

Local Development Framework

Statement of Community Involvement

*Adopted on
6 September 2006*



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Contacts

If you would like a summary of this document in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Punjabi or Urdu language, please phone one of the people named at the bottom of this page.

Arabic	إذا كنت ترغب في الحصول على ملخص لهذا الكتيب باللغة العربية ، فنرجوا منك الإتصال بأحد الأشخاص المدونة أسمائهم أسفل الصفحة.
Bengali	আপানি যদি বাংলায় এই বুকলেটের (পুস্তিকা) সামগ্রী (সংক্ষিপ্ত বিবরণী) চান , তাহলে এই পৃষ্ঠার নিচে যাদের নাম লেখা আছে তাদের অথবা যে কোন একজনকে বলা করে ফোন করুন।
Chinese	如須此小冊子摘要之中文版，請與在本頁底部列出之任何人士電話聯絡。
Hindi	अगर इस पत्रिकाकी हिन्दीमे विशेष माहिती जानना चाहते हो तो आप, नीचे दिये गये किसी भी व्यक्तिसे फोन पर बात कर सकते हो।
Punjabi	ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਪੁਸਤਿਕਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਣਨਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।
Urdu	اگر آپ کو اس کتابچہ کا خلاصہ اردو میں چاہیے تو آپ اس صفحے پر نیچے دیئے گئے ناموں میں سے کسی ایک سے فون پر بات کریں۔

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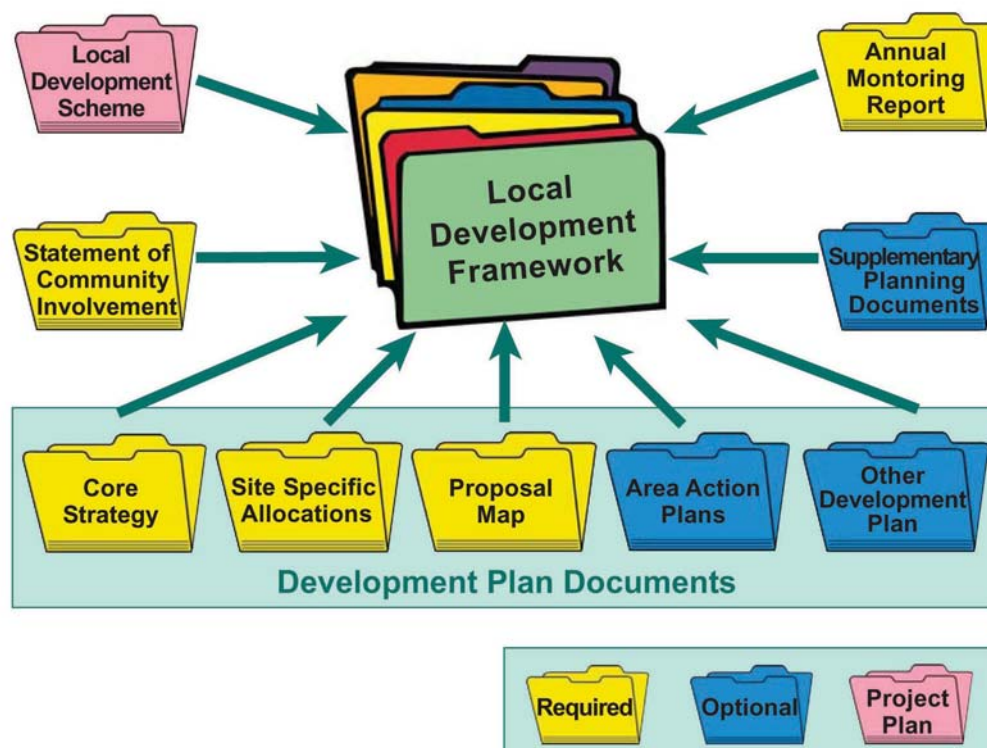
1 Foreword

- 1.1 In 2004 the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act introduced a new planning system for England. A key objective of the new system is to strengthen community involvement. Local authorities are therefore required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI for short) as one of the first steps. This is the final version of the SCI for Newcastle, prepared after extensive consultation throughout 2005.
- 1.2 The principles and guidelines set out here will apply directly to plans and related documents prepared under the new Planning Act. However, the overall approach will be the same as that taken in preparing other plans and strategies and there should be no difference in the way the Council involves the community, whatever the topic under discussion and whoever is leading that discussion.
- 1.3 The Council is committed to engagement with all residents and other stakeholders in the city. *The Community Participation Plan* and the *Consultation and Liaison Code of Practice - a Compact between Newcastle's voluntary sector and the City Council* demonstrate this. The Council is also participating in the Home Office sponsored Civic Pioneers initiative.
- 1.4 The Council supports the Newcastle Partnership, which produces the City's Community Strategy, called the *Newcastle Plan*. A fundamental part of the Partnership's vision is that people are included and involved in decisions. The Council will work with the Partnership to ensure that this vision is put in place.
- 1.5 The principles set out in all these documents will be further developed in accordance with the Council's own adopted vision and more particularly in line with the values which lie behind it. The values say that the Council will:
- Be an open, accountable, listening, responsive council.
 - Put the customer and citizen at the heart of everything we do, delivering services in a caring and sensitive manner.
 - Manage resources in a co-ordinated way and with an emphasis upon sustainability.
 - Value the contribution of partners, employees and citizens, trusting each other and working collaboratively.
 - See the diversity of our people and communities as a strength.
 - Focus upon continuous improvement in the pursuit of excellence, setting and achieving clear priorities and embracing new opportunities.

2 The new planning system

- 2.1 Central government requires local authorities to prepare and consult upon development plans for their areas. *The Unitary Development Plan* (UDP for short), which was adopted in 1998, sits alongside the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East to form the current development plan for Newcastle. Under the new system, the Council must review the UDP and replace it over time with a rolling programme of new *development plan documents*.
- 2.2 This new system is designed so that local councils can decide which combination of planning documents best suit their circumstances. The ability to produce a series of documents rather than review the UDP as a whole will make it easier to keep policies and proposals up to date. The new development plan documents and other supporting documents will be grouped into what is called the Local Development Framework (LDF for short).
- 2.3 There will be different sorts of documents in the Local Development Framework, as illustrated in figure 2.1 and described below. Further information can be found in the references listed at the end.

Fig 2.1: The elements of the Local Development Framework



Development plan documents

2.4 These have the highest status and will have the most scrutiny, including independent examination by a planning inspector. The Local Development Framework must include in time the following:

- The **core strategy**, setting out the vision, objectives and strategic policies for the city as a whole.
- **Site specific allocations**, showing which land is set aside for specific uses of land.
- The **proposals map**, illustrating the geographical extent of policies and updated as necessary to reflect other development plan documents.

The Local Development Framework can also include the following if needed:

- **Area action plans**, for parts of the city undergoing major change or requiring special protection.
- **Other development plan documents**, for example to cover specific topics such as housing, employment or retail development or to amend development control policies generally.

Supplementary planning documents

2.5 These do not have development plan status, are quicker to prepare than development plan documents and are not subject to independent examination. They cannot rewrite policy and cannot allocate land for specific uses. They will still be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement and sustainability appraisal and can constitute a material consideration in decision-making.

Other documents in the Local Development Framework

2.6 Supporting documents in the LDF will include:

- The **local development scheme**, setting out details of each of the development plan and other documents to be produced and the time scales and arrangements for production.
- The **statement of community involvement**, specifying how the authority intends to involve communities and stakeholders in the process of preparing local development documents.
- An **annual monitoring report**, setting out progress in terms of producing local development documents and implementing policies.

Role of SCI

- 2.7 The Council as local planning authority must comply with the standards of consultation contained in the approved SCI when preparing and reviewing relevant documents in the Local Development Framework. The Council will therefore meet not only the minimum standards set by regulations but also undertake a wider range of community involvement as described in later sections below.
- 2.8 The regulations state that all development plan documents and supplementary planning documents must be accompanied in their final stages by a statement covering community involvement - a *pre-submission consultation statement* for the former and a *consultation statement* for the latter. The statement in each case must set out who has been involved, how they were consulted, a summary of the issues raised and how those issues have been addressed.
- 2.9 Failure to meet the standards as set out in the final version of this SCI could result in development plan documents being unable to progress through to adoption and leave supplementary planning documents open to challenge. The primary test for development plan documents when subject to public examination is that they are 'sound', as defined in government guidance. One test of soundness is that the document has been prepared in accordance with the approved SCI (or the relevant regulations if the SCI is not yet adopted). There are also similar tests for soundness of this SCI and these are given in Appendix B.

