

# Statement of Community Involvement

January 2022

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## Document Summary

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will engage with the community in respect of planning matters.

This will be the second review of the SCI since the original document was first adopted in 2006. A revised document was adopted in 2016. Regulation 10A (1) b of The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) requires that the SCI is reviewed every 5 years.

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 reflect reforms in the Localism Act 2011. Proposals in the White Paper are yet to be incorporated into new legislation or regulations but the SCI has been updated to incorporate the ambitions of the White Paper. Of relevance to the SCI, along with emphasis on early engagement, is a simplified process for plan preparation and the recognition of the increased use of electronic communication as a way of notifying and consulting with communities.

Information should be available from the earliest stages and during the planning process.

- The reason for consultation should be clear
- Methods should be right and well-managed
- Information should be available to all
- Council decisions should show people's views have been taken into account
- People should be given the chance wherever possible to stay informed

An important part of the Statement of Community Involvement is to recognise those groups who are at risk of being left out and to show how the Council will make sure information is available to everyone.

In this booklet we explain what some of the terms used mean. You will find a definitions list at the back of the booklet in Appendix 1.

### 1. Planning Documents

#### 1.1 Local Development Documents

These are the Statement of Community Involvement, Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. These Documents go together to form the Local Plan for the County.

#### 1.2 Local Development Scheme (LDS)

This is a list of what documents will be included in the Local Plan and timetable for their production. It is regularly reviewed to keep it up to date. The latest version can be found [on the council LDS web page](#).

- 1.3 Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**  
This explains how and when people can be involved in the preparation of the Local Development Documents and decisions about planning applications.
- 1.4 Development Plan Documents (DPD)**  
These will form part of the development plan for the area and include:
- The Core Strategy, which sets out the long term vision for the county and the policies needed to deliver that vision.
  - Development Plan policies on issues like housing, employment, and retail which will guide development in the County.
  - Policies showing where land that will be used for individual uses like housing and employment is.
  - A Map showing where in the county is affected.
- 1.5 Supplementary Planning Documents**  
These documents cover a range of issues and give extra detail to development plan document policies.
- 1.6 Neighbourhood Development Plans**  
Every parish has the opportunity to write one of these plans to help shape the way their area develops within the guidelines of the Local Plan.  
A Guide on how to write a Neighbourhood Development Plan and details of the help that is available can be found [on the council Neighbourhood Planning web page](#).
- 1.7 Sustainability Appraisals**  
Sustainability Appraisals are to there to look at the social, economic and environmental impacts of all the Local Development Documents within the Local Plan.
- 1.8 Habitats Regulations Assessment**  
A local authority must carry out an assessment under the Habitats Regulations, known as a habitats regulations assessment (HRA), to test if a plan or project proposal could significantly harm the designated features of a site.
- 1.9 Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)**  
This report will look at the effectiveness of the policies within the Local Plan and show what needs to be reviewed or prepared in the future.  
The Authority Monitoring Report also looks at the Council's performance in achieving the targets set in the Local Development Scheme.  
More information can be found [on the council AMR web page](#).

### 1.10 **Planning Applications**

The council make sure that all valid planning applications are available for public viewing as early in the process as possible. This gives everyone the chance to have their say before the final documents and decisions are made.

## 2. **What is the Statement of Community Involvement for?**

- To identify who will be consulted on plan documents and planning applications and when they will have the chance to be involved in plan making and as part of decisions on planning applications.
- To set out useful ways people can be involved that are easy to understand and available to everyone during the planning process.
- To encourage early involvement in decision making between the community and all interested parties. This can help to settle any conflicts and give a sense of ownership.
- Explain how the results of the consultations will be used and how those involved will be kept informed.

2.1 Statutory consultation requirements are set by the Government in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012.

## 3. **Who will be involved in the consultation?**

3.1 There are certain organisations and bodies that the Council must ask for their opinion when preparing plan documents and deciding on planning applications.

