



Statement of Community Involvement



First adopted February 2015

Revised August 2018

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Preface

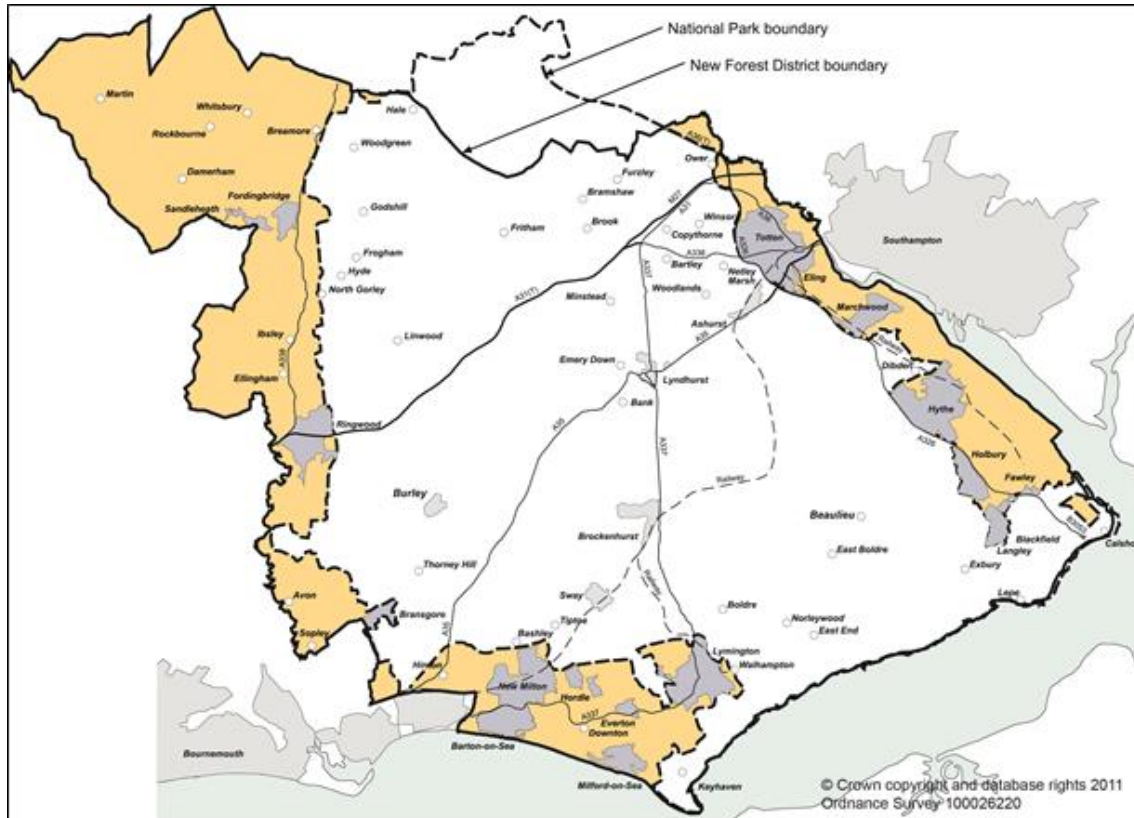
This Statement of Community Involvement was originally adopted and published in February 2015.

It has been updated to reflect the provisions in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 (Commencement No. 3) Regulations 2018.

This provides additional information in Section 7 in relation to Neighbourhood Planning / Neighbourhood Development Orders. It also reproduces the published Planning Protocol which defines the nature, scope and limitations of support that will be provided by New Forest District Council Planning Services to Town and Parish councils for the purposes of the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Introduction

New Forest District Council is the local planning authority for the parts of the District outside of the New Forest National Park. As the local planning authority it is responsible for producing the Local Plan and other planning documents for its area and for determining planning applications for most forms of development (Hampshire County Council is the planning authority for minerals and waste planning matters). Within the National Park the National Park Authority is the local planning authority. This document relates to the parts of New Forest District outside of the National Park (the area shaded orange on the map below) referred to as the 'Plan Area' henceforth.



1. What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the District Council will consult and involve others in planning matters in New Forest District outside the National Park. It covers both the preparation of local plans and planning guidance, and applications for planning permission.
- 1.2 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) replaces the previous version adopted in 2006.

2. A brief guide to the planning system

- 2.1 Local planning authorities are responsible for producing Local Plans and other planning policy documents which set the framework under which decisions on planning applications are made. All local planning authorities are expected to have an up-to-date Local Plan for their area. The Plan guides new development, setting the overall planning strategy for the area and setting policies and proposals for what development can happen, and where. The Local Plan is the main planning policy document for the area, but can be supplemented by Supplementary Planning Documents (which provide additional guidance on the implementation of policies in the Local Plan) and by Neighbourhood Plans (which are community-led plans).
- 2.2 The Government sets national planning policies in the 'National Planning Policy Framework' (NPPF). Local Plan policies must comply with this national framework. The Government also publishes national Planning Practice Guidance (PPG), which gives further guidance and advice on how local authorities are expected to prepare local planning documents and implement Government policy.
- 2.3 The current planning system has no hierarchy of plans between national and local planning policies. However, the Localism Act established a new 'Duty to Co-operate' which requires local planning authorities and other organisations to work together constructively in preparing their plans, to try to resolve cross boundary planning issues.