3 The Local Development Framework in Newcastle

Development plan and other documents

- 3.1 The City Council took the first steps in producing its Local Development Framework by approving the Local Development Scheme (LDS) in February 2005. As outlined above, this sets out the proposed programme of new development plan and other related documents, including timetables for the production of the first ones. At the heart of the Local Development Scheme are six development plan documents which are to be produced up to 2008.
- 3.2 The LDS document as approved sets out the proposed timetable for these plans, as follows. As the details of our LDS including the timetable for plans may change over time, please visit our website at www.newcastle.gov.uk/ldf for the most up to date version of the scheme and information on proposed reviews.
- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|
| Core Strategy | December 2006 |
| Walker Riverside Area Action Plan | April 2007 |
| City Centre Area Action Plan | January 2008 |
| Benwell Scotswood Area Action Plan | February 2008 |
| Site-specific land allocations | March 2009 |
| Development control policies | June 2009 |
- 3.3 The LDS also sets out Unitary Development Plan policies which are to be 'saved' for the time being and a schedule of supplementary planning documents that the Council proposes to prepare.

Sustainability appraisal

- 3.4 In preparing development plan documents and supplementary planning documents within the Local Development Framework, the Council must undertake sustainability appraisal. For development plan documents this process must also incorporate the requirements of the *European Union Strategic Environmental Assessment directive 2001/42/EC*. At each stage the sustainability appraisal will examine the social, environmental and economic effects of policies and proposals.
- 3.5 In preparing its methodology for sustainability appraisal, the Council has built on work done at the regional level by SUSTAINED, the region's Sustainable Development Round Table. SUSTAINED has produced a Regional Sustainable Development Framework entitled the Integrated Regional Framework. It contains the framework for undertaking sustainability appraisals and in particular includes 17 objectives which it recommends to others. The Council is adapting these for its own use.

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- 3.6 In preparing and implementing sustainability appraisals for planning documents, the Council will:
- Consult key stakeholders on the scope, key issues and detailed objectives for each appraisal process.
 - Consult a broader range of stakeholders and the public on identifying and testing options against the agreed sustainability objectives as part of the wider consultation process.
 - Prepare and publish interim and final sustainability reports alongside the formal drafts of the related document (as required by regulation).

Keeping up to date with the Local Development Framework

- 3.7 Circumstances change and the programme of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents within the LDS may change over time. The most reliable source of information on changes to the Framework programme will be the LDF website. The website will be continually updated as soon as new information is available. Addresses for this and a range of other useful websites are given at the end of this document. For those without access to the internet, then similar information will always be available by letter or telephone. The Council may produce newsletters from time to time to update interested individuals and organisations. The consultation pages on the City Council web site always list current consultations (planning or otherwise).

4 Links with other plans, strategies and corporate processes

Community Strategy

- 4.1 The Community Strategy and the Local Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for the city were published in early 2005 by the Newcastle Partnership. Together they form the Newcastle Plan *Making a Great North City*. The Strategy is a very important context for all work of the Council including planning. In addition the continuing work of the Partnership to promote the nine themes of the Newcastle Plan will assist greatly in community involvement in planning.
- 4.2 The nine themes of the Plan are as follows and each has or will have a dedicated group to make that part of the Plan happen:
- Community Safety
 - Environment
 - Health and social care
 - Housing
 - Learning
 - Prosperous city
 - Children and young people
 - Creativity and culture
 - Transport and access

At a general meeting of the Partnership in January 2004 a set of principles covering community involvement were agreed and they are consistent with those set out in this document. This and other information is on the Newcastle Plan website.

Other plans and strategies

- 4.3 The Council and its partners in various activities produce many plans and strategies. The Newcastle Plan has an over-arching role and the Council is preparing a complementary Regeneration Strategy for publication in 2006. This aims to harness all available resources and to ensure that delivery matches strategic policy. The Council and its partners have a range of other more specific plans and strategies in place or under preparation. The Local Development Framework will help coordinate the locational, land use and transportation aspects of all of these. The Council will ensure that where possible consultation exercises for different purposes but with common themes are integrated in order to avoid confusion, to achieve best value for money and to avoid consultation fatigue.

Council governance and corporate consultation

- 4.4 The Council is continually trying to make local government more meaningful to residents and other stakeholders. The *Community Participation Plan* describes a 5-stage model of participation and each part of the Council is required to support its principles and put them into action. At the time of writing the Council is considering how to move these principles forward and whether to develop them further. There will undoubtedly be more emphasis on decision making and ownership of actions at a local level.
- 4.5 One specific issue is how best to make use of the existing arrangements for ward/area committees (the latter covering groups of wards, typically three or four). Both levels can make a major contribution to enhancing community involvement. The precise arrangements for ward and area representation in future are not yet known but the planning system will be active at both levels.
- 4.6 The Council is also looking at the key corporate strategies covering consultation and community involvement processes. The *Community Participation Plan* and the *Consultation and Liaison Code of Practice - a Compact between Newcastle's voluntary sector and the City Council* are being reviewed. A corporate toolkit on information, consultation and community engagement will be ready by mid 2006 and will be available on the Council's website. Participation in the Home Office sponsored Civic Pioneers initiative will provide useful help in developing new ideas and learning from others.

5 The Local Development Framework - who we are going to involve and how

- 5.1 There are a large number of organisations as well as individuals who may have an interest in shaping the future of Newcastle. The new Planning Act and related regulations set out consultation standards which the Council must meet as a minimum. At certain times in the formal process the Council must write to specific bodies and organisations and these are specifically named or described in categories in government guidance. Appendices A1, A2 and A3 list these specifically for Newcastle.

Who we plan to involve

- 5.2 The Council will seek to exceed these standards whenever it can in order that it engages more people and organisations than are currently involved. The following list indicates those we hope to bring in to the process.

The general public:

- Residents of Newcastle.
- Those who work in the city.
- Local neighbourhood and residents groups.
- Other community and neighbourhood based groups.
- Groups representing black and ethnic minority communities.
- Groups representing the young and the city's elders.
- Groups representing disabled people.
- Faith groups.
- Trade unions.

Political representatives:

- Parish and ward councillors.
- MPs and MEPs

Groups and organisations, including those with an interest in:

- Environment, transport and health.
- Building conservation and heritage.
- Animal welfare.
- Education, learning and skills.
- Business, industry and commerce.
- Landowners, agents and developers.
- Housebuilders and housing providers.
- Waste and mineral operators.
- Retail and leisure.
- Sport, recreation and tourism.

City wide and area partnerships, including development trusts

National and regional governance:

- North East Assembly.
- Neighbouring local authorities.
- ONE NorthEast.
- Regional Housing Board.
- Bridging NewcastleGateshead (Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder).
- Government Office for the North East.
- Other government departments and agencies.

Providers of public services, including:

- Utility providers.
- Telecommunications operators.
- Transport companies.

How we plan to involve you

- 5.3 In the past the Council in preparing development plans has depended heavily on formal written forms of consultation, though with some use of more interactive techniques. Under the new system local authorities are encouraged to involve people in the process as early as possible and to do so in ways that maximise the involvement of all sections of the community.
- 5.4 Whilst some are familiar with the planning system, many people and organisations are unfamiliar with planning and what it can (and cannot) achieve. The Council intends therefore to take an inclusive approach, seeking to involve everybody, and to do so in a way that everybody can understand. Some are harder to reach and involve than others and the Council will concentrate initially on contacting the young, the city's elders and black and minority ethnic communities.
- 5.5 For strategic exercises such as the LDF Core Strategy the Council will generally work with umbrella organisations that seek to represent and provide links to hard to reach parts of the community. These exist to a certain extent at the time of writing, though will undoubtedly develop further in the future. For more localised exercises such as Area Action Plans a wider range of opportunities will arise to work with geographically based groups. Work with schools will be important in order to reach the young. We will ask for the help of Planning Aid where possible.