3.2 The main groups to be contacted are:

- Central, Regional and Local Government organisations
- Bodies such as utility companies
- Community, voluntary, resident and interested groups
- Individuals who have requested to be kept informed on planning policy matters (see data regulation note below)
- Parish/Town Councils
- Local businesses, developers and agents
- Neighbouring authorities and relevant internal council departments

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is an EU law that came into effect in the UK on 25 May 2018. It replaces the Data Protection Act 1998.

GDPR gives individuals greater control over their personal data. Data will only be held on those that have given us permission to do so and individuals have the right to withdraw the information at any time.

- 3.3 A complete list of those who must be contacted is available [on the Government planning regulations web page](#).
- 3.4 The groups and organisations will change over time and the planning consultation contact list will be checked regularly to keep an up to date list of groups, organisations and individuals to contact.

#### **4. When can you get involved?**

- 4.1 People can be involved from early stages in plan making, including Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and as part of the decisions on planning applications.
- 4.2 Section 10 will have more information on how Communities can come together and play a part in how the area around them develops in the future by writing their own Neighbourhood Development Plan.

#### **5. Different ways to engage with people**

- 5.1 Different ways of communication will suit people, depending on circumstance. Using organisations that are there to provide a support network to specific groups of people is important. With the use of good communication, everyone can find the information they need and will know how to get involved if they choose to. The council monitor the methods used and which were most successful, so this information can be used for future consultations.
- 5.2 The following table lists some pro-active approaches, as well as the more generic methods such as social media and press, utilising links with groups and organisations used by the council.

| <b>Groups of identity</b>  | <b>Methods used</b>   |
|--|---|
| Minority Ethnic  | Links with the Council Equality and Diversity team,   |
| Travellers/Gypsies   | Links with the Council Equality & Diversity team and Licensing, Travellers & Technical Support Service, specific publications and national organisations/bodies supporting this specific group. |
| Disabled People including those with numeracy, literacy disabilities | Links with the Council Care Commissioning, organisations/bodies representing this specific group, local access groups.  |
| Older people   | Links with Council Care Commissioning, and local network groups supporting the elderly.   |
| Children and young people  | Links with Council children's services, British Youth Council (BYC), county schools & colleges and Youth Clubs.   |
| Those following different religions or with certain beliefs          | Links with the Council Equality and diversity team, local organisations representing these specific groups.   |
| Young single parents   | Local community centres, post-natal groups, online forums.  |
| Homeless   | Links with Council Homelessness and Housing Advice Team, local organisations representing this specific group.  |

| <b>Groups of identity</b>                | <b>Methods used</b>  |
|--|--|
| People located in dispersed rural areas. | Community forums and groups, parish councilors and clerks.   |
| Adults with Learning difficulties        | Links with Council Adult Social Care team, organisations or bodies representing this specific group. |

Organisations representing these groups are reviewed and updated by the planning office on a regular basis.

In all future consultations, the council will pay regard to broader policies, including: Human Rights Act 1998, Freedom of Information Act 2000, UK General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), Equality Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

## 6. Communication Tools

- 6.1 The council use a number of different communication tools. The ones that are used will vary depending on what will work best for the consultation.

This table shows the different types of communication used by the council:

| <b>Method</b>    | <b>Main Considerations</b>   |
|------------------|--|
| Council web site | Information can be seen by potential consultees from their own home or office at a time which is convenient for them. An online exhibition can be created along with presentations, which are a way of replacing or complimenting face to face event when necessary. |
| Email            | Information can be given quickly and regularly at low cost.  |
| Social media     | Use of sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and YouTube keep users informed with regular updates for low cost. The information can be targeted where appropriate.  |