3. Planning in New Forest District

- 3.1 The Council has an adopted Local Plan for the area. The key documents which make up the Local Plan for New Forest District (outside the National Park) are:
- The Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy, adopted in 2009, which sets the planning strategy for the area up until 2026.
 - The Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management, adopted in April 2014, which sets out more detailed policies implementing the strategy, including identifying specific sites for new development.
- 3.2 The Local Plan Part 1: Core Strategy sets out the broad planning strategy for housing and employment provision, protection of sensitive environments, town centres, and transportation.
- 3.3 The Local Plan Part 2: Sites and Development Management sets out the detailed proposals and policies required to implement the planning strategy for the area agreed through the Core Strategy. It includes allocations of specific sites for new housing, affordable housing and employment land. It also provides additional development management policies to assist the implementation of the Core Strategy.
- 3.4 The Council has adopted a number of Supplementary Planning Documents. These include Local Distinctiveness SPDs and the Mitigation Strategy for European Sites SPD.
- 3.5 The District Council commenced early work on the review of the Local Plan in 2014.

- 3.6 Full details of all current planning policy documents prepared by New Forest District Council are available on the Planning Policy page of the Council's web-site:
www.newforest.gov.uk/planningpolicy

Working with others

The New Forest National Park

- 3.8 The Council attaches great importance to having a close working relationship with the New Forest National Park Authority (NFNPA). Given the geography of the Plan Area and its relationship with the National Park, it is essential to the proper planning of the area that there is collaboration between the two planning authorities. The Council also has a duty to have regard to the purposes of the National Park under Section 85 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000). Planning policies for the area recognise that development proposals within the Plan Area can have a significant impact on the National Park, and in particular on protected European nature conservation sites within the National Park.

Neighbouring authorities and Local Economic Partnerships

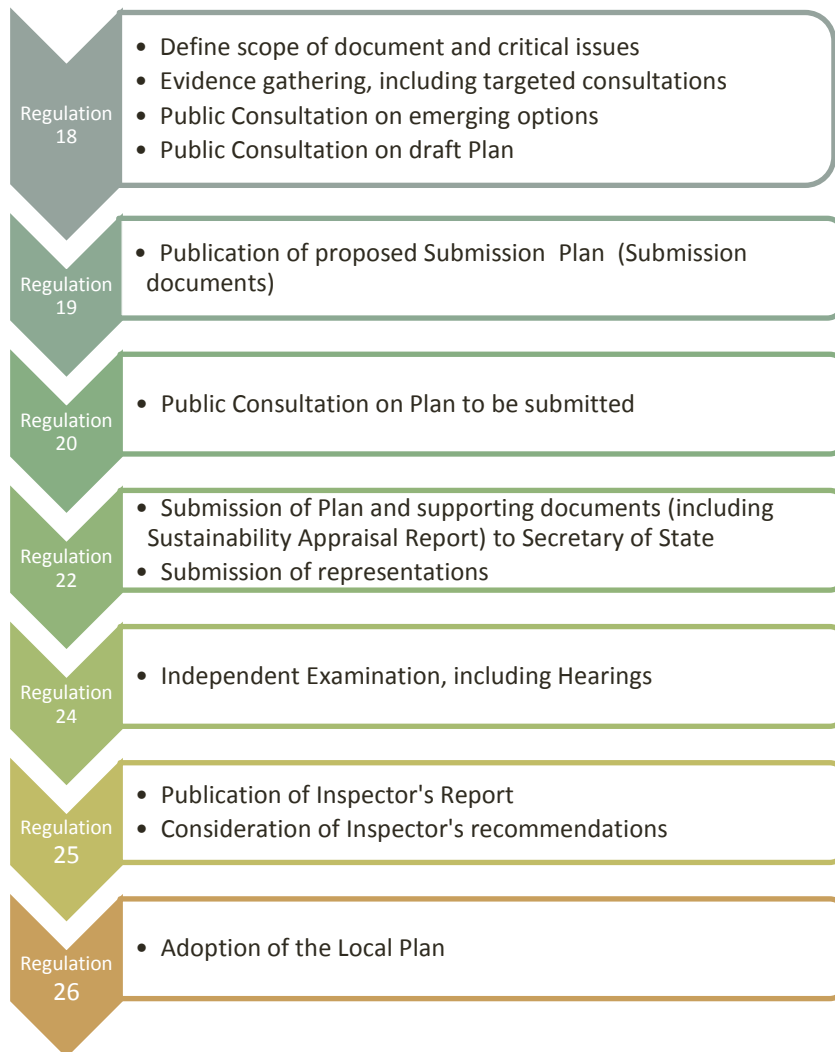
- 3.9 The Duty to Co-operate (DTC), brought into effect by the Localism Act (2011), aims to ensure that bodies engaged in planning work together on issues that are of more than local significance. The Council will continue to work with a wide range of statutory and non-statutory bodies in fulfilling its planning duties and ensuring that issues of more than local significance are dealt with by working with its neighbours and other appropriate bodies.
- 3.10 The Council will work with neighbouring authorities and other authorities in the sub-regions on matters of strategic significance, where cross-boundary working is essential to ensure an appropriate planning strategy for the wider area is established (including the work of the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership, the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire, and the Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership). This will include the joint commissioning of appropriate studies to assess housing and business needs locally and within the wider area.