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- 5.6 The Council has many ways in which it can involve individuals and organisations. It is important that a range of techniques is considered in every consultation exercise. It is not the role of this SCI to lay down precisely what should happen in each case, but Appendix C sets out in table form a range of possible techniques that might be used in a variety of circumstances. Appendix E discusses the possible benefits and some drawbacks of these techniques.
- 5.7 The emphasis in government guidance and in this SCI is on early involvement of the community and other stakeholders in the planning process, well before formal consultation processes begin. However, the formal processes are important in ensuring that everybody with an interest has an opportunity to comment on a clear, fully worked up plan within a set of rules that cannot be varied. Should there be objections to proposals, then for development plan documents there will be adjudication by an independent inspector.
- 5.8 The following two diagrams summarise the process through which the Council will go in preparing supplementary planning documents and development plan documents. These are not intended to be fully detailed and reference should always be made to legislation, regulations and central government guidance on the detail. Timescales are indicative apart from the 4-6 week formal consultation period for SPDs and the two 6 week formal consultation periods for DPDs.

Fig 5.1: Formal stages of preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Weeks*	Stage	What we will do to engage stakeholders and the community	Sustainability Appraisal (SA) stage
6-8	Gathering evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map community structure Build capacity and partnerships 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Stage A Setting Appraisal scope </div>
6-8	Scoping issues and options and prepare for consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve in scoping and identify issues and options Ask for views on planning issues and options 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Stage B Developing & refining options </div>
	Approve draft SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish and make available copies of the draft SPD as widely as possible, along with the Sustainability Appraisal Report Notify where the draft SPD can be viewed / where copies will be made available & the time frame in which comments can be made 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Stage C Appraising the effects of the SPD </div>
4-6	4-6 weeks statutory consultation on draft SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify that a draft SPD is to be published Invite representations 	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Stage D Consulting on plan & SA Report </div>
8-10	We consider your comments and amend the SPD accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to government direction for further modification Publish and make available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies of the SPD Additional documents as required by regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adoption statement The Sustainability Appraisal Report A statement setting out a summary of the main issues raised during the consultation & how these main issues have been addressed in the SPD to be adopted 	
	Finalise and adopt SPD		
	Publish adopted SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify that a SPD has been adopted and where it can be viewed and where copies will be made available 	
on-going	Monitor SPD implementation		<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"> Stage E Monitoring </div>

* N.B. These are very indicative timescales, as they can vary greatly depending on the content of the document.



Fig 5.2: Formal stages of preparation of a Development Plan Document (DPD)

Weeks*	Stage	What we will do to engage stakeholders and the community	Sustainability Appraisal (SA) stage
12	Gathering evidence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map community structure Build capacity and partnerships 	Stage A Setting Appraisal scope
12	Scoping issues and options and prepare for consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve in scoping and identify issues and options Ask for views on planning issues and options 	
	Approve preferred options draft DPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish and make available copies of the Preferred Options Document as widely as possible, along with a Sustainability Appraisal Report on the Preferred Options Notify where the draft DPD can be viewed / where copies will be made available and the time frame in which comments can be made 	Stage B Developing & refining options Stage C Appraising the effects of the plan
6	6 weeks pre-submission public consultation on preferred options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify that a draft DPD is to be published, the proposed title of the document and a brief description of what subject matter the DPD will cover Invite representations 	
12	We consider your comments and amend the DPD accordingly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Involve consultees as necessary on specific issues Provide feedback 	
	Approve submission draft DPD and submit Secretary of State (via GONE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish and make available: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Copies of draft DPD encompassing any changes as a result of pre-submission consultation Additional documents as required by regulations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Sustainability Appraisal Report A pre-submission consultation statement Such supporting documents as in the opinion of the authority are considered relevant to preparation of the DPD 	

Fig 5.2: Formal stages of preparation of a Development Plan Document (DPD) cont.

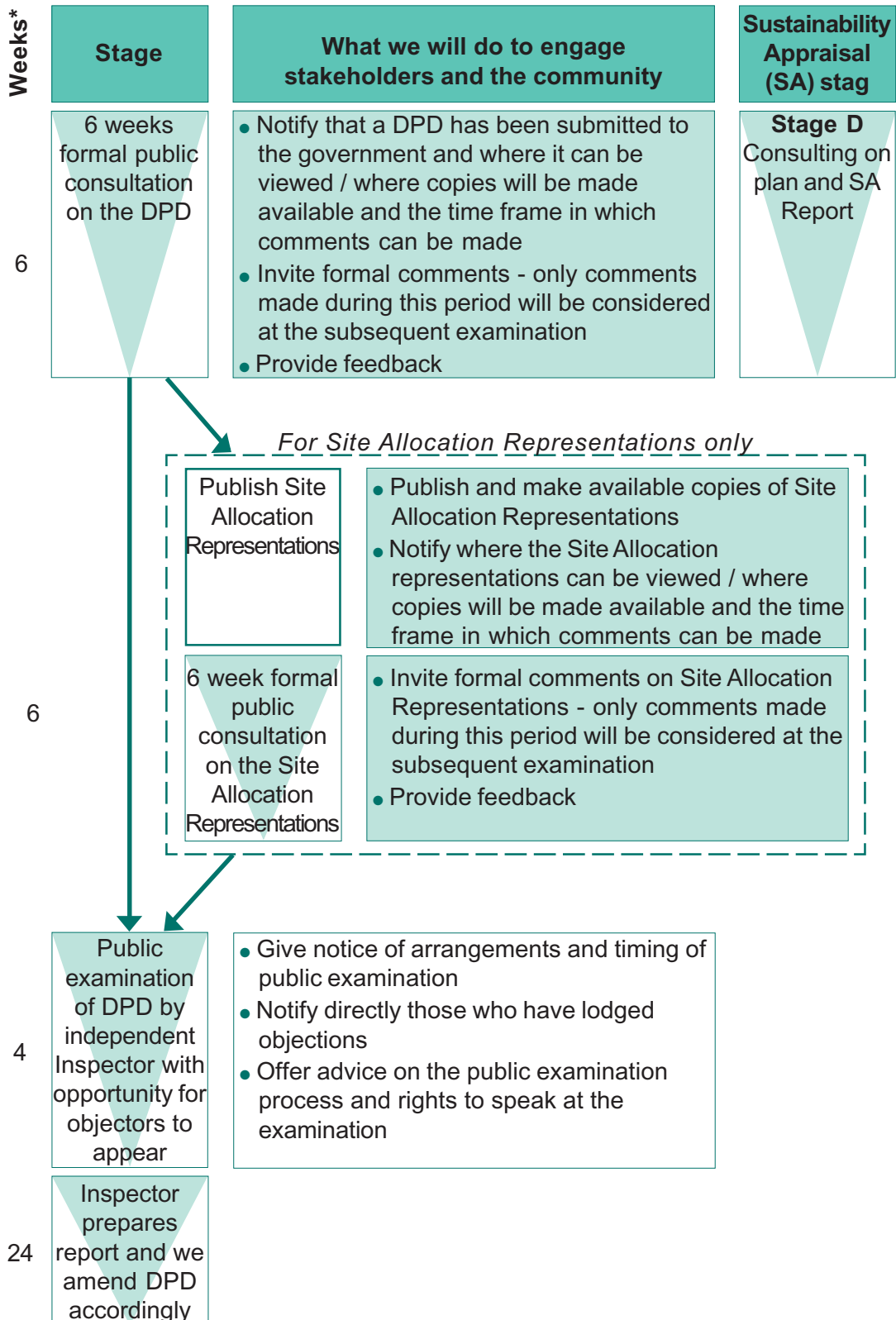
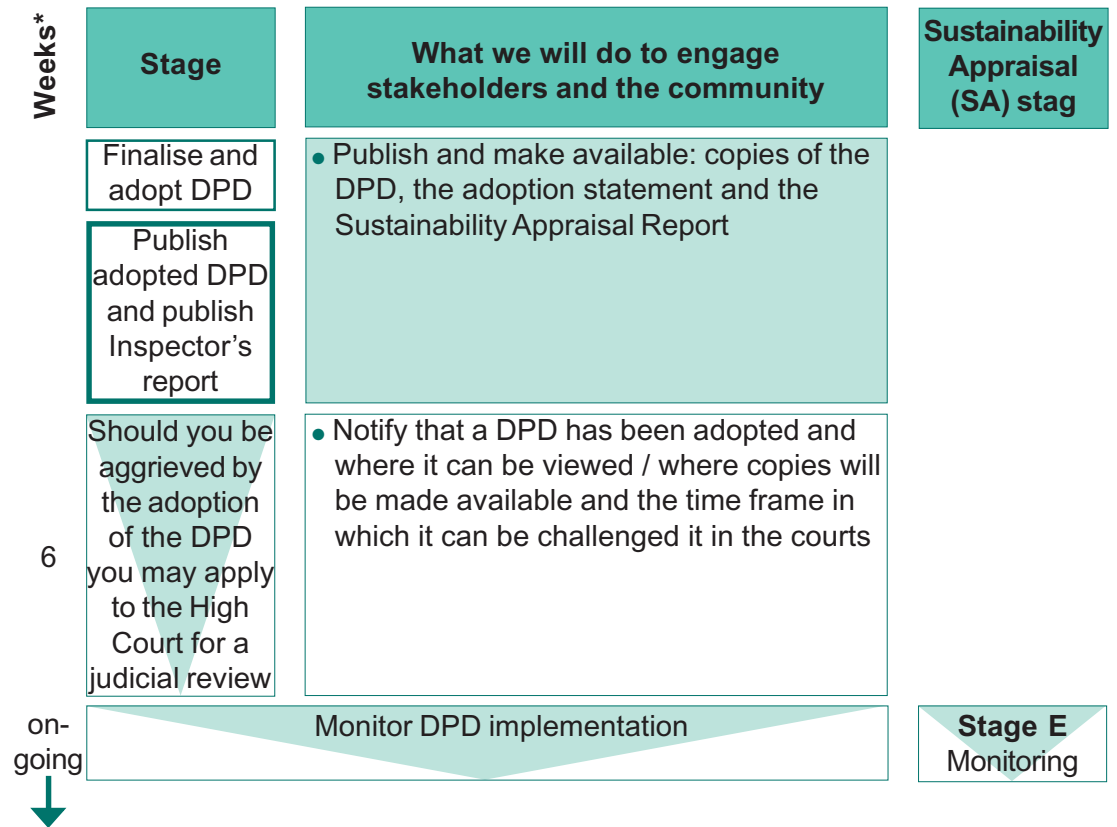


