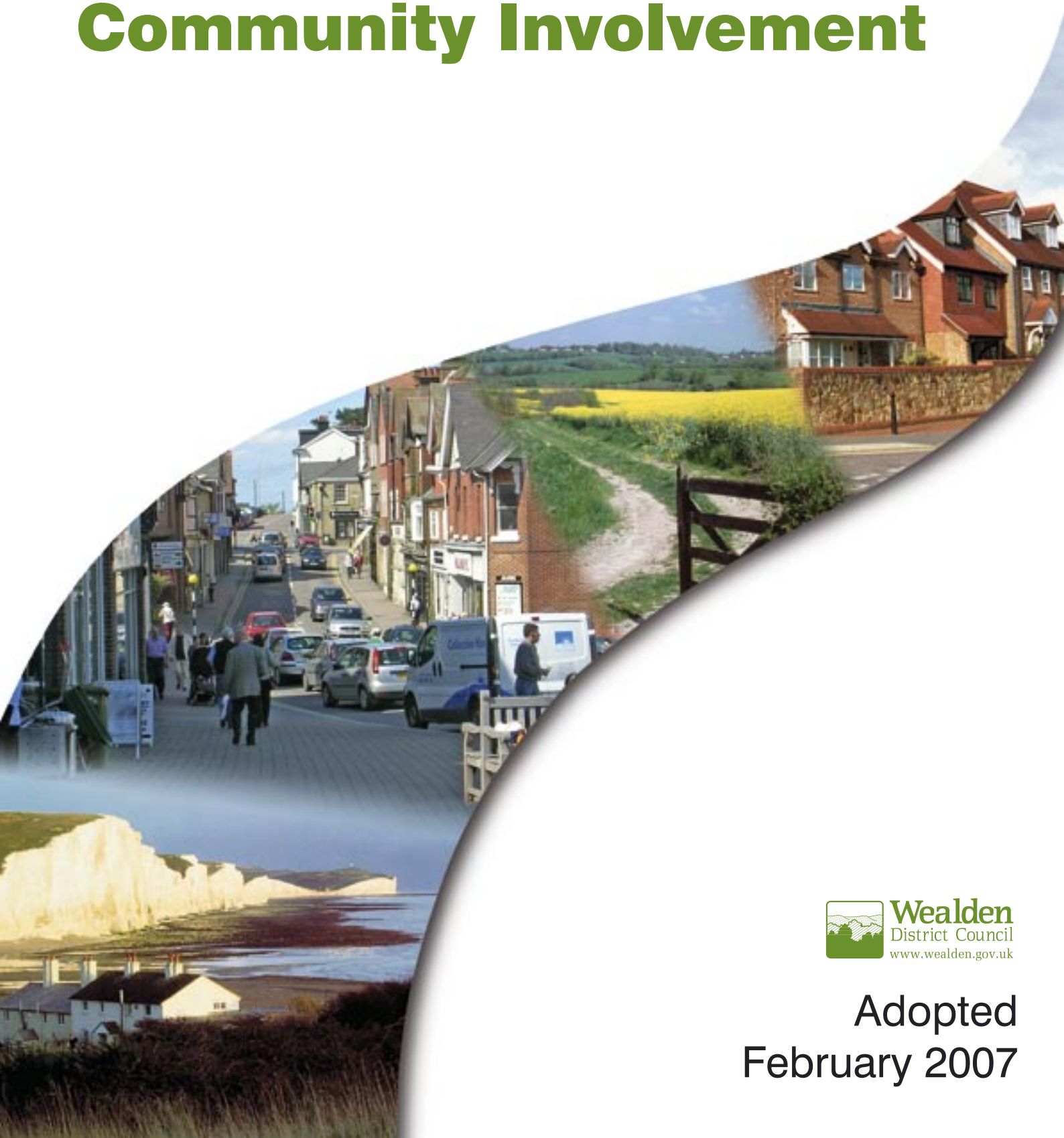
Wealden District Council
Local Development Framework

Statement of Community Involvement



Wealden District Council
www.wealden.gov.uk

Adopted
February 2007

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If you, or somebody you know, would like the information contained in this document in large print, Braille, tape/CD or in another language please contact Wealden District Council on 01323 443322 or info@wealden.gov.uk

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1.1 Wealden District Council has produced this *Statement of Community Involvement* to provide everyone with the information they need to enable them to participate in local planning processes. The Council wants to encourage organisations and individuals to be involved as it prepares the policies in its new *Local Development Framework* and, as already happens, to comment on planning applications in relation to individual sites.

1.2 This document sets out how the Council will encourage opportunities for involvement. It states who will be consulted, when this consultation will take place, and identifies a range of possible consultation methods and media. The methods identified are not overly prescriptive to allow sufficient flexibility as circumstances change and having regard to the level of resources available. A glossary is provided in Chapter 6 to help explain the terminology used.