See Section 5 for further information on the Duty to Co-operate.

4. The process of Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Document preparation

4.1 Procedures for preparing development plan documents are set out in national regulations, currently the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The figure below sets out the stages in plan preparation, indicating consultation stages, as set out in the Regulations.

Figure 1 – Stages in Local Plan preparation

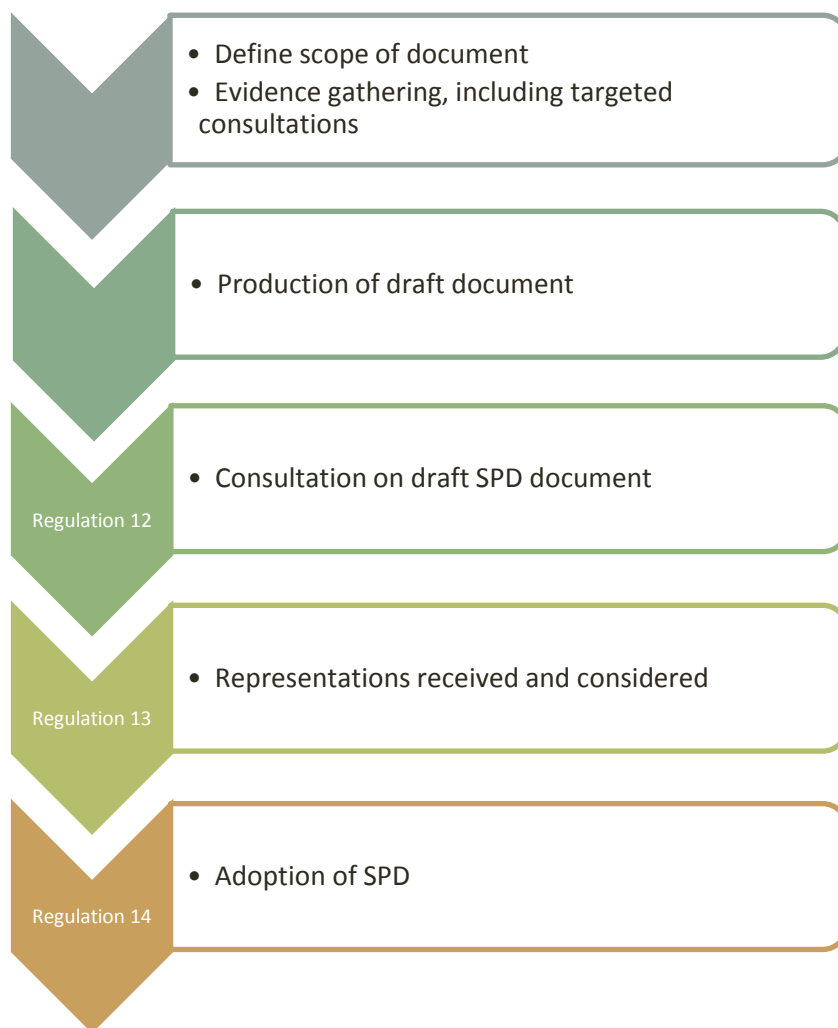


4.2 In the preparation of documents the Council will be consulting and involving others at various stages of plan preparation, from evidence gathering and developing strategic approaches to preparing the Plan for Submission and public Examination by an independent Inspector. The methods and techniques used to involve the community will vary depending on the stage of preparation reached and the type of planning document being prepared. More detail is given in section 5.

4.3 The Local Development Scheme sets out the programme for preparing local planning documents. As well as the Local Plan itself, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), covering particular

areas, sites or topics may be prepared. Examples of SPDs which have been prepared by New Forest District Council include the Lymington Local Distinctiveness SPD and the Mitigation Strategy for European Sites SPD (a full list of current SPDs is provided in the Local Development Scheme). The process for preparing Supplementary Planning Documents is simpler than for the Local Plan, the main difference being that an SPD is not subject to public Examination by an independent Inspector. However, the procedure followed in preparing Supplementary Planning Documents includes targeted involvement and consultation during the preparation of the document. The process is set out in the figure below.

Figure 2 – Stages in Supplementary Planning Document preparation



Further details of how we will involve others in the production of SPDs is set out in section 6.

5. How we will involve and consult others on the preparation of the Local Plan

- 5.1 The National Planning Policy Guidance requires that Local Plans are prepared with meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses. The final Plan should aim to be a ‘collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area’ (Paragraph 155).
- 5.2 The Town and Country (Local Planning (England) Regulations 2012 set out the procedure to be followed by local planning authorities in relation to the preparation of local plans and supplementary planning documents, including consultation with interested persons and bodies and the documents which must be made available at each stage. The Regulations can change over time; therefore the Council will comply with the relevant Regulations in force at the time.
- 5.3 The main means of finding out the latest news about progress with Plan preparation will be the Council’s web-site www.newforest.gov.uk.

