

Statement of Community Involvement 2025

Adopted 22 January 2025



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Foreword

Planning is fundamental to shaping the neighbourhoods and communities in which we all live and work. Early and meaningful engagement with communities and stakeholders is an integral part of the planning process.

Bedford Borough Council considers it important that everyone has the opportunity to be involved in and influence decisions that are made through the planning system. This Statement of Community Involvement demonstrates the council's commitment to engaging with local communities and stakeholders in plan-making and when considering planning applications.

I am very pleased to have this updated document setting out how we will consult and provide information with the aim of encouraging community and stakeholder participation in the planning process. It sets the framework for planning consultations, providing certainty over what sort of engagement can be expected from the planning service and the ways to get involved in helping to shape the future of Bedford Borough.

Cllr Andrea Spice

Portfolio holder for economic growth, planning and prosperity

How we got to this point

Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the Council to have an up to date Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how it will involve the community in plan-making and when considering planning applications.

This revision to the Statement of Community Involvement incorporates a number of factual updates arising from national changes to planning policies and procedures and revised contact details to bring the SCI up to date. We have also taken the opportunity to make the document more concise by removing areas of duplication.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Bedford Borough Council recognises the importance of community engagement and is committed to involving people in the planning process. Community consultation is about more than making sure that the right people are given a chance to comment on individual proposals. It is also about making sure that the whole community is given the chance to influence the wider development framework within which those individual decisions are made.
- 1.2 You can play an important and active role in the planning system by having a say in planning decisions affecting your local community. The main ways you can get involved are:
- Having your say during public consultation on draft plans and other planning policy documents
 - Having your say on planning applications and most other types of consents
- 1.3 This document, the Statement of Community Involvement, sets out who will be consulted, how that consultation will happen and when it will take place both in respect of the preparation of new planning policy documents and the determination of planning applications. The SCI sets out the publicity and consultation procedures that will be used, explains the statutory requirements that we must meet at each stage and what other methods may be undertaken in addition to these minimum requirements. We must comply with the adopted SCI in preparing relevant planning policy documents and in determining planning applications.
- 1.4 The Statement of Community Involvement is structured in four parts and sets out:
- Your opportunities for involvement in the preparation of plans and planning policy documents
 - The publicity and consultation that is carried out in relation to specific applications in what is known as the development management process
 - The neighbourhood planning process and opportunities for involvement in the preparation of neighbourhood plans, neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders
 - General information including how to make effective comments and how responses will be dealt with, sources of further information, how the SCI will be monitored and under what circumstances it might be reviewed.

2. Why the statement of community Involvement has been revised

- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement to produce a Statement of Community Involvement and review it every five years from the date of adoption. The current SCI was adopted in October 2019 so is coming up to five years old.
- 2.2 Restrictions put in place during the Covid-19 pandemic led to the publication of new planning guidance relating to SCIs. The Council assessed the SCI to identify which commitments were inconsistent with the restrictions and made public reasonable steps to help the involvement of those in our community who may experience difficulties getting involved in the planning process through digital and online channels. On 24 June 2020 a temporary version of the SCI was adopted by the Council.
- 2.3 This review of the SCI provides an opportunity to incorporate more flexible arrangements for publicity and consultation which have proven effective under the temporary measures which were necessary during the pandemic, and to bring the SCI in line with changes to how the public and other stakeholders access information relating to the planning process. This includes an increased use and availability of electronic communications and increased use of social media to access information and interact with the Council. We have recognised the importance of ensuring that consultation is cost effective and that the Council is working effectively to free up limited resources. This has the positive effect of making best use of resources whilst helping to facilitate more convenient and effective engagement with the planning system thus encouraging wider public participation. In updating our SCI we have also had regard to changes to planning legislation and guidance.
- 2.4 Whilst it is likely that digital forms of publicity and consultation will continue to grow, we recognise that not all our communities will be able to readily access information digitally. In reviewing our SCI, we have sought to ensure there is equal opportunity for all to participate in the planning process.

3. The national policy context

- 3.1 In preparing this SCI, regard has been had to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and accompanying Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). These highlight the government's commitment to engaging the public in planning both in plan making and decision taking.
- 3.2 The [NPPF](#) states that plans should “be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees”. In relation to decision-taking, it states that “early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system”.

4. A corporate commitment to effective engagement

- 4.1 Effective engagement is a corporate priority, which is enshrined in a range of key documents which the Council and its partners produce. The Council recognises the diversity of its population and is keen to undertake consultation in ways that encourage all sectors of the community to take part. This strong commitment to effective consultation and engagement flows from corporate aims and strategies, which this Statement of Community Involvement will help to deliver.

The Corporate Plan 2024/5-2027/28

- 4.2 The [Corporate Plan 2024/25-2027/28](#) sets out the Borough Council's strategic direction, which is focussed on enhancing Bedford Borough as a place where people, communities and businesses can grow and realise their potential. It explains the principles the Council will aspire to embody which include:
- Service Excellence: We are committed to providing top-quality services for residents, and to be recognised for excellence
 - Community Collaboration: We prioritise working in partnership with our residents, communities and local businesses
 - Results-Driven: We are determined to achieve our ambitions
 - Proactive: to deliver services that focus on prevention early intervention

The ways the Council will work in order to deliver its goals include:

- Enhance Efficiency
- Embrace Change
- Engage, Inform, and Empower all communities and all ages in developing our services
- Ensure cost-effectiveness
- Leverage new technology for maximum impact
- Embed Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in how we deliver our services

Key considerations in shaping and delivering the plan include:

- Financial stability: Maintaining a balanced budget and a solid financial foundation, while ensuring affordability and sustainability for our services
- Affordability: Mindful of the financial challenges for our residents and the Council
- Population dynamics: Addressing the challenges posed by population growth and change
- Legal obligations: Meeting our statutory duties and responsibilities.

4.3 The Corporate Plan sets out the Council's four priorities:

- Supporting individuals and families and empowering communities
- Protecting the environment
- Stimulating economic growth in Bedford Borough, and
- Promoting health and wellbeing.

4.4 The Council regularly updates the Corporate Plan.

Carbon Reduction Delivery Strategy 2020-2030

4.5 The [Carbon Reduction Delivery Strategy 2020-2030](#) and Action Plan set out the approach that the Borough Council will take to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Consultations Strategy 2021-2025

4.6 The [Consultations Strategy 2021-2025](#) explains the principles that underpin all consultation work corporately. It contains guidance on what should be considered when planning and conducting a consultation exercise and sets the framework for a co-ordinated approach to consultation across the Council.

Digital Operating Model

4.7 Part of the Bedford Borough 2020 project was the development of a Digital Operating Model. This encourages the use of digital communication and involved moving all transactional services, wherever possible to a digital platform, thereby making services more accessible and streamlined, providing automated digital services which are open at all times. The Covid-19 pandemic necessitated the roll out of the project quickly to ensure that access to the Council's services during the restrictions was not negatively impacted.

The background of the entire slide is a detailed architectural floor plan. It features various rooms, corridors, and furniture like sofas and tables. Numerous dimensions are written throughout the drawing in a small, light-colored font. The drawing is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

Part 1: Plan-making

Publicity and consultation on plans
and planning policy documents

A solid green horizontal bar that spans the width of the slide, positioned below the subtitle text.The background of the entire slide is a detailed architectural floor plan. It features various rooms, corridors, and furniture like sofas and tables. Numerous dimensions are written throughout the drawing in a small, light-colored font. The drawing is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter.

5. Plan-making – a planning framework for Bedford Borough

Overview of the plan making process

- 5.1 As a local planning authority, we have a statutory duty to put in place a framework of planning policies (known as the development plan or local plan) used to guide development proposals and to help determine planning applications. Our [Local Development Scheme](#) sets out the programme for preparing new planning policy documents. It shows the key stages of preparation, including when consultation will take place. The Local Development Scheme is available electronically on the Council's website and can be viewed in paper copy in Bedford Borough libraries during staffed opening hours and at our Bedford Borough Hub in Horne Lane, Bedford.
- 5.2 The Council also prepares other planning documents that do not form part of the development plan for Bedford Borough. These include topic based or site-specific supplementary planning documents and a number of documents that are not policy-based, but are relevant to the development and use of land, such as this Statement of Community Involvement.

6. Plan-making – what type of documents we will consult you on

6.1 The planning system is a plan-led system. This means that planning decisions must be made in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses are therefore vital in producing plans that reflect the vision and aspirations of local communities.

6.2 The Council prepares various types of documents that involve different plan-making processes and requirements for publicity and consultation. You have the opportunity to be involved in the development or review of the following documents.

Local plans

6.3 Local plans set out a vision and a framework for the future development of the area, addressing needs and opportunities in relation to housing, the economy, community facilities and infrastructure. They provide a basis for managing development, for safeguarding the environment, mitigating and adapting to climate change and securing good design. Local plans can allocate land for development and areas that may need to be protected. Local plans form part of the statutory development plan and are the starting point for the determination of planning applications.

6.4 Preparation of a local plan will follow a set of statutory stages which involve on-going community engagement, defined periods of formal consultation and the submission of comments. There are prescribed minimum publicity requirements for

making documents available: for whom, for how long and where.

6.5 Local plans are independently examined by an Inspector appointed by a Secretary of State (via the Planning Inspectorate). During the examination, an Inspector is required to ensure that the preparation of the plan has followed the relevant procedures including that the Council has consulted and considered comments received.

Sustainability Appraisals / Habitats Regulations Assessments

6.6 A sustainability appraisal (SA) is carried out in parallel with the preparation of local plans. The purpose is to identify any potential social, economic and environmental impacts that the plan may have. Where impacts are identified, the sustainability appraisal process allows for mitigation measures to be considered and fed into the emerging document.

6.7 Integrated into the sustainability appraisal are the requirements of the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive 2001/42/EC. However, the sustainability appraisal covers wider social and economic effects of plans, as well as the more environmentally focussed considerations of the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive.

6.8 A Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) may be required under the European Directive 92/43/EEC on the “conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora for plans” that may have an impact of European (Natura 2000) Sites. The

screening stage determines if a document, such as a local plan, contains proposals that are likely to have a significant effect on international sites. This is the likely effect of the plan before any mitigation is included. The screening can lead to the need for Appropriate Assessment.

- 6.9 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 facilitates reform of the current environmental impact assessment, sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment regimes by providing for Environmental Outcome Reports, creating a new system to measure a development's possible impact on the environment. The Act provides the Secretary of State with the power to make EOR regulations which will specify environmental outcomes against which to assess relevant plans and programmes.

Supplementary planning documents

- 6.10 Supplementary planning documents expand upon and provide additional guidance and interpretation to support policies in a local plan. They cannot introduce new policy. They must be consistent with the local plan and, where relevant, are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. They do not form part of the development plan and whilst consultation forms part of the preparation process, unlike a local plan, they are not tested at examination.

Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule

- 6.11 The Community Infrastructure Levy is a levy that the Council can choose to charge on all new developments in the borough and that can be spent on infrastructure to support housing and employment growth. A Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule is a document in which the Council sets out the levy rates that are charged on different types of new development and this was brought into force in Bedford Borough on 1 April 2014. Charges are based on the size and type of new development. The charging schedule is a financial document and does not form part of the development plan for Bedford Borough.
- 6.12 The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 makes provision to replace the current Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy regimes with a new Infrastructure Levy which, if implemented, will introduce a new way of calculating developer contributions towards affordable housing and infrastructure. The new Labour government has confirmed that it will not be bringing forward the proposed infrastructure levy, instead the government intends to focus on improving the existing system of developer contributions.

Brownfield land register

- 6.13 Brownfield land registers were introduced by the government in 2017. The brownfield land register lists those previously developed sites within the borough that are suitable for housing development. Brownfield land registers are arranged in two parts; part 1 collates into one list those brownfield sites that are suitable for housing development and part 2 goes one step further and identifies sites where Permission in Principle is granted. Where sites are placed on part 2 of a register, the principle of the residential use is effectively granted and only the details need to be agreed. Councils are only required to publish a part 1 register. Part 2 of the register is discretionary.