Fig 5.2: Formal stages of preparation of a Development Plan Document (DPD) cont.



* N.B. These are very indicative timescales, as they can vary greatly depending on the content of the document. Please See the Local Development Scheme for expected overall timetable for Development Plan Documents.



The role of councillors

- 5.9 Councillors as elected members of the City Council represent the communities in their ward. They also have a decision making role through the Council itself or via one of its committees. They will have a very important part to play in developing plans for the city. At the time of publication of this SCI the Council is considering how best to involve councillors and members of the public more meaningfully at the very local level in planning and other decisions.
- 5.10 Councillors will always be willing to receive and consider the views of individuals on planning matters, but it should be noted that if anyone wishes to comment formally on a planning document they should write directly to the Head of Planning and Transportation or as otherwise indicated in consultation documents.

The role of planning officers

- 5.11 Planning officers are generally available by prior arrangement to discuss issues raised during preparation of planning documents. If people are aware that others share their concern or that an existing organisation is already taking an issue up with the Council, then the possibility of a meeting shared with others should be considered so as to make best use of limited officer time and other resources.
- 5.12 Equally the officer contacted may suggest that a forthcoming meeting or event already organised might meet the needs and suggest attendance there. As with councillors, it should be noted that if anyone wishes to comment formally on a planning document they should write directly to the Head of Planning and Transportation or as otherwise indicated in consultation documents.

Planning Aid

- 5.13 The Council recognises that some individuals or organisations might welcome independent advice on planning issues or support in preparing a community response to a consultation. There may be other agencies active in the area that can provide this sort of support, but the Council is aware that the Planning Aid North service of the Royal Town Planning Institute can offer help, particularly to those with limited resources. We will mention the service and contact details in all major consultation exercises.

6 Steps to ensure effective community involvement

- 6.1 This document specifically covers consultation and community involvement in relation to three areas of planning:
- Development plan documents and supplementary planning documents as part of the Local Development Framework.
 - Development control decision making in relation to planning applications.
 - The increasingly important phase of discussions and negotiation with potential developers prior to submission of a planning application.

This section sets out general principles and related actions that should be followed in any significant consultation exercise. The need for such an exercise in the development control process is explained in more detail in section 7 and for the pre-application stage in section 8.

- 6.2 The following paragraphs describe briefly each step that should be considered and if appropriate followed. Each exercise will be different and all steps may not be necessary every time. However, it is important that at the start of any exercise a 'scoping' exercise is carried out to ensure that the provisions of this SCl will be met by the end.

Scoping of exercise

- 6.3 It is essential that the purpose of any community involvement exercise is clear and explained at an early stage. For all consultation or community involvement exercises other than in routine development control cases, it is essential that the lead organisation (often the Council itself) should produce a *Community Involvement Scoping Report*. This report need not be published formally, though for larger exercise it might be advisable to do so and even invite comments before it is finalised. If possible scoping of community involvement and consultation should be carried out alongside scoping of the sustainability appraisal.
- 6.4 The Community Involvement Scoping Report must cover the following:
- (a) Nature of overall planning process underway and what it will produce.
 - (b) How the proposed community involvement exercise will influence decision making.
 - (c) The relationship of the planning exercise to the existing, wider planning framework.
 - (d) Whether or not the exercise is consistent with or seeks to change that wider planning framework.
 - (e) The extent of previous consultation exercises in the area and how the outputs from those will be used.

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- (f) Identification in principle of which parts of the local community and which other stakeholders (in the local area or more widely) are to be involved and where possible identify specific proposed consultees.
 - (g) An outline of the proposed actions with a timetable.
 - (h) An estimate of resources required and how they are to be found.

Discussion with the Council as planning authority

- 6.5 Most exercises covered directly by this SCI will be carried out by the City Council itself. However, on occasions an exercise may be led by an outside agency or commissioned by another organisation or company, for example a land owner or an applicant for planning permission. If such outside organisations are taking the lead it is essential that the scope of the exercise is discussed with the Council as planning authority before any actions are taken. Further advice is given later in this SCI in section 8 on pre-application proposals.

Mapping of community structures and stakeholder interest

- 6.6 Before any work starts, those leading the exercise should ensure that they have as complete as possible an idea of which local organisations might have an interest in the planning document or development proposals. The Council will assist outside organisations in compiling a list of such organisations as necessary. There may also be those with other interests in the process with a local, city, regional or even national remit. For some processes, there are legal requirements to consult certain organisations such as government agencies and other organisations.

Building capacity and creating partnerships

- 6.7 Guidance on the new planning system emphasises the need for early and meaningful involvement of communities. A partnership approach with an emphasis on early discussion and 'front-loading' of discussion is encouraged. Some communities may be able to cope with the sometimes complex issues behind plans and proposals. Others may need support. Those leading the exercise should consider the need for financial or in kind support to community organisations if this does not exist already. It may be appropriate to seek advice from the Planning Aid North service.

Undertaking consultation and encouraging participation

- 6.8 At the heart of the exercise will be a range of methods for informing and involving individuals and organisations in the process. Appendix C to this SCI sets out a range of possible methods with an indication of which might be the most appropriate at each scale. Appendix E discusses benefits and drawbacks of each technique. This list is not prescriptive nor is it necessarily comprehensive and those leading the exercise should decide how best to carry out their own exercise. However, it should be noted that for the more formal parts of some processes such as preparation of a development plan document or processing of a planning application there will be minimum standards laid down in regulations.

Ensuring everybody has an opportunity to be involved

- 6.9 In planning the exercise and in preparing written and other material those leading the exercise should ensure that information is accessible to everybody. Equally all individuals and groups should feel welcome to participate in planned activities. Particular attention should be paid to creating clear, concise and readily understandable documents, available wherever possible in translation and in forms usable by those unable to read conventionally sized print. Any charges for documents should be kept to a minimum.
- 6.10 Whilst use of electronic formats including websites is actively encouraged, all material should also be available in conventional printed form. Those planning an exercise should consider how best to involve hard to reach groups including the young, older people and black and minority ethnic communities. Physical access should be possible for everybody at all events without having to make special arrangements. Arrangements should be made to cover caring responsibilities if possible and help with transport to less accessible venues should be considered.
- 6.11 All printed documents produced specifically for consultation purposes should contain a statement in appropriate languages and typeface size indicating how translated, large typeface or audio versions can be obtained on request via telephone, email or in writing. Documents should be available on request in Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Hindi, Punjabi or Urdu. Disability North will normally expect to be consulted without special request with versions of documents in both normal and 20 point type face.