The Council will use its website to:

- Provide information about progress with the preparation of planning documents
 - Publish all current planning policy documents
 - Give notice and details of current public consultations on planning policy documents under preparation
 - Publish summaries of comments it has received on draft planning policy documents
- 5.4 The Council will keep a database of those wishing to be kept informed directly (normally by e-mail) about stages in plan preparation (the LDF contacts database).
- 5.5 Table 1 below sets out how the Council will involve others in the preparation of its Local Plan at various stages of plan preparation.

Table 1 - The key stages of involving and consulting on Development Plan Documents (DPD):

Stage:	What we will do:
Early preparation Evidence gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consult on the scope of the Plan: identifying matters which may need particular attention in a new Plan - Gather relevant social, economic and environmental information to provide for background information and evidence - Engage in discussions and joint studies with neighbouring authorities
Production of draft plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a draft Plan based on evidence and views collected
Formal Consultation on draft plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provide a minimum period of six weeks for comments to be made on the draft Plan - Publish the consultation document with supporting information and background studies on website - Give details of the consultation and how to comment in a news release and on the Council’s web-site - Notify all those on the LDF contacts database of the opportunity to comment

Stage:	What we will do:
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hold local consultation events, such as exhibitions or workshops, if appropriate - Make all documents available for public inspection at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst - Publish a summary of the comments received on the website
Production of Plan for Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Take into consideration all comments received on the draft Plan in preparing the Plan for submission
Publication of Plan for Submission to the Secretary of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publish the Plan with supporting information and background studies on website - Give details of the consultation and how to comment in a news release and on the Council's website - Provide a minimum period of six weeks for representations to be made on the Plan - Notify all those who commented on the draft Plan that a revised Plan has been published and where the relevant documents can be inspected - Make relevant documents available for public inspection at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst and on the Council's website. - Publish a summary of the representations received on the Council's website
Submission to Secretary of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submit for public Examination the Submission Plan, all supporting documents and all representations received on the Submission documents - Make all documents available for public inspection at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst - Give notice to those persons who requested to be notified of the submission of the local plan to the Secretary of State that it has been so submitted.
Examination by independent inspector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Those making representations on the Plan will be invited by the Local Plan Inspector to respond to questions on matters identified - If required, Hearing sessions will be held during the Examination on matters decided by the Inspector - Those indicating they wish to appear at a Hearing session will be given the opportunity to do so <p>(Note: the organisation and content of the Examination is a matter for the appointed Inspector)</p>
Formal Adoption by NFDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publication of Inspector's Report and any Modifications to the plan required for Soundness - Adoption Statement published alongside the adopted DPD. - Notify all those who commented on the draft Plan that the DPD has been adopted.

Sustainability Appraisal

- 5.6 Alongside the preparation of the Local Plan the Council will undertake a Sustainability Appraisal of the emerging Plan and its proposals. This work will consider the impact of proposals on environmental, social and economic factors, including internationally significant nature conservation sites, which will be a key consideration. The Sustainability Appraisal will be subject to targeted consultation at its 'scoping' stage, and wider consultation when published for comment alongside a consultation draft Local Plan and submission Local Plan.

Fulfilling the Duty to Cooperate

- 5.7 The "Duty to Co-operate" requires local authorities and other prescribed bodies to work together on planning issues, and particularly on strategic matters which have a significant impact on at least two planning areas.
- 5.8 New Forest District Council will work co-operatively with neighbouring planning authorities in Hampshire, Wiltshire and Dorset and other relevant public bodies on matters relating to the development of appropriate planning strategies within the Plan Area and in neighbouring areas.
- 5.9 In addition to formal written consultations, this co-operation will involve discussions at both Officer, and as appropriate, Member level. Cross- boundary issues will be identified and, where possible, appropriate planning strategies will be agreed as a basis for preparing Local Plans and ensuring compatibility across administrative boundaries.
- 5.10 In south Hampshire a formal partnership of local authorities (Partnership for Urban South Hampshire – PUSH) is well established as a vehicle for developing planning strategies for the area. The Council will participate in and contribute to the work of PUSH at both Officer and Member level.
- 5.11 New Forest District Council will also cooperate with Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs) and have regard to their activities when preparing the Local Plan, so long as those activities are relevant to local plan making. For the New Forest District area these are currently the Solent LEP, M3 Enterprise LEP, and the Hampshire & Isle of Wight LNP. Local Enterprise Partnerships have a key role to play in delivering local growth by directing strategic regeneration funds and in providing economic leadership through their Strategic Economic Plans. Local Nature Partnerships work strategically to help their local areas manage the natural environment and they are encouraged to work at a broader 'landscape scale'.
- 5.12 Working relationships on strategic planning matters with neighbouring authorities in Wiltshire and Dorset will be developed from an early stage in plan preparation.

6. How we will involve and consult others on the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents

6.1 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide additional guidance on the implementation of Local Plan policies.

6.2 Although supplementary to the main policies, it is also important that the local community and interested organisations are involved in the preparation of these documents, and have a chance to comment on the detail of how Local Plan policies and/or proposals are to be implemented. Supplementary Planning Documents are not subject to a formal examination by an independent Inspector.