1.3 All the documents that Wealden District Council produces as part of its Local Development Framework have to comply with the consultation intentions set out in the Statement of Community Involvement.

1.4 For any further information, the Planning Policy team can be contacted by e-mail at ldf@wealden.gov.uk or by telephone on **01892 602007** and will be pleased to help you.

Introducing Wealden

1.5 Wealden is the largest District in East Sussex and covers 323 square miles. Half of its 140,000 population live in the five main towns of Crowborough, Hailsham, Heathfield, Polegate and Uckfield. In addition, more than 40,000 people work in the District.

1.6 The High Weald and Sussex Downs Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty cover more than two thirds of the District. In addition to this, Wealden has 34 conservation areas, 32 sites of special scientific interest and more than 2,500 listed buildings.

1.7 The District has a healthy and expanding economy with many national and multinational companies from key sectors. Tourism is a significant industry in the District.

1.8 Planning in the Wealden area must therefore, balance the need to protect the natural environment, to make adequate provision for new housing and infrastructure, and to promote and maintain a healthy economy.

Figure 1 Map of Wealden District



The Statement of Community Involvement Process

Table 1 The Statement of Community Involvement Process

Stage	Process
Consultation on draft document	• Produce a draft document • Opportunity for organisations and the public to make their comments • Comments and suggestions are welcomed from everyone during the six week public participation period
Submission	• Council considers comments and representations • Council produces a revised document • Council submits document to the Secretary of State for examination
Consultation on document as submitted	• Public opportunity to comment on the document as submitted • Six week period for comments by organisations and the public. These will be forwarded to the Secretary of State for consideration
Examination period	• Secretary of State will consider and evaluate the document to ensure it complies with Government requirements and meets the Appendix 2 'Tests of Soundness' • The Inspector will issue a report on behalf of the Secretary of State; which will be binding on the Council and will be made available for public inspection
Adoption	• Wealden will adopt the Statement of Community Involvement as modified by the Secretary of State • The intentions in the Statement will be applied by the Council • The Statement will be subject to annual monitoring and review

1 Introduction

Preparation of a Local Development Framework for Wealden

2.1 Councils are in the process of implementing a new planning system to replace the old-style arrangement of Local and Structure plans. This new system is called the *Local Development Framework.* The Local Development Framework is made up of a set of documents which, when taken together, will guide future development in Wealden.

2.2 These documents will have a big impact on how our towns, villages and countryside look and on what happens in them. They will provide a set of policies for the District focusing on subjects such as housing requirements and the need to ensure the sustainable use of resources. These documents will set out where in the District new homes and business premises should be developed. They will affect all of us, and this is why the Council is encouraging as many people as possible to be involved in the preparation of its Statement of Community Involvement and as it progresses work on its Local Development Framework.

2.3 The new system of planning for the use and development of land was introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Once this is fully implemented, what is known as the statutory *Development Plan* for an area will be made up of the relevant *Regional Spatial Strategy* (in our case the South East Plan) and a Local Development Framework for each relevant council area (in our case Wealden). Both the Strategy and the Framework need to comply with national policy as set out in topic-based *Planning Policy Statements* issued by Government. These Statements are available to view online at www.communities.gov.uk.

2.4 All households had the chance to be involved in the consultation on the South East Plan, which occurred in 2005. An Examination in Public commenced in late 2006 but it will be sometime later in 2007 before the Plan is accepted or modified. One of the main consequences of the Plan for the Wealden area, as currently drafted, is the requirement to provide for some 400 new homes a year in the period 2006-2026. This will mean finding additional land for about 5000 new homes, having regard to sites already identified.

2.5 Local Development Frameworks set out the relevant Council policies and proposals for development and land use and provide a sound and consistent basis on which to take decisions about whether or not to approve individual planning applications. They are intended to promote a proactive and positive approach to managing development and delivering change and will be a key component in the delivery of Wealden's Community Strategy. Each of the documents that make up the Local Development Framework needs to be prepared with a robust and credible evidence base and an appropriate level of community involvement.