| Method   | Main Considerations   |
|--|---|
| Formal adverts in the Hereford Times newspaper   | There are statutory requirements to publish notices advertising certain planning applications   |
| Press releases   | Bringing local issues into the broader local arena. Releases are sent out to all main county publications and radio stations.   |
| Documents can be made available in hard copy   | Information for those who don't have online access.   |
| Leaflet, newsletters and brochures   | To draw attention to subject in summary and invite comment. Parish newsletters are also a good communication link amongst local communities.                                  |
| Formal written letter  | Letters are sent when there is no other means of communication or a person has requested to be contacted to by post.  |
| Public exhibitions, meetings, presentations and workshops, when government guidance allows | Opportunity to get information out, answer questions in real time and receive feedback from people face to face. Meetings can be based in key areas to reach local residents. |
| Notices displayed on a site  | Direct and local information to those around a site and in local area.  |
| Through partnership organisations and focus groups, existing forums/panels                 | Useful for finding out what certain groups think.   |
| Councilor networks   | Councilors and clerks play an important role in community engagement. They are a recognised local point of contact with regard to Council matters.                            |

| <b>Method</b>   | <b>Main Considerations</b>  |
|---|---|
| One to one or more local meetings and briefings, when Government guidance allows          | Useful for seeking views from targeted groups/individuals   |
| Meeting using online communication platform, such as Teams, Zoom or Webex                 | Able to have virtual verbal interaction with individuals in their own homes, even in times of public restriction.   |
| Online platform such as Youtube, for viewing informative material, such as a presentation | Can be watched at viewers' leisure, rather than being tied to a specific time. Can be shared and watched multiple times.  |
| Parish and Town Council networks  | They can provide important contact with local communities. Many have developed their own websites and social media pages and can be used to provide information relevant to parish residents. Care will be taken to allow for infrequency of some parish meetings when setting deadlines for responses. |
| Talk Community Hub  | Provides a newsletter that can deliver important information to communities.  |
| Questionnaire/surveys   | More detailed information and feedback can be collected. Can be used both online and offline.   |

## **7. Role of elected members**

- 7.1 Herefordshire Council has 53 councillors who are elected to represent the residents of 53 wards. They have an important role to play by keeping their local communities informed, representing their views, encouraging and assisting them to get involved in the future planning and development of their area.

## **8. Consultation on Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents**

- 8.1 There are organisations and bodies that the council must contact as part of a consultation (see para 3.2). The Council also has a duty to involve the public at an early stage in the preparation of Local Development Documents.

## 8.2 Development Plan Documents

Development Plan Documents are produced to set out the local authority's policies and proposals for development and use of land and buildings in the area. There are stages of consultation that must take place, as well as independent examination.

The stages of preparation are:

- First consultation, or series of consultations (Minimum 6 weeks each) – to add to evidence base and prepare a number of options. Consultees will be invited to give their feedback and the preferred options identified.
- It may be that developers or individuals that give new options not known about. In this case, another consultation on these options will take place.
- Draft document consultation (Minimum 6 weeks) – Consultees will be asked to give their feedback.
- Subject to there not being significant changes following the previous stage, the final document goes to the Secretary of State. People will be contacted to let them know when this has happened.
- The final document is examined by an Independent Planning Inspector. There may be modifications suggested by the Inspector at this stage. These will be published and subject to public consultation.
- The Inspector will issue a report including any changes that must be made to the document.
- Adoption and publication of the final document.

The Council may make a reasonable charge for a hard copy of a document. Documents can also be made available in alternative formats where necessary, on request.

## 8.3 Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary Planning Documents are there to give more detail to development plan document policies and do not require independent examination.

The stages of preparation are:

- First consultation (Minimum 4 weeks) – to add to evidence base and prepare issues and options. People will be invited to give their feedback, which will help to shape the final document.
- Cabinet Member briefing and sign off
- Adoption and publication of the final document.

The council will keep a record of the feedback during a consultation, which will be considered and all this information will be published.  
A summary of the consultation will also be available and will be part of the final evidence base during the preparation of Planning Documents.