Giving feedback

- 6.12 It is essential at each stage (or for shorter exercises at the end) that there is a clear statement as to what has been done, what consultation responses have been received and how these have influenced the decision making process up to that point. This must then be communicated to those who have been involved. It will not usually be possible for everybody's views to be taken on board fully, but all participants must be sure that their voices have been heard and opinions actively considered.

Undertaking evaluation and external assessment

- 6.13 At the end of the exercise there should be an evaluation of what has actually happened against the expectations and standards set out in this SCI and more generally in terms of its successes and failures. Whilst it is not a requirement of this SCI, it might be useful for larger exercises (and particularly for those commissioned by organisations with a financial interest in the eventual outcome) to seek an independent assessment of the exercise. Such evaluation should be planned in from the start and run alongside the main exercise.
- 6.14 As well as individuals and organisations with a known interest being notified, copies of any documents summarising consultation responses or giving any related feedback on progress should be available on the internet at a well publicised web address (generally www.newcastle.gov.uk/ldf for Council led exercises). Printed copies should also be made available at any location used for deposit of documents in previous stages of the consultation, for example libraries.

7 Community involvement in the Development Control process

Development control - what it does

- 7.1 The City Council as local planning authority for the area deals with all planning applications in Newcastle. The process by which this and other councils deal with these applications is called *development control*. The development control system works within the framework set by the development plan. This is currently the Unitary Development Plan but will in future be the Local Development Framework as already described.
- 7.2 The development plan does not in itself indicate how each planning application should be determined. Planning legislation and government guidance allows a considerable degree of discretion to local planning authorities in considering each case. The guidance attaches significant importance to seeking and taking note of the views of residents and other stakeholders and there are minimum standards set in regulations as to who should be consulted.

Consultation on planning applications in Newcastle

- 7.3 The table in Appendix D describes what consultation is carried out to meet government standards and beyond in the city. In summary, consultation letters are sent to all neighbouring properties that share a boundary, or are opposite the site and will be affected by the proposal. In certain circumstances, planning applications are advertised in the local evening paper and applications may be advertised by notices placed on or near the application site.
- 7.4 The Council acknowledges that a small number of applications, and not necessarily just those on larger sites, may have a wider impact than on adjoining owners or occupiers. The Council therefore will on occasion consult residents and others on a wider basis, normally through the use of formal consultation letters.
- 7.5 The Council does not normally arrange public meetings or other forms of event in relation to specific applications, although officers will attend meetings organised or requested by others if possible. Lists of all applications received and decisions reached on applications are available on the Council's website, along with copies of the Development Control Committee agenda and minutes. A weekly list of applications received can be either e-mailed or posted to community and amenity groups.

The decision making process

- 7.6 The process following consultation can be summarised as follows:
- All representations received on planning applications are summarised in a report on the application and are considered before a decision is made.
 - Applications will not be determined before the 22 days allowed for responses has expired. Bodies such as English Nature will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.
 - Further consultation will be done when amended plans are received which raise new issues or do not resolve objections previously made.
 - The results of any such consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, the Council.
 - A senior officer under 'delegated powers' determines approximately 94% of planning applications.
 - The other 6% of applications, which are either particularly significant or receive a certain number of objections, are determined by the Development Control Committee, made up of elected councillors.
 - Ward councillors may speak on an objector's behalf at Development Control Committee and the public can usually speak by prior arrangement.
 - When a decision has been made on a planning application, all members of the public who made comments are informed of the decision.

What we may do in the future to improve the service

- 7.7 The Development Control service is under constant review. There is always a need to find an acceptable balance between achieving tight government performance targets on the one hand and meeting other objectives such as achieving more community involvement on the other. Major changes to the consultation processes outlined here are not currently proposed, but two amendments are being considered.
- 7.8 The first is the possible introduction of standard representation forms for making comments on planning applications, available in particular on the website. Such forms would simplify the task of collating comments but might not suit some or even most of those commenting.
- 7.9 The second is the possible increase in liaison with community groups on very large or significant applications. This could have significant resource implications and it is thought sensible to see if the greater use of pre-application consultations might satisfy the evident desire for more involvement by some groups and organisations.

8 Pre application consultation and community involvement

- 8.1 The Council is considering how to improve the way in which it handles discussions with landowners and potential developers prior to planning applications being made. Central government encourages local authorities to use what is known as the Development Team Approach to improve overall efficiency and reduce the likelihood of disagreements at the application stage. It involves a coordinated approach for officers within the Council and gives set procedures for involving others outside.
- 8.2 At the time of publishing this SCI the Council is finalising its internal Development Team Approach procedure, but this will contain very clear cross referencing to the contents of this document, especially to section 6. A guiding principle in applying the Development Team Approach will be transparency. Reinforcing this approach is the strong government encouragement for consultation and community involvement exercises to be undertaken before planning applications are made. The Council supports this strongly in principle. Such consultation can be done either by the Council or perhaps more usually by the potential developer.
- 8.3 The nature and extent of a pre-application consultation exercise will depend very much on the scale or impact of the development proposed. Appendix C on use of consultation methods gives a broad indication of how high, medium and small scale (or impact) proposals might be dealt with. The table in Appendix C does not include set thresholds between the different scales and a judgement will be needed in each case as to which category a plan or development should apply.
- 8.4 In the first instance, developers considering a community consultation or involvement exercise should undertake a scoping exercise as set out in paragraphs 6.3 and 6.4. This should include immediate discussion with the Council as per paragraph 6.5. The Council can advise on whether or not the proposal appears to fit within the current planning policy framework and, if not, how to deal with this. The Council can help with the mapping of community structures and stakeholder interest. The need for support for community organisations can also be discussed. It may also be advisable to consider early discussions with statutory consultees on likely impacts on sensitive sites.

9 Resources and management

- 9.1 The changes to the planning system introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 give added emphasis to community involvement. It is important that this aspect is properly managed and that there are adequate resources to carry it out. It will be necessary to monitor how well the system is working and in due course the Council will need to review this SCI.

Management and resources

- 9.2 The Head of Planning and Transportation has overall responsibility for coordinating both the Local Development Framework (LDF) and the Development Control function. He is also responsible for coordinating transport policy through the Local Transport Plan (LTP). Within his Division the Strategic Planning and Transportation Group is responsible for coordination of the LDF and directly for the Core Strategy and the other city wide development plan documents. The Planning Control Group in the same Division is responsible for development control.
- 9.3 The Head of Sustainable Development is responsible for area based planning work and is responsible for progressing Area Action Plans. Staff in his Division work together with those from Planning and Transportation on these and also on preparation of supplementary planning documents.
- 9.4 Both Divisions have or will identify resources for community involvement exercises under their control, from mainstream revenue funding, Planning Delivery Grant or from other sources. Adequate resources for training of officers in regeneration and community involvement skills will be identified also in line with the national *Skills for Sustainable Communities* initiative.
- 9.5 There will be many opportunities for working with others both within the Council and outside to undertake joint exercises that meet both planning and other objectives. Work on the Housing Strategy and on the Bridging NewcastleGateshead (Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder) programme are just two examples. Every effort will be made to ensure that community involvement exercises are coordinated and integrated through the Council's existing corporate officer Research Group and otherwise.
- 9.6 Where landowners, developers or external organisations choose to carry out pre application consultation exercises (as encouraged by this SCI) they will be responsible for the cost. The Council may choose to cooperate with and possibly take part itself in these exercises and may consider contributing to the cost, but this should not be assumed in the first instance. There may be opportunities for using skills and experience in the community itself, though this may require some financial or in kind support.

Monitoring and review

- 9.7 The Council will monitor progress on preparing the documents named in the Local Development Scheme and will assess the success of their community involvement exercises as compared with the related Community Involvement Scoping Report. The Council will review the effectiveness of community involvement in the development control process from time to time. The Council will research emerging best practice in other local authorities. The need to review this SCI will be considered annually alongside preparation of the Local Development Framework *Annual Monitoring Report*.