Other documents

- 6.14 The Council produces a number of other documents that are relevant to the development and use of land in Bedford Borough. These include documents for which there are no legislative requirements to consult, such as the Statement of Community Involvement, the Local Development Scheme and the Bedford Borough Planning Annual Monitoring Report.
- 6.15 In addition to sustainability appraisals we carry out a range of background studies and impact assessments to support the formulation of plans and policies. Key background studies are published as part of formal consultation.

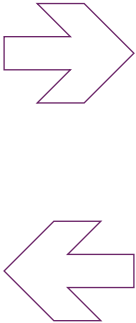
Figure 1 The development plan for Bedford Borough and other documents

The development plan

Local plan documents

Saved policies

Neighbourhood Plans



Other documents

Policies Map

Supplementary planning documents

Community Infrastructure Levy

Brownfield land register

Statement of Community Involvement

Local Development Scheme

Planning Annual Monitoring Report

7. Plan-making – how we will consult you and keep you informed

7.1 There are opportunities for public involvement at different stages of plan preparation for each type of document. The various stages of plan preparation in relation to different types of documents are explained in section 8. To reduce expenditure and make best use of resources we carry out as much consultation as possible electronically. Given the diversity of communities in Bedford Borough and the nature of documents the Council prepares, different methods are used flexibly to suit different circumstances, target groups and the type of document that is being prepared.

7.2 Some of the methods we use are intended to publicise information and aim to raise awareness and provide information about planning policy document consultations that you may be interested in. These are publicity methods. Other methods, such as a questionnaire or online response form, are used to actively seek your comments and provide an opportunity for you to respond. These are consultation methods. Some methods, such as letter or email, for example, may be used both to publicise information and invite your comments.

7.3 The key publicity and consultation methods we use to ask for your comments and publicise information are set out below.

Website

7.4 We use our website to publicise information or documents and invite comments via our online consultation system. It provides a wealth of information about plans and planning policy documents and is the primary means of publicity and

consultation that we use to reach out to our communities. We make draft plans, background documents and response forms available on our website. We also use our website to publicise consultation on draft plans and other planning policy documents, details of where and when you can inspect documents in paper copy, submission of documents to the Secretary of State for examination, relevant examination details, formal plan adoption and other key information. When sending out letters or emails to individuals or organisations, or publicising information in the local press, we normally direct attention to our website for further information or details about the consultation. The planning policy pages can be accessed at www.bedford.gov.uk/planningpolicy. Where possible we will provide customised web links to consultation documents and information about the consultation.

7.5 The Council's website includes a facility to [sign up](#) to receive Your Voice, Your Views bulletin to keep up to date with consultations being undertaken by the Council and you can also access an [online database](#) of the Council's consultations.

Direct notification

7.6 Direct notification by email or letter will be used to publicise information or documents and consult. Where we have an email address for an individual or organisation on our consultation database we send notifications by email, Letters will be sent where no email address is held, or a specific request has been made. This will include large print, alternative format or another language where required. To minimise costs to the Council and

to help reduce resource use, individuals and organisations are encouraged to register an email address on the Planning Policy online consultation system.

Public notices

- 7.7 Public notices detailing the availability of documents may be posted on the Council's website and in local newspapers both online and in paper copy at the start of a consultation period. Notices will also be available to view in paper copy in Bedford Borough libraries during staffed opening hours and at our Bedford Borough Hub.

Availability of consultation documents

- 7.8 We make copies of draft plans and other planning policy documents available to view in Bedford Borough libraries during staffed opening hours and at our Bedford Borough Hub to publicise documents and provide an opportunity for you to inspect documents in paper copy. Please telephone 01234 718068. You may also request that a copy of a document is made available to you in paper for a charge. This will include large print, alternative format or another language where required. Please telephone 01234 718068 for assistance.

Local press

- 7.9 We may publicise in the local press local plan consultations, local plan examinations, consultations on other planning policy documents, the publication of examiner recommendations following a local plan examination and the formal adoption of local plans and other documents. Press releases may be prepared to raise awareness of planning policy documents and

highlight events in which local communities can get involved.

Social media

- 7.10 Social media provides a cost effective way to reach communities that may not respond to traditional methods of consultation. We will use our social media channels to raise awareness of consultations, where and when documents can be inspected and direct attention to our website for further information and access to consultation documents.

Posters and leaflets

- 7.11 Posters and leaflets may be prepared to raise awareness, summarise the principal matters and direct attention to our website for further information and access to consultation documents.
- 7.12 In addition to the key publicity and consultation methods we use to ask for your comments and publicise information, we will use these and other engagement methods to actively involve our communities, businesses and other stakeholders in the preparation of relevant planning policy documents. They provide the opportunity to present information, discuss issues, gather feedback and encourage participation. Examples of other engagement methods that may be used include our online consultation system, exhibitions, meetings, workshops and presentations. Where we use face to face engagement methods, we will choose accessible venues and consideration will be given to holding in-person events on a range of days and times. We can provide an induction hearing loop system for those who are deaf or hard of hearing upon request.

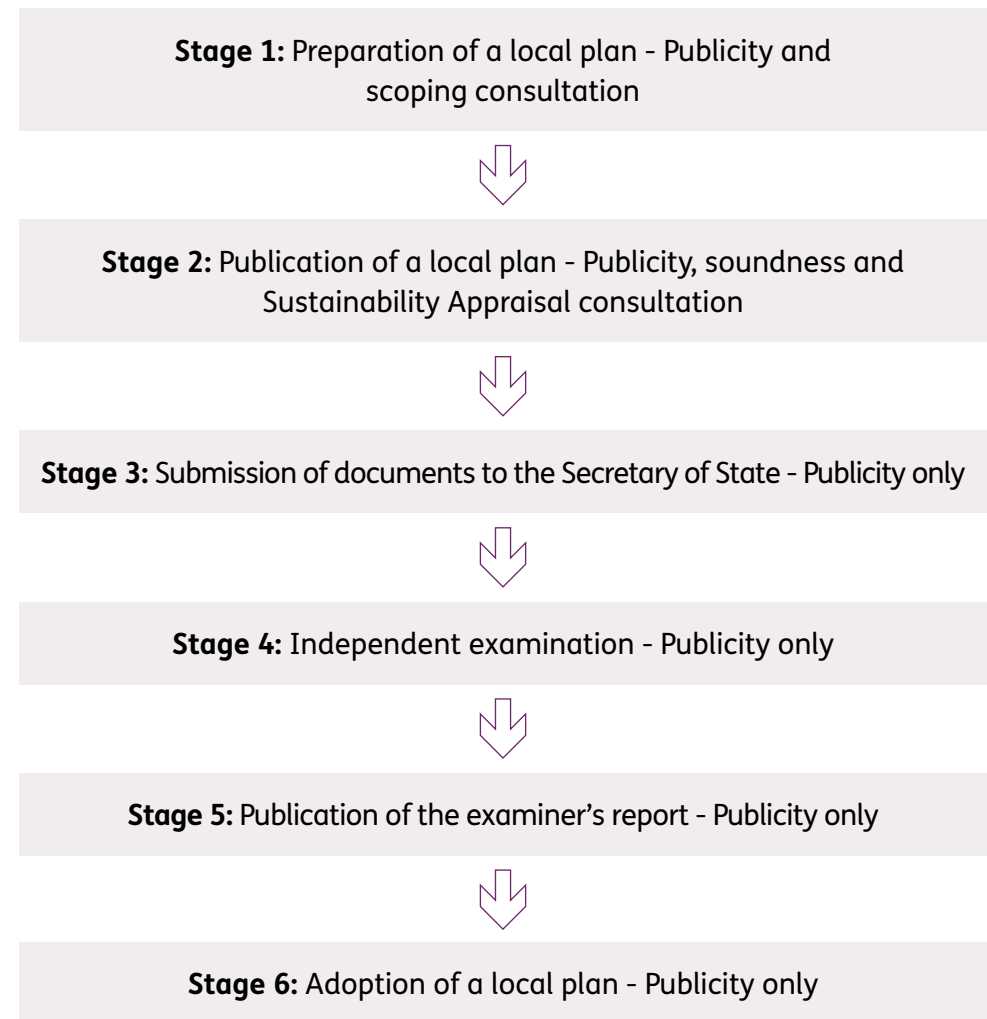
8. Plan-making – when we will consult and inform you

- 8.1 When we prepare planning policy documents, there are several key stages in the plan preparation process at which we will ask for your comments or publicise the progress we have made in preparing the plan.

The local plan process

- 8.2 Local plans are prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Figure 2 illustrates the stages at which we carry out publicity and consultation and those stages at which we carry out publicity only.

Figure 2 The local plan process



- 8.3 The individual stages of the local plan process and the consultation and publicity the Council carries out at each stage are explained in Table 1. When preparing local plans we may carry out more extensive consultation than required by the Regulations, depending on the nature and scope of the local plan that we prepare.

Table 1 Publicity and consultation in preparing local plans

Intent	How we prepare a local plan	Publicity and consultation
Preparation of a local plan (Regulation 18)		We will...
Scoping consultation and publicity of plan subject	As a first step we gather evidence and information to identify and evaluate the issues and alternatives for the local plan. Evidence gathered may include technical information and comments received in response to a scoping consultation, which together will form part of the evidence base for the local plan. Local communities and stakeholders are encouraged to put forward their future plans and proposals at this early stage in the plan preparation process, so that discussions can take place and issues can be resolved.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify the statutory consultation bodies and those on our consultation database of the subject of the local plan we propose to prepare in writing. • Publicise on our website the subject of the local plan we propose to prepare, inviting comments on what the plan should contain. Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult the statutory consultation bodies and those on our consultation database, other stakeholders and the public inviting comments on what the plan should contain in writing. In relation to a local plan addressing Gypsy and Traveller issues the Council will have regard to the advice in Planning policy for traveller sites (2023) when preparing the evidence base. • Consult the Strategic Environmental Assessment consultation bodies, inviting comments on the scope to be included in the sustainability appraisal report in writing.
	In parallel we prepare a sustainability appraisal scoping report, which considers the social, economic and environmental matters to be covered in the sustainability appraisal report. The sustainability appraisal objectives contained in the scoping report are used to test alternatives for the local plan and inform the consultation on the plan's contents.	
	Taking account of comments received where appropriate and the evidence gathered during the scoping stage we prepare the Plan for Submission, which we intend to submit to the Secretary of State for independent examination.	
	Alongside the Plan for Submission we prepare a sustainability appraisal report, which considers the social, economic and environmental impacts that are likely to arise from the Plan for Submission.	

Publication of a local plan (Regulation 19)	We will...
<p>Publicity of the Plan for Submission and sustainability appraisal report and consultation on the sustainability appraisal report and soundness of the Plan</p>	<p>The plan we intend to submit to the Secretary of State for examination is subject to a consultation on its soundness. It is important to note that at this stage the Council will only make further changes to the Plan for Submission if major changes are considered necessary as a result of comments received in response to the soundness consultation.</p> <p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise for at least 6 weeks on our website the Plan for Submission, sustainability appraisal report, supporting documents and a statement of representations procedure setting out how and by when representations must be made. Make available for inspection for at least 6 weeks the submission documents and statement of representations procedure at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries during staffed opening hours. Notify in writing the statutory consultation bodies and those on our consultation database of where and when the submission documents can be inspected in paper copy. Publicise for at least 6 weeks on our website details of where and when the submission documents can be inspected in paper copy. <p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult for at least 6 weeks the statutory consultation bodies and those on our consultation database, other stakeholders and the public inviting comments on the soundness of the Plan for Submission in writing. Late responses will not normally be accepted at this stage. Consult the statutory Strategic Environmental Assessment consultation bodies and those on our consultation database, other stakeholders and the public on the sustainability appraisal report, inviting comments in writing. Carry out further consultation before submission to the Secretary of State only if major changes to the Plan for Submission are considered necessary as a result of consultation.