## 9. Community involvement in the planning application process

9.1 Herefordshire Council is responsible for the processing and decision making of planning applications. This work which is done by the development management team and can include the following types of application:

- Dwellings and extensions
- Agricultural development
- Large housing and employment development including retail
- Minerals and waste
- Listed building consent
- Prior notifications

### 9.2 How can I find out about planning applications in Herefordshire?

- Information about receiving a weekly list of applications is available to view [on the council planning application web page](#).
- If you do not have access at home, you can use the online services in libraries and customer service centres, when Government guidelines allow.
- Site notices
- Press notices in Hereford Times
- City, town and parish councils are told about all applications in their area.

### How can I comment on a planning application?

Once you become aware of a planning application the complete details of the proposal can be viewed on the Council's website.

You have the option of speaking to your Parish Councillor or Ward Member, or if you wish to personally comment on any application within the given timescale then you can:-

Use the online comment form on the website. Information can be found [on the council planning web page](#).

E-mail: [planning\\_enquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:planning_enquiries@herefordshire.gov.uk)

Write to: Planning Services, PO Box 230, Hereford, HR1 2ZB

Information regarding privacy can be found [on the council privacy policy web page](#).

The majority of decisions are made by Officers under Delegated Powers. Where this is not the case the application will be determined by the Planning Committee, which can be watched or listened to online. Further information about forthcoming meetings can be found [on the council planning and regulatory committee web page](#)

#### 9.8 Relevant planning matters include:

- Planning policy, including Local Plan – Core Strategy, Neighbourhood Development Plans and National Planning Policy Framework
- The design and visual impact
- The impact on privacy/daylight/sunlight
- Environmental factors - noise, smell, pollution
- The economic and social benefits
- Highway issues - access, traffic, parking
- Impact on the landscape and ecology (nature conservation)
- Impact on the historic environment, heritage assets and their setting.

#### 9.9 Matters which are not normally relevant:

- Loss of a view
- Impact on property value
- Land ownership/property covenant
- Effect on trade/competition
- Personal circumstances of the applicant (except in exceptional circumstances)

The Council itself does not undertake any form of public/community consultation at pre-application stage but if the development proposed is considered to be significant, would strongly encourage the applicant to involve the community.

Information and advice on early engagement is available in the pre-planning advice section [on the council planning services web page](#).

Planning obligations (also known as section 106 agreements) are legal agreements between a developer and the local planning authority (the council), and any others that have an interest in the land. Developers can also enter into a voluntary legal agreement to carry out works and these are known as a unilateral undertaking.

Information about monies made available to a parish can be found [on the council planning obligations web page](#).

## **10. Neighbourhood Development Planning**

Communities now have the opportunity to come together and shape the development of the area in which they live.

Parishes do not have to prepare a Neighbourhood Development Plan, however there are a number of benefits to having one.

### **10.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans can:**

- Decide where and what type of development should happen within a parish
- Promote more development than provided for within the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy
- Provide less development in certain circumstances where justified.
- Include detailed planning policies for the parish which do not work against the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy

### **10.2 Neighbourhood Development Plans cannot:**

- Work against the policies within the Herefordshire Local Plan – Core Strategy, but should sit within general agreement of them.
- Be used to prevent development
- Be prepared by a body other than a parish or town council in Herefordshire
- Include County Matters such as Minerals and Waste

### **10.3 Who can create a Neighbourhood Development Plan?**

In Herefordshire, only the parish or town council is the ‘relevant body’ who have the responsibility for producing a Neighbourhood Development Plan for their area. The parish/town can enlist help from others within the community but only the parish council can make a neighbourhood area application and submit the relevant draft documents to Herefordshire Council for consideration.

### **10.4 What might a Neighbourhood Development Plan include?**

Neighbourhood Development Plans can contain a variety of issues and policies which are most relevant to a specific parish. Below is a list of possible issues which could be covered. Other items could be added to this list and parishes do not need to include every item.