Table 2 - The key stages of involving and consulting on Supplementary Planning Documents:

Stage:	What we will do:
Awareness raising and evidence gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gather relevant background information and evidence - Engage in selective discussions and targeted consultation as appropriate
Production of draft plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Prepare a draft document based on evidence and views collected
Formal Consultation on draft plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Publish the consultation document with supporting information on the website - Contact those on the LDF contacts database by e-mail to inform of the draft publication and opportunity to comment - Give details of the consultation and how to comment in a news release and on the Council's web-site - Provide a minimum period of four weeks for comments to be made on the draft SPD document (although the norm will be for a six week consultation period) - Write to all those specifically requesting postal notification of publication of a specific SPD - Make all documents available for public inspection at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst and on the Council's website. - Publish a summary of the comments received on the website
Adoption by NFDC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Revised plan submitted with summary of comments received and how comments have been addressed - Comments received reported to members (with summary of comments) - - Publication of Consultation Statement, Cabinet / Full Council papers, and final document for adoption - Adoption Statement released alongside the adopted SPD

7. Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders

- 7.1 The Localism Act 2011 introduced statutory Neighbourhood Planning in England. It enables communities to draw up a Neighbourhood Plan for their area (within certain limits and parameters set by the agreed strategy in the Local Plan). Through preparing a Neighbourhood Plan (or a Neighbourhood Development Order) local communities can have a greater say in deciding how the planned development is accommodated in their area. These can be taken forward by Town / Parish Councils.
- 7.2 Parish and Town Councils can use neighbourhood planning powers to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in their neighbourhood through the preparation of a Neighbourhood Plan or the granting of planning permission for a specific type of development through a Neighbourhood Development Order.
- 7.3 It is the role of the local planning authority to agree the (geographical) neighbourhood planning area. Additionally, the local planning authority must provide advice and assistance; hold an examination; and make arrangements for a referendum. The District Council has published a planning protocol which outlines how the Council will undertake its statutory duties, and the level and extent of the technical advice and assistance that the Council will provide. See Appendix 2 for the planning protocol.
- 7.4 Neighbourhood Plans / Orders must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan which the District Council will continue to produce. The District Council will continue to produce detailed plans for (geographical and policy) areas where Neighbourhood Plans are not produced by the local community.
- 7.5 They must also meet a number of conditions before they can be put to a community referendum and legally come into force. The conditions ensure that plans are legally compliant and take account of wider policy considerations (e.g. national policy and the Local Plan strategy). Neighbourhood Plans do not take effect unless there is a majority of support for it in a local Referendum and the Plan is adopted by the District Council.
- 7.6 It will be for those preparing a Neighbourhood Plan to decide how best to consult during the preparation of the document, but they must comply with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations in place at the time. More information about Neighbourhood Planning can be found at: <http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/>

8. How we will involve others on allocating the Community Infrastructure Levy to projects

- 8.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 require the Council to set out a list of those projects or types of infrastructure that it intends to fund, or may fund, through the levy. This list of projects may be revised from time to time following appropriate consultation.
- 8.2 The consultation process will involve providers of infrastructure including bodies such as HCC, the Police and Health Authorities, NFDC departments and Town and Parish Councils, as appropriate. A recommended list of projects (known as a Regulation 123 list) will then be prepared and subject to further consultation before being presented for approval by the Council's Cabinet at the start of the year. Requirements for who should be consulted are currently set out in Regulation 15 of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (with amendments) and the Council will apply the relevant regulations in force at the time.

9. How we will involve and consult others on planning applications

- 9.1 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. In decision-making on planning applications, as well as taking into account the advice of specialist consultees (e.g. the Highways Authority, the Environment Agency), it is important that all sections of the community have an opportunity to express their views either in support of, or objection to, the proposal. On major applications the Council is encouraging applicants to undertake community consultation prior to making a formal planning application, independent of the consultations the Council itself will undertake once an application has been received.
- 9.2 The Council advocates the use of its pre-application advice service for which charges are levied to cover costs. By using this service applicants receive advice from planning officers which will assist in ensuring the development proposal complies with the Council's local planning policies and requirements, so that when a planning application is made, if the advice has been followed, the development proposal can normally be recommended for approval. No community consultation takes place as part of this process but the views of the relevant specialist consultees are sought and taken into account.
- 9.3 Minimum standards for planning application publicity are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010. This requires local planning authorities to publicise planning applications submitted to them. New Forest District Council will publicise planning applications to meet the minimum requirements set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3 - Publicising planning applications:

Type of publicity	Examples:
Notices or Direct Notifications:	- Posting of notices on (or close to) a site and sending neighbour notification letters to relevant properties.
Documentation:	- Making documents available normally in an electronic format on the council's Public Access webpages. - Making paper copies of application forms, supporting documents

	<p>and plans available at Appletree Court on request when notice is given, or some local offices if more convenient for the application site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Making copies of current planning applications available on its Public Access webpages (NFDC will maintain a facility to accept comments by e-mail, via the Public Access website, or by post)
Newspaper advertisements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Where required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010 (and amendments) applications are advertised in newspapers circulating in the locality
The community:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Local Town and Parish Councils and the relevant District Councillors are directly advised as to the receipt of applications in the area they cover.
Adjoining Local Authorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Notifying adjoining authorities where applications are close to the boundary.