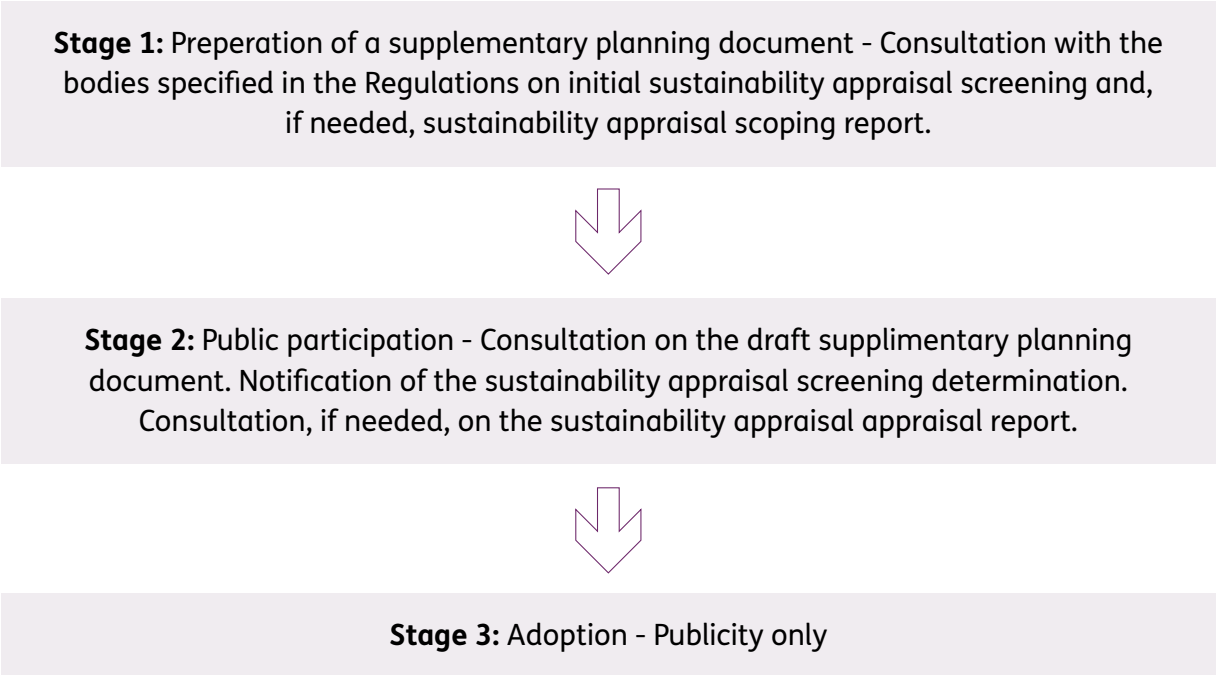
Submission of documents and information to the Secretary of State (Regulation 22)		We will...
Publicity of submission documents	Following the consultation on the sustainability appraisal report and the soundness of the Plan for Submission, we submit electronically (and in paper copy where requested) all submission documents to the Secretary of State for independent examination. The submission documents include the Plan for Submission, sustainability appraisal report, supporting documents, a summary of all comments received in response to consultation and how comments have been dealt with.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise the local plan, sustainability appraisal report and supporting documents we have submitted to the Secretary of State, making these available on our website, and at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries for inspection in paper copy during staffed opening hours. Publicise on our website where and when the submission documents can be inspected. Notify those who requested to be notified of the submission of the Plan for Submission to the Secretary of State in writing. Notify in writing the statutory consultation bodies and those on our consultation database who made comments on the soundness of the local plan that the submission documents are available for inspection and where and when they may be inspected.
Independent examination (Regulation 24)		We will...
Publicity of local plan examination	The Secretary of State appoints an Inspector, who may conduct the examination by written representations or hearing sessions that are open to the public to observe. At examination the plan is tested to ensure it has been positively prepared, is effective and contains policies that are justified and consistent with national policy (tests of soundness). The Inspector also considers if the local plan has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement. The Inspector considers all comments received in response to consultation on the Plan for Submission. If any issues raised in response to the soundness consultation remain unresolved, the hearings provide the opportunity to be heard in person by the Inspector or submit a written statement.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise at least 6 weeks in advance of the opening of the examination the details of the upcoming examination, including the name of the Inspector and where applicable the time, date and place at which the hearing will take place on our website. Notify in writing anyone who has provided comments in response to the soundness consultation of the name of the Inspector and the time, date and place at which the hearings will take place.

Publication of the examiner's report (Regulation 25)		We will...
Publicity of the examiner's report	The examiner will produce a report setting out recommendations, which must be considered by the Council. If the examiner considers that modifications will be required to make the plan sound, these will be included in the report. The Inspector may recommend a range of main or additional modifications to the local plan. If the Inspector recommends minor changes to the local plan, these are incorporated in finalising the local plan for adoption.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available as soon as practicable the examiner's report on our website, at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries during staffed opening hours. • Notify the statutory consultation bodies, those on our consultation database who commented on the soundness of the local plan and those who have requested to be notified of the publication of the examiner's report in writing. Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out further consultation only if the examination has found that main modifications are necessary to make the local plan sound. Following further consultation on the main modifications only, it may be necessary to hold further hearing sessions for the Inspector to consider the consultation responses before the examination closes.
Adoption of a local plan (Regulation 26)		We will...
Publicity of the adopted local plan	Elected councillors will vote to formally adopt the local plan. We prepare an adoption statement that gives notice of the Council's resolution to adopt the local plan and that legal challenge may be made within 6 weeks of the adoption date. Once adopted the local plan becomes part of the development plan for Bedford Borough.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available on our website, at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries during staffed opening hours the adopted local plan, sustainability appraisal report, the adoption statement and a statement of where the adopted local plan is available for inspection. • Send a copy of the adoption statement to the Secretary of State and those who requested to be notified in writing.

The supplementary planning document process

- 8.4 The preparation of supplementary planning documents in accordance with the same Regulations follows a similar approach, but does not involve an examination, soundness consultation, or a sustainability appraisal unless a sustainability appraisal screening indicates otherwise. Therefore, supplementary planning documents typically take less time to prepare than local plans. The process is set out in Figure 3.

Figure 3 The supplementary planning document process



8.5 Table 2 explains the individual stages in preparing a supplementary planning document and the consultation and publicity the Council carries out at each stage.

Table 2 Publicity and consultation in preparing supplementary planning documents

Intent	How we prepare a supplementary planning document	Publicity and consultation
Preparation of a supplementary planning document		We will...
Consultation on initial sustainability appraisal screening of draft document	<p>We carry out initial screening to identify significant social, economic and environmental effects that are likely to arise from the preparation of a supplementary planning document.</p> <p>We prepare the draft supplementary planning document considering all evidence gathered.</p> <p>We prepare an initial sustainability appraisal screening for consultation with the Strategic Environmental Assessment bodies, which considers whether or not sustainability appraisal is required. If it is determined that sustainability appraisal is required, we prepare a sustainability appraisal scoping report which considers the social, economic and environmental matters to be covered in the sustainability report.</p>	<p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult the Strategic Environmental Assessment consultation bodies, inviting comments on the initial sustainability appraisal screening in writing. If it is determined that sustainability appraisal is required, consult the Strategic Environmental Assessment consultation bodies, inviting comments on the scope to be included in the sustainability appraisal report in writing.
Public participation (Regulation 12)		We will...
Publicity and consultation on draft document and sustainability appraisal screening determination	<p>The draft supplementary planning document is publicised and subject to consultation. Comments are invited on the draft document.</p> <p>The sustainability appraisal screening determination and, if needed, the sustainability appraisal report, is subject to consultation in parallel to the draft supplementary planning document.</p> <p>We prepare a consultation statement listing those consulted and the main issues raised.</p>	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise for at least 4 weeks on our website the draft supplementary planning document, the sustainability appraisal screening determination and the consultation statement. Make available for inspection at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries during staffed opening hours for at least 4 weeks the draft supplementary planning document, the sustainability appraisal screening determination, and details of how and by when representations must be made. <p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult for at least 4 weeks relevant stakeholders on the draft supplementary planning document, inviting comments in writing. Invite comments on our website, providing details of how and by when representations must be made. If a sustainability appraisal report is required, consult the Strategic Environmental Assessment consultation bodies and relevant stakeholders inviting comments on the report in writing.

Adoption of a supplementary planning document (Regulation 14)		We will...
Publicity of adopted document and adoption statement	<p>We will take on board comments received where appropriate, considering whether any changes are needed before finalising the supplementary planning document for adoption. Once adopted through formal Council procedure, we will publicise the adoption of the supplementary planning document.</p> <p>We prepare an adoption statement in order to give notice of the adoption providing details of any modifications made prior to adoption. The adoption statement will be subject to publicity alongside the adopted supplementary planning document.</p>	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available the supplementary planning document and adoption statement on our website, at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries during staffed opening hours. • Send a copy of the adoption statement to those who have requested to be notified of the adoption in writing.

The Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule process

- 8.6 The Community Infrastructure Charging Schedule is prepared in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 as amended. The Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule was brought into effect in Bedford Borough on 1 April 2014. Publicity and consultation in the CIL Charging Schedule process is likely to be of limited interest to the public and targets primarily those in the development industry. The individual stages of the preparation / revision process of the CIL Charging Schedule are set out in Figure 4 and the consultation and publicity the Council will carry out at each stage are explained in Table 3.

Figure 4 The Community Infrastructure Levy process

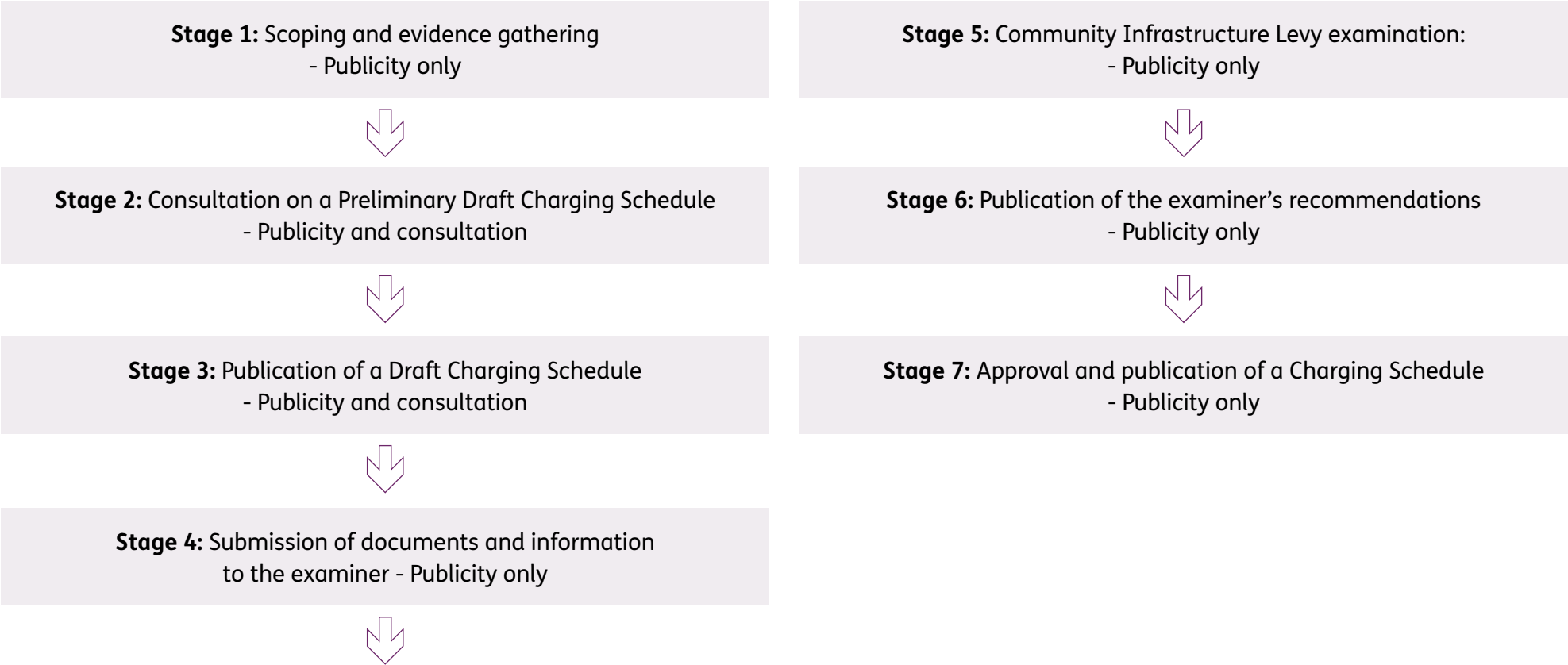


Table 3 Minimum consultation and publicity procedures in the preparation of the CIL Charging Schedule