Conformity of the SCI with Regulations and Guidance

- 9.8 This SCI has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and related government guidance, as explained in the Consultation Statement submitted alongside the Submission Draft SCI in September 2005.

Key national references

- 1 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
- 3 Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives, 2004.
- 4 Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, 2004.
- 5 Creating Local Development Frameworks: Companion Guide to PPS12, 2004.

Available via www.opsi.gov.uk (1 & 2) and www.communities.gov.uk (3-5)

Useful web sites

- Newcastle City Council Consultation www.newcastle.gov.uk
Local Development Framework www.newcastle.gov.uk/consultation
City Council Vision and Values www.newcastle.gov.uk/ldf
www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/vision
- Newcastle Plan www.newcastle.gov.uk/newcastleplan
- Civic Pioneers www.togetherwecan.info/pioneers
- Planning Aid www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
- Government publications online www.opsi.gov.uk
- Dept for Communities & Local Government www.communities.gov.uk

Appendix A1

List of 'specific' consultees (based on Annex E in PPS12) for Local Development Framework purposes

North East Assembly as Regional Planning Body

Relevant authorities:

Parish Councils in Newcastle, and Parish Councils in Castle Morpeth with boundaries immediately adjacent to Newcastle's administrative area.

Adjacent local authorities: North Tyneside Council, South Tyneside Council, Gateshead Council, Northumberland County Council, Castle Morpeth Borough Council.

The Countryside Agency

The Environment Agency

The Highways Agency

The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage)

English Nature

The Strategic Rail Authority

ONE NorthEast as Regional Development Agency

Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under s106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003

Any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the Local Planning Authority

Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic Health Authority

Northern Gas Networks Ltd as gas licensee

Northumbrian Water Ltd as water and sewerage undertaker

Plus

Government departments, generally through the Government Office for the North East

Appendix A2

List of 'standard' national and regional consultees (based on Annex E in PPS12) for Local Development Framework purposes

Age Concern

British Geological Survey

Bridging NewcastleGateshead (Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder

North East Chamber of Commerce

CBI

Church Commissioners

Newcastle International Airport (in its own right and for Civil Aviation Authority)

The Coal Authority

CABE

English Partnerships

Commission for Racial Equality

Crown Estate Office

Disability Rights Commission

Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee

Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

Friends of the Earth

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Northumberland Wildlife Trust

Durham Wildlife Trust

Tyne and Wear Fire and Civil Defence Authority

Forestry Commission

Freight Transport Association

Gypsy Council

Health and Safety Executive

Help the Aged

The Housing Corporation

Learning and Skills Council Tyne and Wear

National Playing Fields Association

Network Rail

Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority

Nexus - Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Executive

Northumbria Police

Port of Tyne Authority

Rail companies

Regional Housing Board

Regional Sports Board

Road Haulage Association

Sport England

Home Builders Federation

Local authorities and sub regional bodies in the region not covered
by Appendix A1

Appendix A3

List of categories of other consultees (based on Annex E in PPS12) for Local Development Framework purposes

Voluntary bodies

Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups

Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups

Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons

Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business

Civic Societies

Community Groups

Local equality groups

Note:

Details of organisations in these categories (as well as those covered by Appendices A1 and A2) are held by the Council in the LDF Consultation Database. The names of all organisations currently held on this Database are available on the LDF website via the SCI page at www.newcastle.gov.uk/ldf. Requests to be added to or removed from the database can be made at any time via the contact points listed at the front of this SCI. Please note, this list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations occur.

Appendix B

Criteria for the examination of the soundness of an SCI

Paragraph 3.10 of Planning Policy Statement PPS12 *Local Development Frameworks* states the following in relation to the examination of an SCI:

The purpose of the examination is to consider the soundness of the statement of community involvement. The presumption will be that the statement of community involvement is sound unless it is shown to be otherwise as a result of evidence considered at the examination. A hearing will only be necessary where one or more of those making representations wish to be heard. In assessing whether the statement of community involvement is sound, the inspector will determine whether the:

- i Local planning authority has complied with the minimum requirements for consultations as set out in Regulations;
- 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;
- ix Statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.

Appendix C

Table of consultation methods with suggested application

Consultation methods	Policy documents			Site specific exercises			Development Control
	City wide policy	Area based policy	Topic based policy	Large scale or impact	Medium scale or impact	Small scale or impact	
Information							
Public notices on site				✓	✓		✓
Newspaper notices & adverts	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
Press releases	✓	✓	✓	✓			
TV & radio interviews	✓			✓			
Citylife (Council newspaper)	✓	✓	✓				
Displays at libraries, etc.	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Local leaflets & newsletters		✓		✓	✓	✓	
Council meetings - city	✓		✓				✓
- area	✓	✓	✓	✓			
- ward		✓		✓	✓		
Consultation							
Public meetings				✓	✓		
Open days, roadshows, etc	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Planning for Real®, etc.		✓		✓	✓		
Written consultation	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Speaking at Council Meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
User comments & complaints		✓					
Questionnaire surveys	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Focus groups	✓	✓	✓	✓			
User panel		✓					
Citizens' panel	✓	✓	✓				
Community etc. representation		✓		✓			
Citizens' juries	✓	✓	✓				
Ballots, referenda, etc.							
Participatory appraisal		✓		✓			
Residency periods		✓		✓	✓		
Stakeholder meetings	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Electronic Consultation							
Web site	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Email & bulletin board	✓	✓	✓	✓			
CD ROM	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Text messaging & SMS	✓	✓	✓	✓			
Visualisations & virtual reality	✓	✓		✓			

Appendix D

Summary of consultation processes in development control

Type of planning or other application	Stakeholders	What government regulations say we must	What additional publicity we do, where appropriate
Major Applications: housing more than 10 dwellings or 0.5 hectares; other development more than 1000m ² floorspace or 1.0 hectares.	Neighbours, general public and wider community. Government and statutory consultees.	Notice in a local paper, either post a site notice or neighbour notification.	Posting site notices and notifying neighbours.
Application that is a departure from the local plan, and/or has an environmental impact assessment.	Neighbours, general public and wider community. Government and statutory consultees.	Notice in a local paper and post a site notice.	Notifying neighbours.
Development affecting the setting of a listed building.	Neighbours, general public and wider community. English Heritage.	Notice in a local paper and post a site notice.	Notifying neighbours. Conservation Area Panel consulted.
Development affecting the character of a conservation area.	Neighbours, general public and wider community. English Heritage.	Notice in a local paper and post a site notice.	Notifying neighbours. Conservation Area Panel consulted.
Other applications.	Neighbours and general public.	Post a site notice or notify neighbours.	Normally notifying neighbours in adjoining properties. Posting site notices where there is likely to be wider public interest or where it not practicable to notify adjoining properties.
Advertisement Consent.	General public.	There are no statutory requirements.	A site notice may be displayed or a letter sent to neighbouring properties if it is considered that the advertisement may affect neighbouring residents or have a significance effect on the surrounding area.
Listed Building Consent.	Neighbours, general public and wider community.	Site notice. Notice in a local paper.	Letters are sent to adjoining properties. Conservation Area Panel may be consulted.

