

## **Update to Broadland District Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

**October 2008**

### **1. Introduction**

This update has been written in response to The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

These Regulations amend the requirements for community involvement in the production of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) for a local authority's Local Development Framework (LDF).

Broadland District Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) details how the Council will involve communities and other stakeholders in the production of documents that make up its LDF, as well as explaining how developers should involve communities in the formulation of any major development proposals in the district.

This update should be read in conjunction with the Council's existing SCI. It updates particular sections of the document, which deal with the process of DPD production and the opportunities for community involvement.

### **2. The Process for Producing Development Plan Documents**

Section 4.1 of the SCI sets out the process for producing Local Development Documents (LDDs) and where in this process there are opportunities for community involvement. Under the amended regulations certain aspects of this process have changed and so, therefore, have the stages at which communities and stakeholder can have an input. The following sets out the amended process for producing a DPD:

#### **a) Preparation**

The amendments allow the Council greater flexibility in undertaking community and stakeholder involvement in advance of the publication of the DPD in question. This is largely as a result of dropping the requirement for a 'Preferred Options' stage of consultation.

The first stage, or 'Preparation' stage will now encompass a range of community and stakeholder involvement that satisfies Regulation 25 of the amended regulations.

This regulation calls for local authorities to invite relevant stakeholder bodies and, if appropriate, the public and local businesses, to make representations to them about what a DPD with that subject ought to contain.

The flexibility accorded the Council during this stage means that, for each DPD we produce, there may be slightly different patterns of early community and stakeholder involvement. However, it is likely that this stage will normally encompass the following:

i) Evidence gathering

The initial stages of evidence gathering, for any DPD, will involve the gathering and analysis of relevant research and the participation of relevant stakeholders to identify the key issues to be addressed by the DPD and potential options for addressing them.

Techniques that could be used at this stage to secure the involvement of stakeholders largely replicate those listed in the 'Evidence Gathering' column of Figure 4 in the current SCI.

ii) Consideration of issues and options

The identification of issues to be addressed and options for addressing them presents the next logical stage for involving communities and stakeholders - seeking views on the potential options with the aim of developing and refining DPD policies and proposals.

This stage will normally feature more extensive community and stakeholder involvement and may therefore require a combination of interactive methods such as exhibitions and forums, as well as web-based and postal surveys. Publicity will be very important and full advantage will be taken of media such as letters, emails, Broadland News, local newspapers, the Council website, posters etc.

iii) Consideration of draft DPD

The Council intends to produce a draft version of the DPD, in advance of producing the proposed submission document, and will seek comments from communities and stakeholders on its suitability.

This is entirely in keeping with the objective of a continuous programme of community involvement throughout the process and that of achieving as much consensus as possible before producing the proposed submission document.

Again, it is anticipated that this stage will feature extensive community and stakeholder involvement (as far as the subject is relevant to them). Techniques that could be used will be similar to those listed in the 'Production of draft/preferred options document' column of Figure 4 of the current SCI.

## **b) Pre-submission**

The result of this preparatory stage will be the production of the DPD document which is to be published in advance of being submitted to the Secretary of State.

Once published, the document will be open to representations from the public and other stakeholders for a period of 6 weeks. This is a formal process and, as such, is subject to several specific requirements as documented in Regulations 27 and 28 of the amended planning regulations.

The document and supporting information will be made available via:

- the Council's website (the Consultation Portal, accessible via the LDF web pages).
- the Council offices at Thorpe Lodge.
- the Council Information Centres in Broadland (Aylsham, Wroxham and Norwich Millenium [Forum] libraries) and the Mobile Information Centre.

The document and supporting information will also be sent to those 'specific consultation bodies' that were consulted during the preparatory stage ('specific consultation bodies' are defined in Regulation 2[1][a] of the amended planning regulations).

Notice of the availability of the documents will be handled in the following ways:

- all other bodies that were consulted during the preparatory stage will be sent notice of the availability of the documents.
- the Council will place an advertisement in the Eastern Daily Press and the Norwich Evening News.
- the Council will also (should timings allow) produce an article for Broadland News, which is distributed free to every resident.

## **c) Submission**

Following the 6 week period alluded to in section b), the Council will summarise the main issues raised in the representations that have been received and submit the DPD document, with supporting information, for examination.

There is no longer a requirement, as detailed in the current SCI, to advertise and consult on any site allocation representations.

However, the amended regulations do allow the Council to make any 'focused' changes that may be required in advance of submitting the document. It is not expected that this will normally be the case, as the

DPD and the process it has undergone should have been found to be 'sound' before its publication.

Should the Council decide to make a 'focused' change at this stage, it will adopt the following process:

- prepare an addendum to the published document, setting out the proposed change.
- conduct a sustainability appraisal of the implications.
- consult the community and stakeholders on the addendum for a minimum period of 6 weeks.