Intent	How we prepare a CIL charging schedule	Publicity and consultation
Scoping / evidence gathering		We will...
Publicity of intent	We gather technical information, identify infrastructure needs and the funding gap, and test the economic viability of potential levy rates on development.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise on our website that we intend to prepare / revise our CIL charging schedule.
Consultation on a preliminary draft charging schedule (Regulation 15)		We will...
Consultation on preliminary draft charging schedule	We prepare a preliminary draft charging schedule based on the evidence gathered, setting out the levy rate we propose to charge. Alongside the preliminary draft charging schedule, we prepare a list of relevant infrastructure and viability assessment.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send a copy of the preliminary draft charging schedule to the statutory consultation bodies. Make available for inspection for at least 4 weeks the preliminary draft charging schedule and background documents at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries during staffed opening hours. Publicise for at least 6 weeks on our website where and when the preliminary draft charging schedule and background documents can be inspected and details of how and by when representations must be made inviting comments on the proposed levy rate. Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult for at least 6 weeks the statutory consultation bodies, residents, businesses and other relevant stakeholders on the preliminary draft charging schedule, inviting comments in writing. Take comments on board where appropriate in preparing the draft charging schedule.

Publication of a draft charging schedule (Regulation 16)		We will...
Publicity of and consultation on a draft charging schedule	<p>We prepare the draft charging schedule we intend to submit to the Secretary of State for examination, taking into account comments received where appropriate. Alongside the draft charging schedule and background documents, we publicise a statement of representations procedure, setting out how and by when representations must be made and that representations may include a request to be heard in person by the examiner and to be notified of the submission to examination, the publication of the examiner's report and the adoption of the charging schedule.</p>	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available for at least 4 weeks the draft charging schedule, relevant evidence and the statement of representations procedure at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries for inspection during staffed opening hours. • Publicise for at least 4 weeks on our website the draft charging schedule, relevant evidence and the statement of representations procedure including details of where and when documents can be inspected in paper copy. • Publicise by local advert the draft charging schedule, relevant evidence and the statement of representations procedure including details of where and when documents can be inspected in paper copy. • Send a copy of the draft charging schedule and the statement of representations procedure to the statutory consultation bodies and other relevant stakeholders. • Send a statement of modifications to the statutory consultation bodies and other relevant stakeholders by email or post only if modifications have been made to the draft charging schedule following the consultation and prior to submission to the Secretary of State.
	<p>If modifications to the draft charging schedule are necessary as a result of consultation prior to submission to the Secretary of State, these will be set out in a statement of modifications prepared by the Council.</p>	<p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult for at least 6 weeks the statutory consultation bodies, residents, businesses and other relevant stakeholders on the draft charging schedule in writing, inviting comments and providing the opportunity to request to be heard in person by the examiner and to be notified of submission to the Secretary of State, the publication of the examiner's recommendations and the approval of the charging schedule by the Council. • Take comments on board where appropriate in finalising the draft charging schedule for submission to the examiner.

Submission of documents and information to the examiner (Regulation 19)		We will...
Publicity of submission documents	We submit the draft charging schedule, relevant evidence, a consultation report, all comments received and where appropriate a statement of modifications made following publication. As soon as reasonably practicable following the submission we will publicise and make available the documents we have submitted to the examiner.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available the draft charging schedule and other documents submitted for examination, on our website, at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries during staffed opening hours. • Publicise on our website where and when the submission documents can be inspected. • Give notice to those who have requested to be notified of the submission to the examiner in writing.
CIL examination: right to be heard (Regulation 21)		We will...
Publicity of examination	<p>At examination the Draft Charging Schedule is tested to check that the necessary procedures have been complied with and it is supported by appropriate available evidence, and the proposed rates would not put at risk overall development in the area.</p> <p>The examiner may decide to conduct the examination by hearings or through written representations.</p>	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 4 weeks in advance of the examination publicise on our website and by local advertisement the details of the upcoming examination, including the name of the examiner and where applicable the date, time and place at which the hearings are to be held. • At least 4 weeks in advance of the examination notify those who have made representations on the Draft Charging Schedule and those who have requested to be heard in person by the examiner of the upcoming examination in writing.

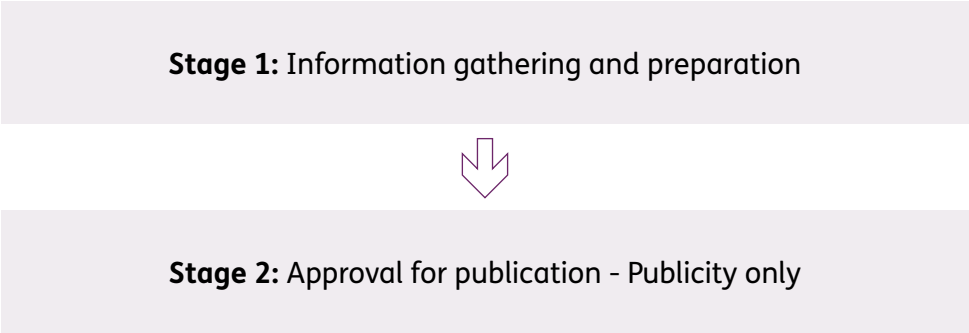
Publication of the examiner's recommendations (Regulation 23)		We will...
Publicity of examiner's report	The examiner will produce a report setting out recommendations, which must be considered by the Council. Having considered the examiner's recommendations we will finalise the CIL charging schedule.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the examiner's report available on our website, at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries for inspection during staffed opening hours. • Publicise on our website where and when the submission documents can be inspected. • Notify those who have requested to be notified of the publication of the examiner's report in writing.
Approval and publication of a charging schedule (Regulation 25)		We will...
Publicity of approved charging schedule	Elected councillors will vote to formally approve the charging schedule. Once approved, the charging schedule will take effect from the day specified therein.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish the approved charging schedule on our website. • Make available the approved charging schedule on our website, at our Bedford Borough Hub and local libraries during staffed opening hours. • Give notice by local advertisement of the approval of the charging schedule and details of when and where it can be inspected. • Notify those who have requested to be notified of the approval of the charging schedule in writing. • Send a copy of the approved charging schedule to relevant consenting authorities.

The Brownfield Land Register process

- 8.7 The Brownfield Land Register is prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017. Brownfield Land Registers are arranged in two parts; Part 1 collates into one list those brownfield sites that are suitable for housing development and Part 2 goes one step further and identifies sites where Permission in Principle is granted. Where sites are placed on Part 2 of a register, the principle of the residential use is effectively granted and only details need to be agreed. Additional publicity and consultation is undertaken in relation to the preparation of Part 2 Registers.

- 8.8 At the time of publishing this Statement of Community Involvement, Bedford Borough Brownfield Land Register contains sites on Part 1 only. In future years the Council may decide to place sites on Part 2 of the Register, so details are given below for the publicity and consultation activities that will be carried out for preparation of a Part 1 Register, and for a Part 2 Register. The individual stages of the preparation / revision process of the Brownfield Land Register are set out in Figure 5 and the publicity and consultation the Council will carry out at each stage are explained in Table 4.

Figure 5 The Brownfield Land Register process - Part 1 Register



The Brownfield Land Register process - Part 2 Register (if prepared)



Table 4 Minimum consultation and publicity procedures in the preparation of the Brownfield Land Register

Intent	How we prepare a Part 1 Register	Publicity and consultation
Information gathering and preparation of a Part 1 Register		
Preparation of a Part 1 Register	We gather information and prepare a Part 1 Register.	
Approval of a Part 1 Register for publication		
Approval of a Part 1 Register	We approve the Part 1 Register for publication.	
Public inspection of the Register		We will...
Public inspection of the Register	We will make available a copy of the Register for public inspection.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available a copy of the Register on our website.

Intent	How we prepare a Part 2 Register	Publicity and consultation
Information gathering and preparation of a Part 2 Register		
Preparation of a Part 2 Register	We gather information and prepare a Part 2 Register.	
Approval of a Part 1 Register for publication		We will...
Publicity of proposal to enter land in a Part 2 Register	We consider whether any of the sites identified in a Part 1 Register should be entered into a Part 2 Register. If a Part 2 Register is prepared, we will publicise the proposal to enter land into a Part 2 Register and invite representations to be made following publicity.	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display a notice at or near the site for at least 21 days and publicise the proposed entry of the site in a Part 2 Register on our website for at least 14 days, including details of how and by when representations may be made on the proposed Register and where and when the proposed Register may be inspected. • Where the land is situated within 10 metres of relevant railway land, we will publicise the proposal to enter it in a Part 2 Register by notifying the infrastructure manager of any relevant railway land. • Where a parish or neighbourhood forum within the Borough have requested to be notified of a proposed entry in a Part 2 Register and the land to which the proposed entry relates is within the area of the relevant body, we will notify the relevant body of the proposed entry. • Make available the proposed entry of land in a Part 2 Register on our website for at least 14 days, including details of how and by when representations may be made on the proposed Register and where and when the proposed Register may be inspected. <p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where notice has been given by site display we will consult for at least 21 days. When consulting on information made available on our website we will consult for at least 14 days. When consulting with an infrastructure manager of any relevant railway land, a parish council or a neighbourhood forum we will consult for at least 42 days for the first publication of Part 2, or at least 21 days where the first publication has taken place. We will invite comments in writing. • Take comments on board in deciding whether to enter land into a Part 2 Register.

Consultation on proposal to enter land into a Part 2 Register		We will...
Consultation	We will consult with other persons, bodies or authorities.	Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult with persons, bodies or authorities with whom we would be required to consult on an application for planning permission for residential development of the land. We will consult for at least 42 days for the first publication of Part 2, or at least 21 days where the first publication has taken place, inviting comments in writing. Take comments on board in deciding whether to enter land into a Part 2 Register.
Approval and public inspection of the Register		We will...
Approval of the Register and public inspection	We approve the Register for publication. We will make available a copy of the Register for public inspection.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make available a copy of the Register on our website.