Appendix E

Discussion of Consultation Methods

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Information				
Public notices on sites	A notice providing a description of a development proposal, informing the public about the planning application and stating where a copy of the plans may be viewed. It should be located on the site in a high profile visible location or beside the existing or proposed access. Notices are often used in conjunction with press advertisement or neighbour notification.	In theory can reach a wide audience. Is most likely to be seen by regular users, so targets the groups most affected by the proposals.	Unlikely to be read widely. Often needs to be accompanied by other consultation methods. Can be subject to vandalism.	Cost of each notice is minimal and is sometimes covered by an applicant.
Newspaper notices & adverts	Notify local magazines or newspapers in order to inform large numbers of people of key consultations. They can take out an advert in the publication or include a supplementary flyer to be delivered with the publication.	Can inform large numbers of people relatively easily. Generates public debate.	Not inclusive of everyone. Excludes those who don't buy the publication.	Cost of advert or flyer – can be expensive.
Press releases	The issue of a statement to the media designed to inform the public of key issues and consultation events.	Can provide wide publicity of proposals.	Cannot guarantee that the press will report. No editorial control.	Minimal costs, if any.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Information cont.				
TV & radio interviews	Can be used to inform the community of key issues and consultations and to obtain public views.	The opportunities offered by new technologies can make participation easier and more enjoyable. Provides a quick response.	Can exclude significant groups. Can have technical problems. Relies on broadcasters to invite. No editorial control.	Minimal costs, if any.
Citylife (Council bimonthly newspaper)	The Council's free Newspaper which is sent bimonthly to every household in the city and can be used to provide information about the planning process, emerging issues and consultation events.	Reaches all households. The Council has editorial control.	Publication schedule may not coincide with the events. Not guaranteed that all residents will read it. Non-residents do not necessarily receive it.	Minimal if part of the existing publishing schedule. Special edition would be costly.
Displays at libraries, customer service centres, etc.	An exhibition or display held in a public library where audiences can be informed of an issue or service. The aim is to take the information to the community.	Gives flexible terms of attendance (i.e. not restricted to one time of day or location), so can be inclusive. Provides information for all. Can generate an informed public debate if used effectively. Can be left un-staffed.	Can only reach library users, so can exclude certain groups. May be limited space. Only limited information is available and it is more difficult to respond, unless accompanied by some form of comment cards or questionnaire.	Cost varies depending on display materials, but does saves on staff time compared to a roadshow.
Local leaflets & newsletters	Delivery of specially produced leaflets or summary documents informing residents of planning issues and inviting feedback.	Reaches all households.	Can be seen as junk mail and discarded. Response rate is likely to be low.	Printing costs. Delivery costs – e.g. Royal Mail door-to-door - £45 per 1,000.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Information cont.				
Council meetings	Members of the public are welcome to attend all meetings of the Council, except those where confidential or restricted information is being discussed. Public notice is given in advance of meetings including whether or not they are open to the public. The public can sometimes speak.	Residents and stakeholders can see decision making process in action. Many meetings (e.g. Area and Ward Committees) encourage participation. Council officers attend and can be asked questions directly.	Language used is sometimes very technical. Not necessarily intended for community involvement. Can be long and dull. Political debate can put some people off.	Costs already met by the Council at the centre
Consultation				
Public meetings	An open meeting where the Local Authority presents information and proposals within a framework which enables immediate discussion and feedback. Can be used to get a feel for public opinion on a particular topic/issue and to inform the public.	Provides local opportunities for people to comment on matters that affect them directly and indirectly. A convenient and transparent way to demonstrate public consultation/build up good relationships. Can be used to inform at the same time as getting views from the public. Attracts individuals as well as group representation. Can meet relatively large numbers of people at the same time. Can generate informed public debate if used effectively.	Self-selecting, as not everyone would be able to make it at the same time, so may not be representative of the wider community. Contributions will be specific and about local, topical or personal concerns rather than service-wide strategic priorities. Can be intimidating for individuals to voice opinions if too large. Can have a low turn out. Can be confrontational.	Up to £1,500 per meeting depending on venue, display materials, staffing

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Consultation cont.				
Open days, roadshows, etc.	<p>One or more exhibition or display held in accessible locations where audiences can be informed of an issue or service. They can have the opportunity to meet planning officers, who are available to answer questions. The aim is to take the information to the community using a wide range of media.</p>	<p>Gives flexible terms of attendance (i.e. not restricted to one time of day or location), so can be inclusive.</p> <p>Forum to listen as well as to inform.</p> <p>Promotes good relations as direct contact between public and decision makers.</p> <p>Good way of reaching large numbers if well located.</p> <p>Can generate an informed public debate if used effectively.</p>	<p>Can have a low turn out, especially if venue is poor.</p> <p>Resource intensive if permanently staffed.</p> <p>Responses can be difficult to record unless used with some form of comments card or questionnaire.</p> <p>Could be confrontational if issues are very sensitive.</p>	<p>Hire of a location.</p> <p>Cost of publicity.</p> <p>Cost of Display material.</p> <p>Staff time.</p>
Planning for Real®, Enquiry by Design, etc.	<p>Helps communities develop simple models to put forward and prioritise ideas on how their area can be improved. Can use three dimensional, models which can be moved around, being used to identify problems and solutions as well as making comments by attaching post-it notes to the buildings.</p>	<p>Is high profile, hands on community involvement.</p> <p>People of all abilities and ages find it easy and enjoyable to engage in, so can reach 'hard to reach' groups, such as young people or those with literacy difficulties.</p> <p>Can be a useful way of gaining an understanding of local issues and concerns for both the planners and the community.</p>	<p>Needs to be carefully organised, publicised and managed, so is resource intensive.</p> <p>More suited to specific local interest.</p> <p>Requires concerted follow up to show actions and results.</p> <p>Can be time consuming and often requires an external specialist to increase credibility of the conclusions.</p>	<p>Estimated to cost £6,000-£10,000 per event, depending on scale and complexity.</p>