- Identify sites for housing, including affordable housing
- Provision of a settlement boundary
- Provision for businesses to set up or expand in the parish

- Provision of cycle ways and footpaths
- Identify sites for community use, such as schools, village halls, health centre, leisure facilities
- Design guidance for your parish
- Protection and creation of open space, green amenity areas, nature reserves, allotments, play areas
- Protection of important local buildings and other historical assets
- Promoting of renewable energy schemes and projects
- Restrict the types of development or change of use, for example; non retail uses in town centres
- Provide sites for gypsies and travellers

#### 10.5 **Creating a Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP)**

The following stages need to be followed:

- Define the Neighbourhood Area  
(A 6 week consultation needs to take place if it's a group plan or different to parish boundary)
- Write and publicise the draft Neighbourhood Development Plan  
(6 week consultation period)
- Submission of the final plan  
(6 week consultation period)
- Independent Examination
- Referendum
- Adoption of the Neighbourhood Development Plan  
(Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012)

#### 10.6 **Community Right to Build**

The Community Right to Build enables community organisations to progress new local developments without the need to go through the normal planning application process, as long as the proposals meet certain criteria and there is community backing in a local referendum.

Communities may wish to build new homes or new community amenities, and providing they can prove overwhelming local support, the Community Right to Build will give communities the powers to deliver this directly.

All profits derived from a Community Right to Build Order proposal must be used for the benefit of the community, for example to provide and maintain local facilities such as village halls.

### 10.7 Neighbourhood Development Order

A Neighbourhood Development Order allows communities to grant planning permission for development they want to see go ahead in a neighbourhood. For example, it enables them to allow certain developments, such as extensions to houses, to be built without the need to apply for planning permission.

Herefordshire Council conform to a Service Level Agreement developed specifically to ensure that all parishes wishing to take an active role in the shaping of their area will receive sufficient advice and support throughout the process.

## 11. Monitoring and reviewing

Preparing this Statement of Community Involvement has enabled the Council to give significant thought to how the authority is best able to involve people in planning matters from an early stage in the process.

11.1 The Council will keep the adopted Statement of Community Involvement under review by:

- Monitoring the success of community involvement techniques by reviewing the quantity of representations received and where they came from.
- Including an equality monitoring questionnaire as part of the survey to ensure participants are given the opportunity to raise any concerns about fair treatment. Individual feedback is used to inform and improve all future engagement.
- Also including consultation feedback questions, to ensure adjustments can be made to future engagement approach where necessary.
- Staying advised on best practice including consulting with relevant council departments, such as Communications and Equality Monitoring.

11.2 The document will be examined every year through the Herefordshire Council Monitoring Report. Any proposed review will be identified within the Council's Local Development Scheme with a clear timetable for its production.

For further information or clarification on any aspect of the Statement of Community Involvement or to ask about accessing the document in an alternative format, please email: [ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk)

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)



## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Definition of terms

#### **Engage**

Providing key information and inviting all interested parties to participate and give their views.

#### **Consultation**

People are given a fixed amount of time to offer their opinion.

#### **Local Plan**

A group of documents which set out strategy for development in the county over the next 15 years.

#### **Policies**

These are the guidelines written by the council to guide development and growth.

#### **Statutory**

Expected by law.

#### **Exclusion**

People being left out and not having the chance to have their say.

#### **Independent Examination**

The document is read by an inspector who does not work for the council, the inspector will decide whether the plan is sound and can be adopted and make recommendations where he/she deems appropriate.

#### **Evidence base**

The background work collected to help create new policies.

#### **Issues and options**

A range of choices available.

#### **Preferred options**

All the feedback will be considered after the consultation. The council will then decide which the best choices are, taking all the responses into account.

#### **Adoption**

The document becomes part of the Local Plan.