9. Plan-making – who will be consulted on plans and planning policy documents

- 9.1 The Council has a long history of engagement with local residents, local councils, businesses, stakeholders, community groups, voluntary organisations and others in preparing planning policy documents. These make up an extensive consultation database.
- 9.2 Anyone can register on our consultation database in order to receive information about consultation documents. Signing up will enable you to be kept informed of the Council's ongoing planning policy work and notified directly of a consultation. To request inclusion in the consultation database, please register directly on the Council's [online consultation system](#) or email planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk. If you are not a statutory consultee and do not wish to receive further notifications, please send an email to the above address.
- 9.3 The personal information we hold on our consultation database is used for the purpose of publicity and consultation only. Where we ask for personal information, we will ensure that this is proportionate to the purpose of publicity and consultation. The database is periodically reviewed and managed to comply with the General Data Protection Regulations 2016 and Data Protection Act 2018 or any successor legislation. Full details about how we use this data and the rights you have around this can be found in the [privacy notice](#) on the Council's website. From time to time we will review our database and contact you in writing to find out if you would like to remain on the database.
- 9.4 Whilst the existing consultation database is the starting point for any consultation, the Council makes every effort to identify and consult organisations, groups and individuals to whom the document is relevant and of interest. Prior to consultations the Council will carry out a stakeholder mapping exercise in order to identify the groups and individuals that are appropriate and may have an interest in the document.
- 9.5 Depending on the subject matter addressed by the document we intend to prepare a more focused consultation may be appropriate. We may consider this approach, for example, when preparing a planning policy document that provides guidance on an individual site. In this case, not everyone on the database may be automatically consulted.
- 9.6 Statutory consultation bodies for local plans can be divided in two main groups; specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies. Specific consultation bodies include government agencies, utility providers, local councils and other local authorities, which we consult if they are considered to have an interest in the document. General consultation bodies primarily include interest groups, which are consulted with by the Council as appropriate.
- 9.7 Integrated into the list of specific consultation bodies are the three Strategic Environmental Assessment consultation bodies, which are the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England. These must be consulted with on sustainability appraisal reports and sustainability appraisal screening determinations.

9.8 When preparing sustainability appraisal reports and the Community Infrastructure Charging Schedule there are a range of organisations and groups that the Council must consult. Appendix 1 lists the statutory and other consultation bodies in relation to each type of document.

9.9 In addition to the statutory consultation bodies, there is a range of individuals and groups which we may consult if they are considered to have an interest in the document. These can be found in Appendix 1.

Duty to cooperate

9.10 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a ‘duty to cooperate’, whereby local planning authorities are required to work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies in preparing the development plan for their area. A number of issues, such as transportation, flood risk and waste management, have impacts across administrative boundaries and local authorities and other public bodies are required to work jointly on strategic matters of this nature. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 provides for repealing the duty to cooperate and its replacement with a new “alignment” test.

9.11 One significant cross boundary issue that we are dealing with is the planning of Wixams new settlement. This strategic housing site is located partly in Bedford Borough and partly in Central Bedfordshire and has necessitated close joint working to bring the site forward. The Wixams Joint Development Control Committee was specifically established to coordinate decision-

making on planning applications at this site.

9.12 In exercising the duty to cooperate the Council is required to cooperate with neighbouring authorities, county councils and the statutory bodies that are prescribed for the purpose of planning for strategic cross boundary matters. These are included in Appendix 1.

Reaching everyone

9.13 We appreciate that there are some groups which have been traditionally underrepresented in consultation exercises. We will try to reach these groups through targeted engagement that takes account of their particular needs.

9.14 As an organisation the Council is committed to eliminating any form of discrimination and considers the impacts of the services we provide and the policies we produce on a range of social groups. Some plans or planning policy documents may affect certain local communities more than others. These need to be subject to an equality analysis to identify any negative or differential impacts and mitigate those that cannot be avoided. All planning policy documents will be screened to establish if an equality analysis is required.

9.15 If you have particular needs and want to get involved in the preparation of plans and planning policy documents, please contact us at planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk and we will try to help you.

10. Plan-making – how we will gather feedback on plans and planning policy documents

- 10.1 Responses provided to consultations are an integral part of the plan-making process. We will receive and encourage comments, representations and feedback using the following methods, depending on the consultation.

Online consultation system

- 10.2 We encourage comments to be made online using our [consultation system](#) (you will need to create an account if you do not already have one). This allows you to save comments as you go along and return to your response at a later time before you submit it. It also retains a copy for your records. Responding online helps us to improve the efficiency of the plan making process and reduces resource use.

Questionnaires and response forms

- 10.3 The type of questionnaire / response form will be dependent on the consultation. Response forms can be downloaded from the Council's website or a paper copy may be provided on request. Using the published response form ensures that all the information required is submitted. Questionnaires / response forms can be completed online, completed electronically and returned attached to an email (as a WORD document), or completed and returned to the Council by post.

Emails and letters

- 10.4 Although it is our preference that comments are made using online facilities, emails will continue to be accepted. Letters can also be sent to the Council by post. We will provide a postal address for each consultation.

Online meetings, workshops and presentations

- 10.5 Online meetings, workshops and presentations may be used in conjunction with other consultation methods to publicise consultations, disseminate information and encourage feedback.

In person meetings and workshops

- 10.6 Whilst it is not always possible to meet, we will consider requests and find ways to ensure that our communities and interested parties are given the opportunity to be involved where online communication would not be effective.

Exhibitions

- 10.7 Exhibitions can include staffed or unstaffed displays and may be used to present information and options to our communities. Exhibitions offer the chance to provide feedback through interactive displays, informal polls, or through discussions with officers (where officers are present).
- 10.8 At certain statutory stages of plan making it is important that responses are received during the advertised timeframe. This will be made clear on all public notices and consultation documents. We will also specify the means by which comments should be made.

11. Plan-making – your comments and responses to plans and planning policy document consultations

- 11.1 We will acknowledge receipt of comments provided to assure you that we have received your comments. After each formal consultation period ends, all comments received during the consultation will be reviewed by officers. We will engage in further discussions where this will assist the Council in developing the document.
- 11.2 All comments received will normally be published online with personal information redacted in accordance with the Council's data protection duties and policy. As it is not practicable for the Council to individually respond to all comments received, we produce a consultation report, summarising or grouping the comments we have received and explaining how the issues raised have affected the development of policy, for each document at each stage of the plan preparation process. These reports will be made available on the Council's website. At the final stages of plan making, comments are shared with a Programme Officer and Planning Inspector when the Council submits the plan under Regulation 22 for examination.
- 11.3 If you make comments as part of a planning policy document consultation we will retain your details on our consultation database. If you are not a statutory consultee and do not wish to receive further notifications, you can request to be removed from the consultation database at any time by emailing planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk. The exception would be if you have provided a response at the Regulation 19 stage to a plan intended for submission, then we will retain your details and pass them to the Planning Inspector to fulfil our legal obligations.

Publicity and consultation in development management (dealing with planning and other related applications)

Publicity and consultation in development management (dealing with planning and other related applications)

12. Development management – planning permission and other consents

- 12.1 A principal aim of the planning process is to regulate the development and use of land in the public interest. The planning application process involves the making, consideration and determination of applications for “development” which can be either building works or a material change of use. There are also other types of applications that do not involve development but fall under the management of the local planning authority and include applications for advertisement consent and listed building consent.
- 12.2 However, not all “development” requires an application for planning permission. Some can be carried out as “permitted development” where planning permission is granted automatically by order. In some cases permitted development is subject to a ‘prior approval’ process that requires the developer to seek approval that specified elements of the development are acceptable before the work can proceed. Similarly, not all advertisements require consent from the Council; certain types of advert may be displayed with “Deemed Consent”.
- 12.3 If you are unsure whether or not you need planning permission, or other planning related consents, for the development you are contemplating, you can obtain advice from the Council. Please visit the [Council’s website](#) for useful advice including a link to the “Interactive House” (if you are considering works to your house) and information about the Council’s pre-application advice service. If you do not have access to the internet or wish to ask about the service offered, please visit our Bedford Borough Hub in Horne Lane, Bedford, telephone 01234 718068 or email planning@bedford.gov.uk.
- 12.4 Where you need to know whether or not an application for planning permission is required, you are advised to submit a request (in the form of an application) for a “Certificate of Lawfulness of Proposed Use or Development”.
- 12.5 For up to date information on how to make a planning application, guidance notes are available on our website and the government’s [Planning Portal](#).

13. Development management – planning application process

- 13.1 There are various stages in the planning application process. These are set out in Figure 6. Consultation and publicity procedures in the planning application process are governed by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and other legislation.

Figure 6 The planning application process



14. Development management – pre application advice and consultation

- 14.1 For enquiries relating to specific schemes or emerging proposals, we offer a formal pre-application service. Information on accessing pre-application advice, the service that will be provided and financial costs involved can be viewed on the [Council's website](#).
- 14.2 We encourage those submitting proposals for larger schemes or schemes of a sensitive nature to undertake consultation with the local community and other stakeholders before submitting a planning application, even if not required. This will enable local people to influence proposals at an early stage. The nature and extent of any pre-application consultation should depend on the scale and sensitivity of the proposed development.
- 14.3 We are currently preparing a protocol for the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents, masterplans and design codes associated with policies in the Local Plan 2040.

15. Development management – planning applications

Making an application

- 15.1 If you are thinking about making a planning application please visit the Council's [step by step guidance](#) which includes: what we need to be submitted with your application (validation requirements), fee details and how to pay, links for electronic submission and forms to download and submit in paper. Alternatively, you can submit a planning application through the [Planning Portal](#).

When an application is received

- 15.2 A planning application is checked by a validation officer to determine that all relevant forms, plans and documents are received in line with the national requirements, as set out in Part 7 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, and in line with the 'local validation list' requirements, which are published on the [Council's website](#) and that the description of the proposed development is accurate. If we require further information to validate the application we will ask for it and provide a timeframe for submission of that information. Once validated, your planning application will be recorded on our [online planning register](#) and will be acknowledged to assure you that your application has been received and allocated to a planning officer. Planning applications subject to public consultation will be made available for public inspection on our website. We will undertake a formal period of notification and consultation in accordance with the requirements of the relevant planning regulations. The extent of consultation depends on the scale

and nature of the development proposal. In most cases the consultation period will be a minimum of 21 days unless the notification period states otherwise.

- 15.3 The methods we use to publicise and consult on planning applications will meet the minimum requirements provided in legislation and are set out below. It is not necessary for you to have been directly notified in order to make comments. Further information about commenting on applications is available on the [Council's website](#).

Website

- 15.4 All planning applications and associated documents, including consultation responses are available to view on the Council's [online planning register](#). There is a facility to find an application using a simple search, advanced search, address search or map search, and view the progress of an application. You can also use the weekly or monthly list to view all the applications received and determined and research the planning history of a property back to 1995. Planning history from 1948 to 1994 can be found using the online card index and plotting sheets. You will need to register in order to submit comments on an application and you will be sent an acknowledgement once you have submitted your comments. Registering online also enables you to save searches, track applications and receive email notifications when the application status changes. For assistance with finding applications and conducting searches please refer to the [how to guides](#).

- 15.5 If you are unable to view applications online, you may contact our Bedford Borough Hub on 01234 718068 to discuss alternative methods.

Site notices

- 15.6 One or more site notices are displayed in a public place at or near to the application site. They provide details of the planning application, where to view plans, how to make comments and by what date.

Direct notification

- 15.7 We will send a direct notification by email or letter to the following. Where we have an email address for a consultee we send notifications by email. Letters will be sent where no email address is held, or where a specific request has been made.
- Internal and external statutory consultees in accordance with the relevant regulations and will be dependent on the scale, nature and location of the proposed development
 - Local councils when an application relates to their area
 - Adjoining Town and Parish Councils and adjacent Local Planning Authorities where strategic development sites border their respective administrative area.

Neighbour notification

- 15.8 Where required by planning legislation, we will notify those properties adjoining the red line site boundary or in some circumstances opposite the land to which the application relates by way of a letter. As we do not know the identity of the owner of any property we always send the letter addressed to

‘the occupier’ and it will be sent by second class post. We will also notify people who commented on an earlier application within the last five years where the red line boundary is the same as on the new application. The letter will provide details of the planning application, where to view plans, how to make comments and by what date.

Local press

15.9 In accordance with statutory requirements, we will publish details in the local press of all planning applications for the following:

- Major developments
- An application accompanied by an Environmental Impact Statement
- A departure from the Local Plan
- A development that would affect a public right of way, under Part III of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981
- Development affecting the character or appearance of a Conservation Area
- Development affecting a Listed Building or its setting.

15.10 Table 5 describes examples of different types of application and the publicity and consultation that is relevant to each type. The application types and suggested consultees are not an exhaustive list but cover the most common eventualities. Each case will be assessed on its own merits for the level of publicity and consultation required and statutory requirements will be met in every case. All applications will continue to be published on our website.