- 9.4 Where the Council receives significant amendments to a current planning application, that it is able to accept, it will re-publicise the application making it clear that amendments to the application have been proposed.
- 9.5 The determination of most applications is delegated to Council officers, but some applications are determined by the Planning Development Control Committee. In cases where applications are to be considered by the Planning Development Control Committee, those who have already made written comments on the application can request to address the Committee at the meeting.

Appendix 1: Local Planning documents - consultees

New Forest District Council has an electronic database used solely for the purpose of contacting interested organisations, groups, and individuals about the preparation of local planning documents. There are four types of consultee identified on the database, as set out below.

Type A - Specific Consultation bodies

In accordance with the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, this Council will consult the following organisations on parts of the Local Plan to the extent that it considers the document to be relevant to the organisation:

- All town and parish councils within New Forest District
- The New Forest National Park Authority
- Hampshire County Council
- Dorset County Council
- Wiltshire Council
- Test Valley Borough Council
- Isle of Wight Council
- Melchet Park & Plaitford; Nursling & Rownhams; Romsey Extra; Wellow Parish Councils
- 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
- Eastleigh Borough Council
- Alderholt; Cranborne & Edmondsham; Sixpenny Handley with Pentridge; St Leonards & St Ives; Verwood Parish council
- The Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH)
- The Coal Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency
- The Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (English Heritage)
- The Highways Agency
- The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership
- NHS West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group
- British Telecommunications PLC
- Southern Electricity
- Scottish and Southern Energy
- Southern Gas Networks
- RWE npower
- EON PLC
- The National Grid Company PLC
- British Gas

- The Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire
- The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership
- The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Wessex Water
- Southern Water
- Sembcorp Bournemouth Water PLC
- The Mobile Operators Association (which represents telecommunications operators such as: Airwave, Dolphin Communications; Hutchinson 3G; Mercury; NTL; One2One; Orange; O2; T-Mobile; Vodafone etc).

Type B - General Consultation bodies

In addition to the identified 'Specific' consultees set out above, the Regulations require the Council to also notify and consult additional bodies it considers appropriate.

The list below represents the type of different organisations which are likely to have an interest in the Local Plan process, and is not meant to be exhaustive.

The Council has created a contacts database which includes local groups and organisations in the categories below. However, the Council is dependent on up-to-date information being provided by these local groups and organisations in order to effectively contact them. The Council is keen to hear from other organisations that wish to be involved in the plan-making process, and will be happy to add local groups and organisations to its LDF contacts database on request.

Organisations likely to have an interest in the Local Plan process will include:

- Residents groups and 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

Type C - Statutory consultees for the Duty to co-operate

In accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, this Council will co-operate with the following organisations on matters in the Local Plan it considers to be of strategic significance.

- The Environment Agency.
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (known as English Heritage).
- Natural England.
- The Civil Aviation Authority.
- The Highways Agency
- The Homes and Communities Agency.
- Each Primary Care Trust established under section 18 of the National Health Service Act 2006(16) or continued in existence by virtue of that section (in 2014 this was the NHS West Hampshire Clinical Commissioning Group).
- The Office of Rail Regulation
- The Solent Local Transport Body / Transport for South Hampshire
- The Marine Management Organisation.
- The Solent Local Enterprise Partnership.
- The Enterprise M3 Local Enterprise Partnership.
- The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Nature Partnership

Type D - Individuals

In addition to the above, any individual that has a particular interest in local planning, for example as a landowner or a local resident, can ask to be included in the LDF contacts database, and will receive notification of consultation stages in Local Plan preparation.

Anyone making a comment during public consultation stages of plan preparation will be added to the LDF contacts database and will receive further notifications (normally by e-mail) about the preparation of that document until the time it is adopted.

Appendix 2 – Neighbourhood Planning Protocol



Neighbourhood Planning support

1. Introduction and Purpose

- 1.1. New Forest District Council supports the concept of Neighbourhood Planning and the potential it offers to communities to help shape the places where they live. In deciding whether or how to progress a Neighbourhood Plan, communities will need to consider how they would carry out the work required to deliver an effective and evidence-based Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.2. There are a range of national and other published sources of information and advice on Neighbourhood Planning, and that advice is not repeated here (see appendix one for some useful links). The aim of this note is to define the nature, scope and limitations of support that will be provided by New Forest District Council Planning Services to Town and Parish councils for the purposes of the preparation of a Neighbourhood Development Plan.
- 1.3. The note is also applicable to Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders.
- 1.4. Planning Services will coordinate the involvement of other parts of the Council as and when required, including involvement of Electoral Services at referendum stage.
- 1.5. The District Council is responsible for:
 - a. fulfilling certain statutory requirements at the beginning and end of the process (see section 3)
 - b. the provision of proportionate advice and assistance (see section 4)
- 1.6. This note outlines:
 - a. how the District Council will undertake its statutory duties
 - b. the level and extent of the technical advice and assistance that the District Council will provide

2. Context: Neighbourhood Planning and the District Local Plan

- 2.1. The primary focus and first priority of the District Council is the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan. The ability of the District Council to offer support and advice for Neighbourhood Planning will vary depending on the stage of the Local Plan and the workload of the Local Plan team.