#### **Referendum**

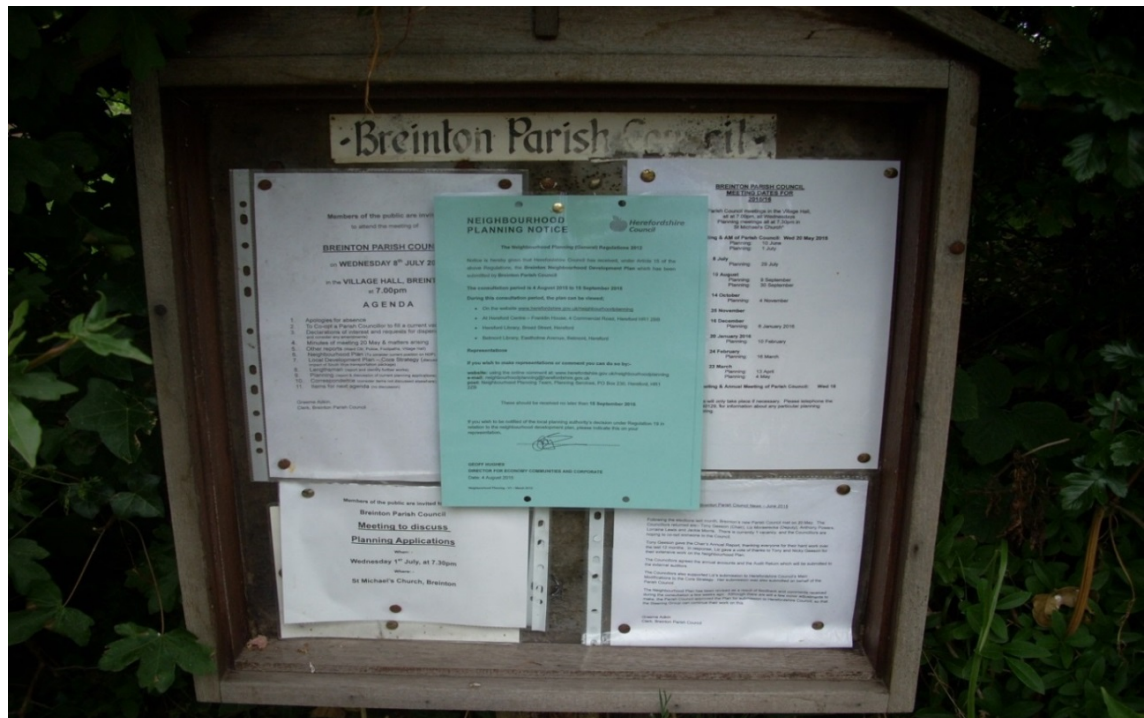
A chance for all parish members and people in surrounding area to vote yes or no as to whether a plan should be adopted. If more than half of voters say yes, then it will be.

## Appendix 2 – Planning notices

### Planning application notice



### Neighbourhood planning notice



## Appendix 3 – Useful information

For more detailed information relating to planning procedures, please refer to the [Herefordshire Council website](#).

For information about Neighbourhood Development Plans, please refer to the [Herefordshire Council website](#).

For more detailed information relating to government planning policies for England and how these are to be applied, please refer to the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).

For more information relating to the shift of power away from central government and towards local authorities and neighbourhood communities in the planning decision making process, please refer to the [Localism Act 2011](#)

For information on how planners can better understand the important role that planning can play in supporting the Government's commitment to tackling disadvantage by reviving the most deprived neighbourhoods, reducing social exclusion, and supporting society's most vulnerable groups, please refer to [Diversity and Equality in Planning – A Good Practice Guide](#)

With the aim of an integrated and well-rounded approach, the preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement has been informed by a number of Council strategies.

These include: [Herefordshire Council County Plan 2020-2024](#) and [Hereford Transport Package](#)

### Further information

[Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2012](#)

[Planning Inspectorate](#)

[Planning Portal.gov.uk](#)

## Appendix 4 – Sources of help and advice

Forward Planning

Tel no 01432 383357

Email: [ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ldf@herefordshire.gov.uk)

Neighbourhood Planning

Tel no 01432 260386

Email: [neighbourhoodplanning@herefordshire.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhoodplanning@herefordshire.gov.uk)

The Royal Town Planning Institute

41 Botolph Lane, London,

EC3R 8DL

Tel 020 79299494

Email: [online@rtpi.org.uk](mailto:online@rtpi.org.uk)

Website: [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)