Table 5 How we will publicise and consult on planning applications

Types of planning application	Characteristics	Publicity and consultation
Small scale planning applications	These may include householder applications involving proposals to alter or enlarge a single house, including works within the garden, or minor proposals for non-residential development like small commercial extensions.	Notify adjacent neighbours by letter and / or site notice; consult local councils and statutory consultation bodies as required.
Major planning applications	These may be proposals for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing development of 10 or more dwellings, or a site area of 0.5 hectares or more • Other development where the floor space to be built is 1,000 sq. m or more, or where the site area is 1 hectare or more • Schemes that are controversial, for example wind farm proposals, or departures from the development plan. 	Notify adjacent neighbours, may need site and press notices. Consult local councils and statutory consultation bodies as required.
Listed building / conservation area consent applications	These may involve proposals for alterations, extensions or demolition of a listed building or any works for demolition to be carried out on a building within a conservation area.	Site notice. Notify adjacent neighbours; advertise in the press; consult local councils, conservation officer and statutory consultation bodies as required.
Advertisement consent	Certain adverts require express consent from the Council to be displayed and will typically include adverts on shops and other commercial buildings.	Notify adjacent neighbours, may need site and press notices. Consult local councils and statutory consultation bodies as required.
Outline consent	This type of application is designed to establish the principle of a particular scheme, the full details are often not given at this stage, for example the full design details of the houses on a residential scheme. The full details are usually considered at the “reserved matters” stage.	Notify adjacent neighbours, may need site and press notices. Consult local councils and statutory consultation bodies as required.
Reserved matters consent	This type of application follows on from an outline planning permission and considers the full details of the scheme, for example the house design and landscaping.	Notify adjacent neighbours, may need site and press notices. Consult local councils and statutory consultation bodies as required.
Change of use applications	This type of application considers an alternative use for a building or land, for example a change of use from grocers shop to a hot food takeaway.	Notify adjacent neighbours, may need site and press notices. Consult local councils and statutory consultation bodies as required.
Tree Preservation Order applications	This type of application considers works to protected trees.	Site notice. Consult local councils and tree officer.

Types of planning application	Characteristics	Publicity and consultation
Notification of works to trees in a conservation area	This type of application is a technical assessment of the work by a tree specialist that is not protected by a Tree Preservation Order.	Notify tree officer.
High hedge complaints	This type of complaint deals with one neighbour complaining about their neighbour's high evergreen hedge.	Notify adjacent neighbours; consult local councils.
Non-material and material amendments	This type of application involves an amendment to the approved scheme that does not require the submission of a new application.	Consultation at the discretion of the local planning authority.
“Prior approval” proposals for telecommunications infrastructure	This type of application considers the visual impact of the works on the street scene and landscape and can include highway safety issues.	Notify adjacent neighbours, may need site and press notices. Consult local councils and statutory consultation bodies as required.
Lawful development certificates for proposed / existing buildings and uses	This type of application is to establish if development or building works has become lawful through the passage of time or because it didn't require planning permission in the first place.	Do not consult for proposed works but do notify adjacent neighbours, local councils and statutory consultation bodies as required for existing development.
Other prior approvals	The government has sought to simplify the planning system by increasing the number of schemes for which only a prior approval is required.	Notification requirements depend on the type of prior notification application. The requirements are set out within the relevant sections of the regulations.
Hazardous substances consent	This application is to regulate the locations for storage of hazardous substances so that they cannot be kept or used above specific quantities until the responsible authority has had the opportunity to assess the risk of an accident and its consequences for people and the environment.	Consult Health and Safety Executive, local councils, Environment Agency and minerals and waste authority.

Commenting on a planning application

- 15.11 It is not necessary for you to have been directly consulted or notified in order to make comments. However, we cannot always consider comments submitted if the application is one that does not require neighbour notification.
- 15.12 All comments on planning applications must be made in writing to the Council. You can submit comments online, by email or by post. If you have not commented online before you will need to register first. Please quote the planning application reference, your name and full postal address, and specify at the beginning of any correspondence if you object, support or are commenting. You cannot comment on an application that has been determined. Comments made on social media will not be considered.
- 15.13 Whilst there is no statutory obligation to take late comments into account, we will exercise discretion and take late comments into account where circumstances allow, up until the application is determined. Comments via the online system will close once the overall consultation expiry date has passed; late responses will therefore need to be submitted by email or letter.
- 15.14 Planning can only take into account matters which are referred to as material planning considerations. Comments raising concern over the ability for the proposal to comply with other regulatory control, private covenants and land / boundary ownership, as well as the character of the applicant, are not material planning considerations. We will reject any comments containing discriminatory, offensive or libellous views.

Further information can be found in section 20 and on the [Council's website](#).

- 15.15 All comments including your name and address will be published online with personal information redacted in accordance with the Council's data protection policy and duties. Please do not include any of your personal data within the text of your comment itself as these are not automatically excluded and will show online.

Additional publicity in respect of amendments to applications

- 15.16 Negotiation between applicants, stakeholders and planning officers is an important part of the planning process and can contribute to delivering sustainable, high quality development. Negotiation may lead to amendments to a scheme which may resolve objections or take on board recommendations made by consultees or stakeholders. Any amendments to an application may be the subject of further consultation. The extent of any consultation will be determined on a case by case basis and is at the discretion of the local planning authority.
- 15.17 For applications subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment, legislation requires that the application is publicised for a period of 30 days where additional environmental information is received.

16. Development management – determining applications

Determining an application

- 16.1 The determination process involves making a decision on whether or not planning permission for a proposed development should be granted or refused. An officer will consider the development proposal against the policies in the development plan, taking account of any material considerations including consultation responses. Any determination must normally be made in accordance with the development plan unless other material planning considerations indicate otherwise. If planning permission is granted, it may be granted subject to conditions. Where the development has an effect on local infrastructure, planning obligations, such as financial contributions, may be required from the developer to offset any related impacts arising from the new development.
- 16.2 Most decisions on planning applications are made by the Chief Officer Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Growth or by the Manager for Development Management under delegated powers given by the Council and do not need to be considered by Planning Committee. The [Planning Committee Scheme of Delegation](#) identifies the application types and triggers for when an item is required to be heard by the Planning Committee.
- 16.3 The Planning Committee is a public meeting and both applicants and members of the public have the right to speak in relation to an application, although that right is restricted by procedural rules. Speakers must be registered in advance with Committee Services. Full details of the right to speak and the Councillor call-in protocol are published on the [Council's website](#). Planning

Committee agendas are normally published a week in advance of the meeting with the items for consideration.

- 16.4 We aim to deal with planning applications in a timely manner and our targets reflect those set by government.

When a decision has been made

- 16.5 If you have commented on a planning application, you will be notified of the decision in writing. Progress of planning applications, and the decisions made, can be tracked on the Council's online planning register or you can view the online weekly list of decisions. Alternatively, you can telephone our Bedford Borough Hub on 01234 718068 or visit them in Horne Lane, Bedford.
- 16.6 Local councils are informed directly about the outcome of applications in their area to which they have objected. Copies of decisions are available to view on the Council's [online planning register](#).

17. Development management – appeals

- 17.1 If you have been refused planning permission, you disagree with any of the conditions attached to a permission or a decision has not been reached within the statutory time period you can appeal against the Council's decision. Appeals are made to the [Planning Inspectorate](#) who act on behalf of the Secretary of State. The appeal will be decided by the Planning Inspectorate either through written representations, a hearing or a public inquiry. There is no right of appeal for third parties (i.e. objectors to a development).
- 17.2 In the event of an appeal, the Council will comply with the notification process set by the Planning Inspectorate. The appeal process, and any public inquiries or hearings are administered by the Planning Inspectorate. All appeal decisions will be made available on the application case file on the Council's online planning register and published on the Planning Inspectorate website. More information about the appeals process can be found on the [GOV.UK website](#).
- 17.3 The only means to challenge an appeal decision by the Secretary of State / Planning Inspectorate is by statutory challenge or Judicial Review in the High Court. Such a challenge must be on a point of law, rather than disagreement with the judgements made. Applications to the High Court to challenge an appeal must be made strictly within six weeks from the date of decision.

18. Development management – enforcement

- 18.1 In cases where development takes place without planning permission or in breach of a planning permission that has been granted, enforcement action may be taken. If you consider development is taking place without or in breach of a planning consent, a request for a [planning enforcement investigation](#) can be lodged through the Council's website. If you are not able to access the internet you can telephone the Bedford Borough Hub on 01234 718068 or visit them in Horne Lane, Bedford.
- 18.2 The Council has published an [Enforcement Plan](#) that addresses how the implementation of planning permissions is monitored, alleged cases of unauthorised development investigated and action taken where it is appropriate to do so.
- 18.3 When carrying out an enforcement investigation, officers will not divulge the identity of persons reporting planning breaches, without the consent of the complainant. Exemptions to the Freedom of Information and Environmental Information provisions will be used where appropriate to prevent the release of identities of persons reporting planning breaches.
- 18.4 If following investigation, it is necessary to serve a formal notice, it will be placed on the public enforcement register of notices. This register can be viewed on the Council's online planning register.

Publicity and consultation in the neighbourhood planning process

Publicity and consultation in the neighbourhood planning process

19. Neighbourhood planning

- 19.1 Through the Localism Act 2011, the government introduced powers to enable local communities to bring forward the development they want to see and shape growth in their local area. Local communities have the option to produce neighbourhood development plans, neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders. These are produced by Parish or Town Councils or in non-parished areas by neighbourhood forums. Community right to build orders may be produced by community right to build organisations that meet a range of legislative requirements.

What are neighbourhood development plans?

- 19.2 The neighbourhood development plan is a community-led plan which communities can use to set out more detailed priorities for development at a local level and address a range of local issues. They must be primarily about the use and development of land and buildings and generally confirm to strategic local plan policies.

What are neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders?

- 19.3 Neighbourhood development orders are orders that confer planning permission – in full or in outline – for development in the area covered by the order without a need for specific planning permission from the Council. This could be either a particular development, or a particular type of development, such as retail or housing.
- 19.4 Community right to build orders are types of neighbourhood development orders which have to meet a number of criteria.

Any benefit from the resultant development stays within the community and is to be used for the benefit of that particular community.

The neighbourhood planning process

- 19.5 Neighbourhood development plans, neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders are prepared in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Their preparation is community-led and there are extensive opportunities for you to get involved. Information about neighbourhood plans in the borough can be accessed on the [Council's website](#).
- 19.6 Both neighbourhood plan proposals and order proposals are tested at examination and are then subject to public referendum before they can become part of the development plan or take effect. The process is outlined in The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendums) Regulations 2012. Once adopted, neighbourhood development plans form part of the development plan for Bedford Borough and the policies contained therein take precedence over local plan policies if they are more up to date.
- 19.7 When we support the development of plans and orders by local councils or neighbourhood forums, we will publicise and consult at various stages of the process, and seek to work with local councils in publicising information locally. The minimum publicity and consultation we will undertake in supporting the preparation of plans and orders is set out in Table 6.
- 19.8 The key publicity and consultation that informs the content of the plan or order is carried out by local councils or

neighbourhood forums prior to submitting a plan or order proposal to the Council. We encourage those producing a neighbourhood development plan or order to carry out consultation and publicity that is proportionate to the nature and subject of the plan or order. This may involve exceeding minimum requirements where necessary.

- 19.9 There are a number of statutory consultation bodies that must be consulted by local councils or neighbourhood forums when preparing neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders. These depend on the nature of the order and are identified in the regulations.
- 19.10 We are committed to supporting those communities who wish to prepare a neighbourhood development plan or order. The support given by the Council can be divided in two categories: the statutory role played in several key stages in the preparation of a neighbourhood development plan or order and a more general duty to assist groups preparing neighbourhood development plans or orders. This can include attending meetings, advising on whether matters can be included in the plan, signposting to relevant contacts, sharing data and information already held by the Council including in map and plan form, and signposting to other sources of information or support. We will also provide a local indicative housing requirement figure, if requested to do so by the neighbourhood planning group. We will seek to fulfil these roles in a timely manner, but this is subject to time, resources and staff availability. Further guidance of Neighbourhood Plan preparation and processes is available on the [Locality website](#).