- 2.2. The Local Plan Part One will cover strategic matters including strategic housing allocations, and may propose strategic housing allocations in designated Neighbourhood Areas. We aim to submit the Local Plan Part One for independent examination by the end of 2017, and subject to the examination adopt it by the end of 2018 .
- 2.3. Other sites and policies will be progressed through the Local Plan Part Two, scheduled to commence in 2018. The content and coverage of the Local Plan Part Two for designated Neighbourhood Areas would take into account the aims and scope of Neighbourhood Plans and their progress.

3. The statutory obligations of the District Council

- 3.1. The District Council will fulfil its statutory Neighbourhood Planning obligations as required by the prevailing regulations , which include
- i As soon as possible after receiving the Neighbourhood Area application, publicise and consult in accordance with the statutory timeframes (Regulation 6)
 - ii To consider the consultation responses received, and (where appropriate) designate the Neighbourhood Area and publicise it on the NFDC website (Regulation 7)
- 3.2. Upon submission of a Plan Proposal by the Town/Parish Council to the District Council, the District Council will (liaising with the New Forest National Park Authority as appropriate):
- i Confirm to the Town or Parish Council whether or not the submission plan proposal complies with Regulation 15 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations
 - ii Publicise and start consultation with the public on the submission plan proposal and other relevant documentation (Regulation 16)
 - iii Contact the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (or equivalent) and appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced examiner
 - iv Submit the draft Neighbourhood Plan, supporting documents and representation to the Independent Examiner (Regulation 17) in a timeframe commensurate with the volume of representations received (Regulation 17)
 - v Arrange an Examination hearing venue and date in consultation with the Town or Parish Council, wherever possible in the local area
 - vi Publish a 'Decision Statement' (Regulation 18/19) as soon as practicable following the receipt of the inspector's examination report
 - vii Subject to the Examiner's recommendations, make arrangements for holding the referendum
 - viii Adopt the Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 19/20) at the first available meeting of the District Council following confirmation of majority support at referendum, and make it available through the District Council website.

4. District Council advice and assistance

4.1. This section relates to the preparation of a draft Neighbourhood Plan by the Town / Parish Council prior to submission of a plan proposal to the District Council.

4.2. For each Neighbourhood Area, the District Council will identify an officer from the Policy and Plans Team as the first point of contact.

Initial meeting

4.3. At the request of the Town or Parish council and following designation of the Neighbourhood Area the liaison officer will host or attend an initial exploratory meeting on the first mutually acceptable date.

Neighbourhood plan objectives, scope and working arrangements

4.4. Before the District Council can provide technical advice or assistance on the preparation or proposed content of the Neighbourhood Plan the Town / Parish Council will first need to decide upon and provide a concise statement that sets out

- the likely aims and objectives of the Neighbourhood Plan eg what it is seeking to influence, change, manage, protect or deliver
- whether or not the Neighbourhood Plan will identify or allocate housing development sites large enough to accommodate ten or more homes
- what other policy areas or issues the Neighbourhood Plan will address
- proposed working and decision making arrangements and how they may be resourced
- an indicative timetable

4.5. The District Council accepts that the above matters may change over time.

Background Data and Evidence

4.6. Upon request the Council will make electronically available or provide access to the following, subject as applicable to licensing, Data Protection and commercial confidentiality

- Published reports and studies in the Local Plan evidence base
- Mapping data (fees may be applicable)
- Any other specific, relevant and proportionate requests for existing planning and environmental information for the Neighbourhood Area that is held by the District Council.

4.7. The District Council will not be able to

- Commission, tender for or carry out Sustainability Appraisal, Habitats Regulations Assessments, Environmental Impact Assessments, Flood Risk Assessments, Housing Need surveys or other such assessments as may be necessary

- Commission, tender for or carry out research or forecasting for the Neighbourhood Area
- Search for, extract or interpret third party data for the Neighbourhood Area
- Prepare plans, maps or map-based analyses for the Neighbourhood Area.

Consultation and engagement

- 4.8. The Neighbourhood Plan process is intended to be local community led. It will be for the local Town or Parish Council to undertake their own Neighbourhood Plan public consultations and the District Council will generally not seek or expect to be involved other than as a consultee.
- 4.9. In addition to its statutory responsibilities the District Council will publicise the Neighbourhood Plan consultation on the District Council website with a link to the published draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Policy and plan writing

- 4.10. On request with advance notification and given sufficient time to respond the District Council will
- Comment on proposed policy approaches (including possible alternatives)
 - Provide initial advice on the application of sustainability appraisal to policy development
 - Review draft policies before they are finalised for consultation or publication and provide informal advice on their clarity, robustness and compatibility with the National Planning Framework and with the adopted and emerging District Local Plan.
- 4.11. The District Council will not be able to
- Write or edit Neighbourhood Plan policies, supporting text or supporting documents
 - Undertake desk top publishing, design, printing, copying or distribution of Neighbourhood Plans or supporting documents.