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Consultation cont.				
Planning for Real®, Enquiry by Design, etc cont.		Allows the discussion of problems in a non-confrontational way. Uses local knowledge well in the plan making process.		
Written consultation	Publishing and distributing documents with a request for comments from the public, interest groups and statutory bodies. Can be used to gain detailed and potentially complex views from interested parties. This is often a statutory requirement, so has to be carried out anyway by the local planning authority.	Can provide users with detailed and comprehensive information. Gives considered views of respondents based on accurate information. Letters to house are more likely to elicit a response than press notices, etc.	Tend to get a low response. Analysing responses can be resource intensive. Open-ended questions or prose can be difficult to analyse. Interest groups can be over-consulted, leading to consultation fatigue. Contact lists can go out of date very quickly and can be time consuming to maintain.	Printing costs. Postage costs. Time to maintain database. Time to analyse results and respond accordingly.
Speaking at Council Meetings User comments & complaints	Members of the public and other stakeholders can be invited to speak at meetings of Council committees. This already happens at Development Control Committee and is positively encouraged at Ward Committees.	This method can allow a very direct input into decision making processes (especially DC Committee) and allows elected members to hear direct the views of stakeholders.	Requires preparation by all sides and adequate briefing to get the most out of such meetings. Debate can be unstructured and can lead to frustrations if time is limited.	Costs of regular meetings already met by Council. Special preparation may cost extra, usually in officer time.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Consultation cont.				
User comments & complaints	Comment cards or complaints forms placed at the point of service delivery or more widely via the internet to gather detailed information from individual users.	Can be used to monitor and improve services by helping to identify recurring problems. Provides information on strengths and weaknesses. Shows users that you are serious about putting things right.	Not representative as only negative responses tend to be made. Service delivery may not necessarily be the focus of spatial plans.	Relatively low cost.
Questionnaire surveys	A structured survey used to get views from a widely representative group, which is statistically reliable. It allows comparative information year on year if the same questions are asked. Can be face-to-face, postal or conducted over the telephone or internet.	A good method of obtaining views of a representative sample, which is statistically reliable. Enables changes over time to be tracked. Established methods of analysing data. Possible to use or adapt approaches that are already in use. By interview, more in depth views can be obtained.	Results can be unreliable if there is a poor response rate. A poorly designed questionnaire can give misleading results, for example if the questions are 'leading'. Postal response can be low. Results can sometimes raise as many questions as they answer. Could miss out some groups, for example if they don't have a telephone or internet access.	Time to prepare questions. Cost of interviewer and analysis. Postal/telephone costs.
Focus groups	A group of around 10 people meet to discuss an issue for 1-2 hours with the help of a skilled facilitator. Often used to help identify key issues or questions for a broader survey or to	Enables you to discover what is important to users. Groups allow people to spark ideas off one another. Provides a greater depth of understanding – answers the	Does not provide statistical information. Feedback is not typical of all users, so not representative. Dominant participants can monopolise discussions.	Up to £1,500 per group, depending on staffing and 'neutral' venue costs.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Consultation cont.				
Focus groups cont.	explore issues in more depth.	'why' as well as 'what' people think. Can focus on particular 'hard to reach' groups.	Can produce a large volume of text which is difficult and time consuming to analyse.	Time to analyse results.
User panel	Regular meetings of user groups with either open or fixed membership, which can be orchestrated by the local authority or requested by users. Is often used to get reaction to ideas and proposals for improvement.	A useful sounding board to test plans and ideas. Can generate new ideas and provide early warning of any potential problems. Creates a continuing dialogue with users which helps build up trust. Gives relatively quick feedback. Concentrates on issues from the users' perspective.	Can be unrepresentative. Requires strong input and commitment from management. Should not be used as only means of consultation. The nature of the group (how representative it is and its right to make recommendations) varies greatly. Requires a turnover of membership to maintain integrity.	Staff time. Cost of recruiting members. Venue hire. Advertising costs. Time and cost of analysing results.
Citizens' panel	A representative group of around 1,000 residents, which reflects the demography of the city, who are used as a sounding board to test specific options or proposals. They can be used to assess services and develop views about future needs and goals.	Recruited on a voluntary basis so more likely to be committed, therefore providing a good response rate. Likely to be representative. Can be used to investigate key issues/themes. Gives reasonably quick feedback once it is set up. Cost effective as it can be used many times.	Response rates can be lower than expected, particularly if over consulted. As members become experienced and knowledgeable of the system they can become less representative of the population as a whole. Level of drop out is quite high. Difficult to engage young people on the panel.	Can cost around £5,000 per survey. Time to prepare questions. Time to analyse responses.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Consultation cont.				
Citizens' panel cont.			Requires the ability to read and write. More suited to discussing broad strategic options than specific issues.	
Community and other interest group representation	Involvement of representatives from a specific group or sector of the community (which can include businesses) in a formal steering group or other similar body. For example, a representative from a specific geographical neighbourhood, a local tenants association, or a specific community or voluntary group. These representatives then help access and engage with their respective group.	Members can be nominated by their group, so likely to be representative. Can effectively involve 'hard to reach' groups. Can be used to investigate key issues/themes. Can generate new ideas and provide early warning of any potential problems. Enables groups to understand conflicts and compromises reached.	May not be representative of the population as a whole. Dominant participants can monopolise discussions. Can be time consuming, particularly for the representatives.	Staff time. Cost of recruiting members. Venue hire.
Citizens' juries	A group of 12-16 'lay' citizens, recruited to be broadly representative of the community, hear evidence from a range of specialist witnesses over several days before making final recommendations to the commissioning body.	Allows detailed debate and provides informed feedback on complex issues. Provides an opportunity for the members of the jury to make a real contribution to public affairs. Generates media interest so can stimulate wider debate.	Expensive. Works best where organisations have already made considerable progress on their consultation. May not be representative of the general public who haven't heard expert evidence.	Can cost up to £35,000 depending on venue, recruitment, incentives, staff time, length of hearing, etc.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Consultation cont.				
Citizens' juries cont.	Is used to obtain detailed, considered views from the public on a particular issue.		Jurors can be unwilling to give their time and effort unless the results are binding.	
Ballots, referenda, etc	People are asked to vote either for or against an option or a limited number of options. Can be useful to get a mandate for a particular action. Can also use deliberative polling, where a representative sample of people is initially polled on an issue, after which they learn more about the topic through being given information, asking questions and participating in discussions. They are then polled again based on the new evidence.	Easy to interpret results. Allows everyone to have a say and in becoming increasingly easy for people to participate. High profile and can stimulate further debate. Provides a clear mandate for action.	Results can be based on superficial, uninformed responses with no way of finding out how much is understood. Provides no qualitative information, you only get a yes/no answer. Can be expensive. Can be seen to set a precedent. Often gets a low turnout and may not be representative.	Cost of producing information leaflets. Cost of publicity. Cost of ballot papers. Cost of counting responses.
Participatory appraisal	This is a family of approaches and methods which enable communities to develop and analyse their own representative, realistic and inclusive portrait of the issues that matter to them, using local knowledge of life and conditions. By empowering local people to conduct their own	Interactive rather than extractive approach. Uses a variety of methods to elicit the same information which enable verification. Allows different types of people to contribute in a way that they feel comfortable and to the level and extent chosen by them.	Cannot cover a wide range of issues, needs to be focused. Exercise needs to be undertaken by a group of people trained in the techniques. Time consuming collating and drawing together the information collected to draw conclusions.	Requires specialist facilitators. Staff time to conduct and to collate results.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Consultation cont.				
Participatory appraisal cont.	modes of investigation, communities can plan and act on their own outcomes developing more community-based solutions.	Allows the views of those people who are usually most difficult to reach to be represented.	Timescale to undertake activity will be variable and will not be evident at the beginning of the task.	
Residency periods	Community engagement through a set period of residency (around 1 week) where a developer or consultant, with the support of the Council, can live in the community, meeting the residents and local stakeholders, as well as experiencing the locality for themselves.	Hands on experience of the location, so can pick up issues which may not be discovered through questions or discussions. Can build up personal relationships with stakeholders and residents. Allows residents to ask questions.	May not get a fair reflection of the locality in a short residency. Very time consuming.	Staff time. Living expenses (accommodation, etc.)
Stakeholder meetings	Much like a public meeting, but with people who are already involved or are known to have an interest.	Often well attended as stakeholders already have an interest and are more motivated to share their views. Is an informed debate as stakeholders already have some knowledge of the issue. Networking opportunities between participants.	Can exclude groups who aren't part of an existing network. Certain stakeholders can dominate the agenda. Is a danger of over-consulting, which could lead to consultation fatigue.	Up to £1,500 per conference, depending on scale, venue, publicity and catering costs. Staff time.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Electronic Consultation				
Web site	An up-to-date page or collection of pages on the internet which can be used to provide information and to obtain feedback in an easy, fun way. The Council already includes details of all current consultations (planning or otherwise) on its consultation web pages.	Quick and efficient way of keeping everyone up to date. Interactive medium. Usage is spreading rapidly. Provides a quick response and can make participation easier and more enjoyable. The opportunities offered by new technologies. Relatively cheap once set up. Can save on printing costs.	Excludes significant groups who lack internet access, so unlikely to access some 'hard to reach' groups. Technical problems. Relies on people checking the website, so may require advertising.	Set up costs if there is no current host and format in place. Very low running costs.
Email & bulletin board	Messages sent via the internet either to individuals or groups informing them of key issues and inviting feedback, or to a bulletin board with limited or open access.	Quick and efficient way to provide users with detailed and comprehensive information. Provides a forum for debate. Usage is spreading rapidly. Likely to provide a high response rate. Gives considered views of respondents based on accurate information. Can save on printing costs. Personalised messages are more likely to elicit a response.	Excludes significant groups who lack internet access, so unlikely to access some 'hard to reach' groups. Technical problems. High response rate can be difficult to collate and open-ended questions or prose can be difficult to analyse. Interest groups can be over-consulted, leading to consultation fatigue. Contact lists can go out of date very quickly.	Cost of setting up and maintaining contact lists. Staff time to collate responses. Saves on printing and postage costs.

Consultation Method	Description	Advantages	Disadvantages	Resource Implications
Electronic Consultation cont.				
CD ROM	The storing and distribution of documents in an electronic format on a CD Rom, to be viewed on a computer. Will often be sent in a form of written consultation instead of enclosing printed documents.	Can provide users with detailed and comprehensive information. Saves on printing costs. Allows users to view electronically which facilitates searching for relevant sections.	Requires access to a computer, so could exclude groups without access to a computer. Technical problems. Still relies on written consultation, so contact lists need maintaining and can go out of date very quickly.	Saves printing costs. Cost to produce CDs. Postage costs. Time to maintain database.
Text messaging & SMS	Messages sent to mobile phones informing individuals or groups of key issues and inviting feedback.	Quick way to inform users of issues or events. Usage is spreading rapidly. Could provide a high response rate, although responses will be fairly short. Personalised messages are more likely to elicit a response.	Excludes significant groups who don't have a text enabled phone, so unlikely to access some 'hard to reach' groups. Technical problems. Response would be limited in length and information that can be sent is also very minimal. Contact lists can go out of date very quickly.	Cost of messages. System to receive replies.
Visualisations & virtual reality	The creation of photo-real still and moving images that can turn concepts into 'reality.' Sketches, plans or CAD files can now be made into accurate photorealistic representations - creating images that will effectively communicate proposals.	Visual aids enhance presentations, documents and leaflets, helping to improve understanding of the proposals, making them more interesting and user friendly. Usage is spreading rapidly.	Can exclude some groups. without access to the technologies (e.g. the internet). Technical problems. Can be expensive.	Can be expensive and time consuming to produce. Developers will often cover costs in an attempt to gain support.

N.B. This version of the Statement of Community Involvement Report is available at www.newcastle.gov.uk/ldf.

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