Table 6 Consultation and publicity in the neighbourhood planning process

Intent	How a neighbourhood development plan, neighbourhood development order and community right to build order is prepared	Publicity and consultation
Publicising a neighbourhood area application (Regulation 6)		We will...
	Before a plan or order can be prepared an application must be made to the Council for the designation of a neighbourhood area. The application should include a map which identifies the proposed neighbourhood area, a statement explaining why this area is considered appropriate for designation as a neighbourhood area and a statement that the applicant body is a relevant body meeting a number of legislative requirements (see stage 3).	
Publicity of and consultation on an area application	Where the area specified is the whole of the parish council's area and the application is submitted by the parish council and the area is located wholly within the parish council's area, regulations do not require publicity to be undertaken. In other situations we will undertake publicity as set out in this table.	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publicise for at least 6 weeks on our website the application for the designation of a neighbourhood area and details of how and by when comments must be made. Make available for inspection in paper copy for at least 6 weeks the area application in our Bedford Borough Hub during staffed opening hours. Encourage local councils or neighbourhood forums to publicise the area application locally. <p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consult for at least 6 weeks with relevant stakeholders, inviting comments in writing. Invite comments on our website for at least 6 weeks providing details of how and by when comments must be made. Consider any comments that argue for or against the proposed neighbourhood area boundary.

Publicising a designation of a neighbourhood area (Regulation 7)		We will...
	Having considered all comments received we will make a decision on whether or not to approve the application for the designation of a neighbourhood area, and prepare a decision statement giving the reasons for our decision.	
Publicity of an area designation and decision statement	Where the area specified is the whole of the parish council's area and the application is submitted by the parish council and the area is located wholly within the parish council's area, regulations do not require publicity to be undertaken. In other situations we will undertake publicity as set out in this table.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we approve the application, publicise on our website the name of the neighbourhood area, a map which identifies the neighbourhood area and the name of the applicant body; and regardless of whether or not we approve the application, the decision statement and details of where and when it can be inspected in paper copy. • Make available for inspection in paper copy the decision statement setting out the reasons for our decision on whether or not to approve the application and map of the designated area (if approved) at our Bedford Borough Hub during staffed opening hours. • Send a copy of the decision statement to the applicant body and those who commented on the neighbourhood area application in writing. • Encourage local councils or neighbourhood forums to publicise the decision statement locally.
Publicising a neighbourhood forum application (Regulation 9)		We will...
Publicity of and consultation on a neighbourhood forum application	In non-parished areas an application must be made to the Council for the designation of a neighbourhood forum that contains a minimum of 21 members from the local area.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise on our website for at least 6 weeks the application for the designation of a neighbourhood forum, a statement that if a designation is made no other body may be designated for that neighbourhood area and details of how and by when comments must be made. • Make available for at least 6 weeks the neighbourhood forum application at our Bedford Borough Hub for inspection in paper copy during staffed opening hours. • Encourage local councils or neighbourhood forums to publicise the neighbourhood forum application locally. Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult for at least 6 weeks with the relevant stakeholders and the public as appropriate to the forum application, inviting comments in writing. • Invite comments on our website providing details of how and by when comments must be made. • Consider any comments that argue for or against the proposed neighbourhood forum.

Publicising a designation of a neighbourhood forum (Regulation 10)		We will...
Publicity of a neighbourhood forum designation and decision statement	We will make a decision on whether or not to approve the application for a designation of a neighbourhood forum and prepare a decision statement giving the reasons for our decision.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If we approve the designation, publicise on our website the name of the neighbourhood forum, a copy of its written constitution, the name of the neighbourhood area to which the designation relates, a contact name and the contact details of the neighbourhood forum. • Make available for inspection in paper copy the decision statement setting out the reasons for our decision on whether or not to approve the application at our Bedford Borough Hub during staffed opening hours. • Publicise on our website the decision statement and details of when it can be inspected in paper copy. • Send a copy of the decision statement to the applicant body and those who commented on the neighbourhood forum application in writing. • Encourage local councils or neighbourhood forums to publicise the decision statement locally.
Pre-submission consultation and publicity (Regulation 14 and 21) (carried out by the Parish or Forum)		Parish Councils, Town Councils or neighbourhood forums should...
Publicity of and consultation on plan / order proposal	Before submitting a plan or order proposal to the Council, local councils or neighbourhood forums should publicise and consult on the plan / order proposal they intend to submit to the Borough Council.	Publicity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise for at least 6 weeks the details of the plan / order proposal in its local area. • Make available for inspection the plan / order proposal. • Publicise where and when the plan / order proposal can be inspected. • Send a copy of the plan / order proposal to the Borough Council. Consultation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In addition, before submitting an order proposal to the Borough Council, Parish Councils, Town Councils or neighbourhood forums should: • Send the order proposal to the owner and the tenant of the land proposed under the order. • Consult for at least 6 weeks with the statutory consultation bodies identified in the Regulations and other stakeholders and the public as appropriate on the plan / order proposal, providing details of how and by when to make comments.

Publicising a plan / order proposal (Regulation 16 and 23)		We will...
Publicity of and consultation on a plan / order proposal	<p>When a plan or order has been prepared the following documents must be submitted to the Council for publication: The draft plan / order, a map or statement identifying the area to which the plan / order proposal relates, a consultation statement and a statement explaining how the draft plan / order meets basic legal conditions.</p> <p>Where neighbourhood development orders and community right to build orders are proposed, an archaeology statement where appropriate and details of relevant enfranchisement rights must be submitted to the Council in addition to the above documents.</p>	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make available for inspection for at least 6 weeks the proposed plan / order and other documents submitted to us at our Bedford Borough Hub during staffed opening hours. • Publicise for at least 6 weeks on our website the proposed plan / order, other documents submitted to us and a statement of the fact that representations may include a request to be notified of the making of the plan / order. • Notify all statutory consultation bodies that have been consulted during plan / order preparation in writing that the plan / order proposal has been received. • Encourage local councils or neighbourhood forums to publicise the submission of a plan / order proposal locally. • Where an order proposal has been subject to Environmental Impact Assessment we will additionally publicise the order proposal submitted to us by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site display in at least one place on or near the land to which the order proposal relates for at least 21 days. • The publication of a public notice in a local newspaper. <p>Consultation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite comments for at least 6 weeks on the plan / order proposal on our website providing details of how and by when comments must be made and how to request to be notified of our decision on the plan / order proposal. • Consult for at least 6 weeks with the statutory consultation bodies that have been consulted during plan / order preparation and other stakeholders and the public as appropriate to the plan / order proposal, inviting comments in writing. • Consider any comments received in relation to the plan / order.
	Publication of the examiner's report and a plan / order proposal decision (Regulation 18 and 25)	We will...

<p>Publicity of examiner recommendations and plan / order proposal decision</p>	<p>We appoint an examiner to whom we submit the plan / order proposal, all documents submitted to us and comments received in response to consultation. The examiner considers whether the plan / order proposal has regard to relevant national policies, contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan. The examiner will further consider whether the plan / order proposal is compatible with EU obligations and likely to have a significant effect on a European site.</p> <p>A referendum may not be considered necessary for plan modifications where the plan modifications do not change the nature of the plan.</p> <p>The examiner then recommends in a report to the Council whether or not the plan / order proposal should go to referendum.</p> <p>Having considered the examiner's report we will decide whether or not the plan / order should go to referendum or be modified and prepare a decision statement giving the reasons for our decision. Where we consider that the plan / order proposal should be extended, we will set out the reasons in the decision statement.</p>	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise on our website the examiner's report. • Publicise on our website the decision. • Send a copy of the decision statement to the body that has prepared the plan / order. • Encourage local councils or neighbourhood forums to publicise the decision statement locally.
<p>Information to be made available in relation to the referendum (Regulation 4)</p>	<p>Subject to any direction from the Counting Officer...</p>	

Publicity of referendum	<p>If we decide that the plan / order should go to referendum, the Counting Officer will organise a referendum that is open to any person registered to vote in the area.</p> <p>We prepare a statement that we are satisfied that the draft / plan order meets basic legal requirements, a statement setting out general background information about planning and an information statement, setting out the details of the referendum.</p> <p>Where it is demonstrated that a proposed plan or order in one neighbourhood could impact on other communities, we may extend the referendum area to include those communities that may be affected. A simple majority of votes in favour of the plan / order proposal is sufficient for the plan / order to be made.</p>	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 28 days ahead of the referendum (or 58 days for a referendum on a business neighbourhood plan), the plan / order proposal, the examiner's report, a summary of all representations received, a statement that we are satisfied that the draft plan / order meets basic legal requirements, a statement setting out general background information on planning and an information statement setting out the referendum details is made available on the Council's website. • A copy of the documents relevant to the referendum is sent to the body that has prepared the plan / order proposal, the local council (if different) and those consultation bodies and individuals that have been consulted on the plan / order proposal prior to submission to the Council. • Local councils or neighbourhood forums are encouraged to publicise the details of the information statement and the documents relevant to the referendum locally.
Decision on a plan / order proposal (Regulation 19 and 26)		We will...
Publicity of the decision on a plan / order proposal	Following the referendum we make a decision on whether or not to bring the plan / order into force through formal Council procedure. We prepare a decision statement, which sets out the decision we have taken and the reasons for making the decision.	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise on our website the decision statement. • Send a copy of the decision statement to the body who has prepared the plan / order and those who provided a response at the Regulation 16 stage.
Publicising a plan / order (Regulation 20 and 27)		We will...
Publicity of a made plan / order	Once brought into force, a neighbourhood development plan forms part of the statutory development plan for Bedford Borough and a neighbourhood development order or community right to build order takes effect.	<p>Publicity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise on our website that the plan has been brought into force. • Notify those who have requested to be notified that the plan / order has been brought into force.

The background of the entire page is a detailed architectural site plan or floor plan. It features various building footprints, parking lots with cars, and pedestrian paths. Numerous dimensions are written throughout the drawing in a small, light-colored font, such as 3700, 5600, 4250, 1800, 3000, 2400, 1100, 800, 400, 1500, 3400, 5700, 8250, 3700, 1800, 3000, 2400, 1100, 800, 400, 1500, 3400, 5700, 8250, 3700, 1800, 3000, 2400, 1100, 800, 400, 1500, 3400, 5700, 8250. The drawing is rendered in a light purple or blue color, matching the overall theme of the page.

Part 4: General information

Your comments and responses to planning applications
and planning policy consultations

20. General information – your comments and responses to planning applications and planning policy consultations

Making effective comments

20.1 The Council welcomes the views of everyone and will consider and take into account any comment that it receives in response to consultation, provided it relates to valid planning matters. When making comments on planning policy documents and planning applications please bear in mind the dos and don'ts set out below.

20.2 Do...

- ✓ Always provide comments in writing so that there is a written record of what you have said. In considering comments on planning applications, we cannot take into account comments that are anonymous, made on social media, or not in writing.
- ✓ Keep your responses short and to the point. This helps the Council to record and report your comments.
- ✓ If you are commenting on a draft planning policy document, think about what might be missing in addition to commenting on what is there.
- ✓ Respond early during a consultation period because it gives the Council more time to consider your comments. Late submissions to planning applications will only be considered where circumstances allow.

✓ Ensure that your comments on a draft planning policy document or planning application relate to planning issues only. Valid planning matters are generally issues of public rather than private interest and may for example relate to the following.

- Impact on the amenities of neighbours (loss of light or privacy, noise and disturbance, etc.)
- The adequacy of means of access
- Parking provision
- Likely traffic generation
- Whether or not there are any relevant government policies
- Design issues
- Impact on Public Rights of Way network
- The planning history of a particular site.