Site allocation in Neighbourhood Plans

- 4.12. Where the Town / Parish Council has committed allocating sites for development as part of the Neighbourhood Plan, the District Council will on request and where resources are available to do so
- Share and explain the Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal Site Assessment methodology
 - Briefly review and comment on any local site selection or appraisal methodology
 - Briefly review and comment on the draft results of a Town or Parish site assessment
 - Provide initial advice on Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment including Habitats impact mitigation
 - Advise what supporting technical assessments would be appropriate for any development site(s) proposed eg ecological surveys, flooding assessments

- Comment briefly on site technical studies.

4.13. Town and Parish Councils should encourage site promoters and land owners to seek pre-application advice from the District Council. Where appropriate some of the above matters may be provided in the form of pre-planning application advice.

4.14. The District Council will not be able to

- Undertake site selection assessments on behalf of a Town or Parish Council preparing a Neighbourhood Plan
- Carry out site technical assessments or background studies for the Neighbourhood Plan
- Undertake detailed site design or masterplanning work unless contracted to do so by the Town or Parish Council.

Attendance of further meetings

4.15. On invitation and subject to availability District Council officers may attend further meetings of the working group at critical decision points leading to consultation on or submission of the Neighbourhood Plan, or the identification of sites for development. An agenda and relevant papers will be required two weeks in advance.

4.16. District Council officers will not be able to attend routine steering or working group meetings or meetings at weekends or concluding after 8.30pm.

5. Funding

5.1. The Government provides some financial assistance to planning authorities to enable them to fulfil their statutory neighbourhood planning duties including holding the examination and arranging the local referendum. Most of this funding is released at the end of the process after the District Council has incurred the costs of the Neighbourhood Plan examination.

5.2. There is no obligation on the District Council to offer financial support for Neighbourhood Planning and we regret that we are unable to do so.

5.3. The Government also provides some financial support for communities who choose to prepare Neighbourhood Plans in the form of grants. Information on how groups can apply is available at <http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/neighbourhood-planning/>.

Appendix One: links to useful information

The following links provide various forms of information and advice on Neighbourhood Planning.

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning>

Information and resources on Neighbourhood Planning from the Planning Advisory Service

<http://mycommunity.org.uk/programme/neighbourhood-planning/>

Advice and funding information portal currently run by Locality for DCLG

<http://www.ourneighbourhoodplanning.org.uk/>

RTPI and Planning Aid portal and forum. The 'resources' section contains an extensive range of technical planning and project management advice

<http://planningguidance.planningportal.gov.uk/blog/guidance/neighbourhood-planning/>

Government Planning Practice Guidance for Neighbourhood Planning

Appendix 3 - Glossary

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.

Appropriate Assessment - Part of the HRA process, considers the impacts of a plan or policy on the integrity of the European sites. Where there are adverse impacts, an assessment of mitigation options is carried out to determine adverse effects on the integrity of the site.

Council's website - www.nfdc.gov.uk or www.newforest.gov.uk

DPD - Development Plan Documents, are the main planning policy documents in the Local Plan. These include the Core Strategy which sets out the main planning strategy for the area.

Duty to Co-operate - The 'Duty to Co-operate' is set out in the Localism Act and ensures that local planning authorities work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies to address strategic issues that affect local plans and cross administrative boundaries.

European Sites – A collective name for internationally important nature conservation sites, including Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Ramsar Sites. Areas of international nature conservation importance that are protected under the Habitats Directive and the Ramsar Convention for the benefit of the habitats and species they support.

HRA (Habitat Regulations Assessment) - An assessment of the impacts of implementing a plan or policy on international protected sites for nature conservation (European Sites and Ramsar sites - wetlands of international importance designated under the Ramsar Convention). Helps determine likely significant effect of a plan or project on international protected sites and, where appropriate, assess adverse impacts on the integrity of a site, and examines alternative solutions.

LDF contacts database – A list of names and contact details of specific consultees and others to be kept informed about the preparation of Local Development Framework documents by NFDC

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

NFDC – New Forest District Council

NPPF - National Planning Policy Framework, sets out the Government's key economic, social and environmental objectives and the planning policies needed to deliver them. Came into force in March 2012 and streamlined the existing suite of national planning policy documents into a single document (removing previous Planning Policy Statements and Circulars).

NPPG - National Planning Practice Guidance, brings together many areas of English planning guidance into a new online format to accompany the NPPF. It contains 41 categories; from

'Advertisements' to 'Water supply'. Each category contains sub-topics which when clicked on reveal a series of questions and answers.

Neighbour notification letters - 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.

Neighbourhood Plan - Communities can now set a vision for the future and establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in their neighbourhood in a document known as a Neighbourhood Plan. Can be detailed or general, depending on what local people want. Only become adopted policy if agreed by a majority in a local community referendum.

Plan Area – New Forest District Council area outside of the New Forest National Park (or part of that area) for which the District Council is the Local Planning Authority.

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 Plan.

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 Plan, and when determining planning applications.

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

Site notices - 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.

Targeted consultation - 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. 'Targeted' means that the consultation will not be universal and will concentrate on those that the Council needs information or advice from at a particular stage in plan preparation.

Town & Parish Councils - The District is made up of 37 Town and Parish Councils. These local councils are able to prepare Neighbourhood Plans for their parish if they chose to do so.