notices.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation of document to statutory bodies, interest groups and town and parish councils as appropriate. • Notification of all those who have asked to be consulted. • Publication of the document on the Council's website. • Documents made available at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst and any other local office or other locations where more convenient. • Press releases and general publicity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documents made available at the Council's offices at Lyndhurst, Lymington, Ringwood, Totton, Hythe, New Milton and Fawley, whichever are relevant to the content of the particular document. • Press releases and general publicity. • Publicity for alternative site proposals in accordance with Regulation 32.
Stage in LDF process	Pre-Production		Production (6-weeks)

Document			
Supplementary Planning Documents -	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings and written consultation with statutory bodies, interest groups and town and parish councils as appropriate. • Discussions with invited focus groups • Local exhibitions, seminars and workshops • Targeted consultation letters or leaflets 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publication of formal notices; • Notification of consultees including statutory bodies, specific interest groups and local residents as appropriate. • Circulation of document to statutory bodies and town parish councils as appropriate; • Publication of the document on the council's website; • Documents made available at the council's offices at Lyndhurst and Lymington, and at any local office or other location relevant to the area to which the document relates; • Press releases and general publicity.