- ✓ Be aware that the following matters are NOT material to planning and cannot be taken into account in the decision-making process.
 - Trade objections (for example where the complaint directly relates to anticipated competition from the proposed development)
 - Objections relating to trespass on the objector's property
 - The question of future maintenance of the objector's property
 - Perceived loss of value to the objector's property
 - Drainage and issues covered by other regulatory regimes, such as Building Control
 - Alleged unauthorised activities or works not directly relating to the proposal under consideration and which might be dealt with through other planning investigations
 - Matters of a personal nature including of a discriminatory nature
 - The wording or content of a proposed advertisement.

20.3 Don't...

- ✗ Provide any comments that you do not want published, because all material consultation responses received are published and attributed to source subject to data protection requirements. However received, responses to planning policy document consultations are entered onto the online consultation system and stored against the name of the person who made the response. Responses are either summarised in a report or reproduced in full and form part of the evidence for the relevant document or development proposal.
- ✗ Submit racist or other discriminatory responses. The Council cannot disclose or consider any consultation responses that are defamatory or likely to incite racial hatred. We are bound by the Equality Act 2010, which makes it unlawful for anyone to induce or attempt to induce another person to discriminate on the grounds of the 'protected characteristics'. This means that any comments in respect of a planning policy document or planning application based on discriminatory grounds are unlawful and may constitute a criminal offence for which the author of the comments may be prosecuted. Where a consultation response is received that is partly discriminatory, it will be returned with an explanatory letter.

21. General information – useful contacts and sources of further information

- 21.1 If you have any questions or would like to find out more about planning, there are a range of sources of planning advice that you can use. In the first instance we encourage you to use available Council resources to find the answer or information you are looking for. There are also a range of organisations that provide assistance to community groups and individuals on planning matters.
- How to contact Bedford Borough Council's Planning Services**
- 21.2 For general queries, assistance with planning online, taking payments and providing access to documents not online and copies. Telephone: 01234 718068 during staffed opening hours. Email: planning@bedford.gov.uk or planningpolicy@bedford.gov.uk Post: Planning Services, 4th Floor, Borough Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP
- 21.3 The Planning and Building Control webpages can be accessed at www.bedford.gov.uk/planning-and-building-control.
- 21.4 The Bedford Borough Hub provides a single point of contact for a broad range of services, including planning enquiries and payments. It is located in the town centre at 2 Horne Lane, Bedford, MK40 1RA and operates on a drop in system during staffed opening hours. Alternatively, you can telephone 01234 718068.

Legislation

[The Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#)

[The Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010](#)

[The Town and Country Planning \(Brownfield Land Register\) Regulations 2017](#)

[Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015](#)

[The Town and Country Planning \(Development Management Procedure\) \(England\) Order 2015](#)

[Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#)

[Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023](#)

National Policy and Guidance

[National Planning Policy Framework](#)

[Planning Practice Guidance](#)

Sources of further information and guidance

Elected representatives

- 21.5 Councillors provide a point of contact for you to express your views on planning issues. They serve on the Council's Committees, represent their communities, bring their views into the Council's decision making process and act as an advocate for constituents in resolving concerns. An [online tool](#) to search and find your local Councillor is available on the Council's website.

Planning Aid

- 21.6 Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional help, advice and support on planning issues to people and communities who cannot afford to hire a planning consultant. Planning Aid complements the work of local planning authorities but is wholly independent of them. For initial planning enquiries visit the [Planning Aid website](#). Alternatively, you can contact Planning Aid on 020 7929 8338 or email advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk.

Planning Portal

- 21.7 The [Planning Portal](#) provides information across all areas of planning and is the national planning application service for England and Wales. It is aimed at the public and professional planners alike.

Planning Inspectorate

- 21.8 Appeals against Bedford Borough Council's planning decisions are to the Secretary of State and are administered by the Planning Inspectorate. Those receiving a decision which can be appealed will receive details of how to appeal with the Council's decision. Information is also available on the [Planning Inspectorate website](#).

22. General information – review and monitoring

Review and monitoring the SCI

- 22.1 Once adopted we must conform with the SCI. In line with legislative requirements, the SCI will be reviewed within five years or if significant changes suggest a review is required. We will monitor the effectiveness of the SCI to ensure that community involvement has been appropriate and effective in the preparation of planning policy documents and the determination of planning applications. We will review the SCI if it is failing to deliver effective community involvement on planning matters. We will also monitor any changes to legislation and national policy, new technology and the groups we engage with and if there are any significant changes, the SCI will be reviewed and updated accordingly.

Resources

- 22.2 Like all local authorities, the Borough Council is facing an unprecedented challenge in reducing its expenditure while maintaining vital services for local residents. At the same time, we are committed to securing value for money through continuous improvement in the way in which we exercise our functions, including our 'Duty to Consult'. Effective engagement is a resource intensive process, which is reflected in work programmes and officer time, particularly at times of formal public consultation on plans and extended consultation on large or controversial planning applications. Therefore, resources will be continually monitored.

- 22.3 Officers from the Planning Policy team progress the preparation of plans and planning policy documents. Other Council departments such as the Communications team and Consultation team may support consultation processes in planning.
- 22.4 Officers from the Development Management team consider the planning applications that are received. The Planning Technical Support Office supports the Development Management team in a range of work areas, including validating incoming planning applications, identifying relevant consultation bodies, sending out consultation letters and issuing decision notices.
- 22.5 The organisation of neighbourhood planning referendums falls to the Chief Executive as Counting Officer who is supported in this role by the Electoral Registration team.

Appendix 1: Statutory and other consultation bodies in plan-making

✓ Will be consulted, notified or informed ☺ May be consulted if considered to have an interest in the subject of the plan or appropriate

S Consulted on Sustainability Appraisal Report / Sustainability Appraisal Screening Determination

* Prescribed bodies for the purpose of the duty to cooperate

Statutory consultation bodies – those we have to consult and inform in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Regulations 2 and 4)	Local plans		SPDs		CIL	Neighbourhood plans ¹
Specific consultees and prescribed bodies						
The Coal Authority ²						
The Environment Agency*	✓	S	☺	S	☺	✓
Historic England*	✓	S	☺	S	☺	✓
Natural England*	✓	S	☺	S	☺	✓
Network Rail	✓		☺		☺	✓
National Highways (former Highways Agency)*	✓		☺		☺	✓
Marine Management Organisation*	✓		☺		☺	✓
Adjoining authorities (Boroughs, Districts, Counties)*	✓		☺		✓	☺
Parish, Town and Urban Community Councils	✓		☺		✓	✓
Local and adjoining policing bodies	✓		☺		☺	✓
Electronic communications companies who own or control apparatus situated in Bedford Borough	✓		☺		☺	✓
NHS Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes Clinical Commissioning Group (former Primary Care Trusts)*	✓		☺		☺	✓
Relevant utility and infrastructure providers (including water, sewerage, electricity, gas and telecommunications)	✓		☺		☺	✓
Homes England (former Homes and Communities Agency)*	✓		☺		☺	✓
Mayor of London*	☺		☺		☺	✓
Transport for London*	☺		☺		☺	
Integrated Transport Authorities*	☺		☺		☺	✓
Highway Authorities*	☺		☺		☺	✓
Office of Rail Regulation*	☺		☺		☺	
Civil Aviation Authority*	☺		☺		☺	

1. The Council will consult the statutory consultation bodies at the Regulation 16 stage.

2. Have requested not to be consulted.

General consultation bodies				
Voluntary organisations	😊	😊	😊	
Ethnic and racial groups	😊	😊	😊	
Religious and faith groups	😊	😊	😊	
Disability groups	😊	😊	😊	
Groups representing businesses	😊	😊	😊	
Local residents, tenants and representative groups	😊	😊	✓	
Local businesses	😊	😊	✓	

Additional groups, individuals and organisations – those we may consult and inform	Local plans	SPDs	CIL	Neighbourhood plans³
Bedfordshire Local Nature Partnership	😊	😊	😊	
South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership*, other partnerships and networks	😊	😊	😊	
Hard to reach groups, including those with protected characteristics	😊	😊	😊	
Councillors	✓	✓	✓	✓
Landowners and developers	😊	😊	✓	
Emergency services	😊	😊	😊	
Members of Parliament / Members of European Parliament	😊	😊	😊	
Wildlife and biodiversity organisations	😊	😊	😊	
Sport and recreation groups	😊	😊	😊	
Amenity, recreation and countryside groups	😊	😊	😊	
Environmental and conservation groups	😊	😊	😊	
Schools and colleges	😊	😊	😊	
Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	😊	😊	😊	
Health care groups	😊	😊	😊	
Registered providers of social housing	😊	😊	😊	
Transport groups	😊	😊	😊	

3. The Council will notify those consultation bodies that are referred to in the consultation statement submitted by the Town Council, Parish Council or neighbourhood forum and that have been consulted in accordance with Regulation 14 (Pre-submission consultation and publicity) that the plan proposal has been received.

Appendix 2: Glossary of terms

Adoption – A process whereby the final version of a document is formally approved and brought into effect.

Bedford Borough Planning Monitoring Report – Assesses the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which policies in planning policy documents are being successfully implemented.

Community Infrastructure Levy – A levy that the council can choose to charge on all new developments in the borough and that can be spent on providing infrastructure to support growth.

Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule – A document that sets out the levy the Council charges on new development.

Community right to build order – A type of neighbourhood development order that can be created by any local community organisation (meeting a number of criteria), parish or town council or a neighbourhood forum.

Counting Officer – Is the Returning Officer for principal area elections for the authority, and acts in this capacity independently from the Borough Council

Departure from the local plan – A planning application that does not meet the requirements or criteria set out in a local plan.

Development plan – Forms the statutory basis for planning decisions and consists of local plans, neighbourhood plans and saved policies.

Development Management – The control of development in the public interest by means of pre-application engagement and advice, the consideration and determination of planning applications and the use where necessary of enforcement powers.

Enfranchisement rights – The right of the occupier of rented or shared ownership housing to buy the property.

Examination – A scrutiny process by an independent Inspector examining closely the documents produced.

Local Councils – Town and Parish Councils.

Local Development Scheme – Sets out the programme for preparing planning policy documents, including timescales and consultation.

Local plans – Spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination.

Material consideration – Factors considered in the determination of applications for planning permission and other consents, alongside the statutory development plan. Includes central government policies and guidance, non-statutory plans and the relevant planning comments made by consultees.

Neighbourhood development order – An order whereby planning permission will be granted for a particular type of development in a particular area.

Neighbourhood development plan – Sets out policies that are relevant to development and use of land within a neighbourhood.

Proofs of evidence – A document containing the written evidence about which a person (expert witness) appearing at a public inquiry will speak. The purpose of an expert's proof of evidence is to identify the relevant issues in a case on which expert opinion is needed. The expert then sets out the factual basis for each of these issues and provides supported opinion on them.

Policies Map – The adopted proposals map illustrates on a base map all spatial policies contained in local plans, together with any saved policies.

Referendum – A direct vote in which those on the electoral register in a defined neighbourhood area are asked to either accept or reject a particular proposal.

Statement of Community Involvement – A document that sets out a Local Planning Authority's intended consultation strategy for different elements of the planning process. This is a requirement that was brought in by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and retained by subsequent legislation.

Statement of representations procedure – A statement providing details of how and by when representations must be made.

Statutory – Prescribed by a legislative authority.

Strategic Environmental Assessment – An evaluation process for assessing the environmental impacts of plans and programmes.

Supplementary planning documents – Provide supplementary information in respect of the policies in local plans. They do not form part of the development plan and are not subject to independent examination.

Sustainability appraisal – An evaluation process for assessing the environmental, social, economic and other sustainability effects of plans and programmes. This is a statutory requirement.

For a full glossary of planning terms, please visit the [Planning Portal](#).

Finding out more

If you would like further copies, a large-print copy or information about us and our services, please telephone or write to us at our address below.

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