At the close of this consultation the Council will submit the proposed submission DPD, the first representations, the addendum and the responses to the addendum to the Secretary of State.

#### **d) Examination**

The submitted DPD will be examined by an independent Planning Inspector to test its soundness, taking into account the issues that have been raised in representations. The inspector may invite any of those who have made representations to appear at public hearings held as part of the examination process.

#### **e) Adoption**

Following the examination the inspector will present the Council with a binding report detailing whether the DPD is sound, unsound or whether specific changes can be made to the document to make it sound.

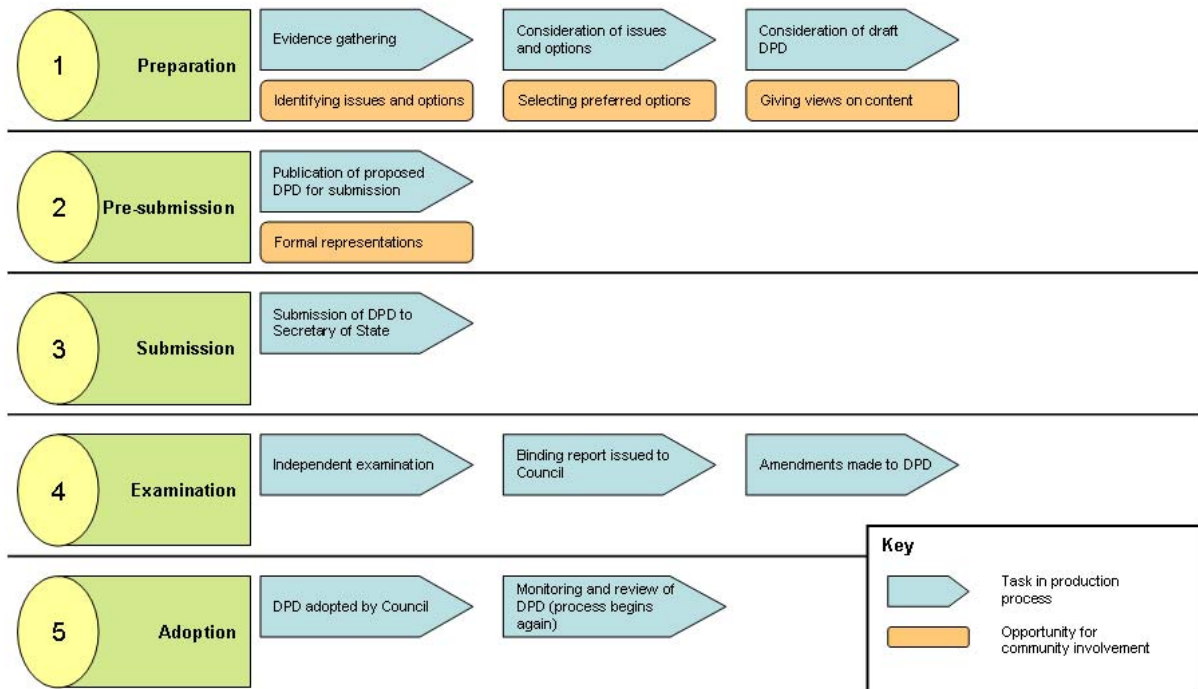
Once the document is found to be sound the Council will adopt it as part of the authority's Local Development Framework.

As soon as reasonably practicable after the Council adopt the document, it will:

- publish a statement of adoption, as well as the inspector's report on the Council website.
- make available the DPD, sustainability appraisal, statement of adoption and inspector's report at the locations used to distribute information in section b).
- send the adoption statement and inspector's report to anyone who had requested to be notified of such.
- publish an advert containing the adoption statement and details of where the DPD can be viewed in the Eastern Daily Press and Norwich Evening News.
- send the DPD and adoption statement to the Secretary of State.

Figure 3 of the current SCI presents a summary of the process for producing a DPD, showing opportunities for community involvement. This diagram has been updated, below, and summarises stages a) to e) of the process described above:

### The process for producing a DPD and opportunities for community involvement



It is the intention of the Council to produce and publish a ‘community involvement briefing paper’ during the early stages of DPD production, setting out the detail regarding opportunities for community involvement relating to that particular DPD.

### 3. Future review of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

This document presents an update to a specific section of Broadland District Council’s current SCI to bring it up to date with current government legislation as detailed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008.

This does not constitute or replace a full-scale refresh of the Council’s SCI which shall take place as and when necessary and which shall be flagged in the Council’s Local Development Scheme (the timetable for the production and review of the Council’s Local Development Framework).

Such a refresh will, itself, be subject to the amended planning regulations and will follow a rigorous process of community involvement in it’s development.