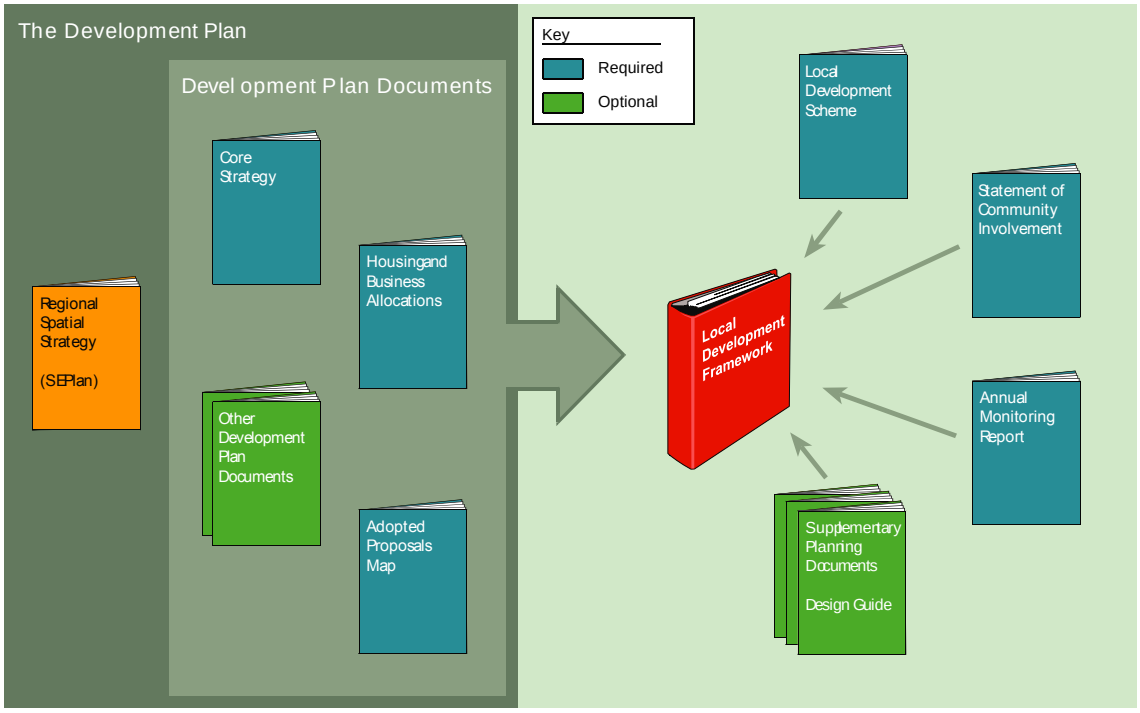
2.6 Wealden District Council has started work to compile the documents that will make up its Local Development Framework. This Statement of Community Involvement has been the first document forming part of the Council's Local Development Framework to be subject to formal public consultation. It is a document more about process than issues,

because it defines the principles and the consultation arrangements which the Council will use to make sure that everyone within the local community has the opportunity to be involved throughout.

The Development Plan

2.7 The illustration below shows the documents that together will comprise the Development Plan. The Development Plan is made up of the Regional Spatial Strategy (which is the overall framework for planning policies in the area and is produced by the South East England Regional Assembly) and the Local Development Framework. The Development Plan will replace the current Wealden Local Plan (adopted in 1998), the non-statutory Local Plan (approved in 2005) and the East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Structure Plan (adopted in 1999).

Figure 2 The Development Plan



2.8 The documents shown above and described in Table 2 'Documents that Wealden Expects to Produce in the Future' will provide an integrated approach to the use and development of land and will have an emphasis on implementation and achieving outcomes. The Council will work closely with the *Local Strategic Partnership* to develop its policies and linkages with the Community Strategy as discussed later in this document.

The Local Development Scheme

2.9 The Council's *Local Development Scheme* is a project management plan that sets out a three year timetable for producing the different documents within the Local Development Framework. It shows when the consultation periods for those documents will be, as well as the dates for submission and examination (if appropriate). Information on these documents is contained in the following table.

Table 2 Documents that Wealden Expects to Produce in the Future

Documents in the Council's Local Development Scheme	Aims of Document
Core Strategy *	Establishes the long-term vision for Wealden and sets out the framework for subsequent policies, objectives and monitoring
Business and Housing Allocations*	Sets out business and housing site allocations
Design Guide	Expands on planning policies with regard to design
Annual Monitoring Report	Reports on the progress of documents in relation to targets and milestones in the Local Development Scheme
Documents for future consideration	
Local Lists	Offers additional guidance on buildings of local architectural or historical importance
Landscape and Biodiversity	Provides additional guidance on implementing landscape and nature conservation policies
Renewable Resources	To provide for the Council's Sustainable Development Objectives in this respect to be met

***** Asterisked titles show Development Plan Documents which will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for Examination; titles which are not asterisked are Supplementary Planning Documents.

2.10 The Local Development Scheme shows which documents will be subject to a formal public examination process undertaken by the *Planning Inspectorate.* It shows the arrangements for the annual monitoring and review processes that we must carry out. It is a compulsory document and must be approved by Cabinet and the Government Office for the South East.

2.11 Wealden's Local Development Scheme can be viewed on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk, inspected at the District Council offices or supplied on request.

Links with the Wealden Community Strategy

2.12 This Council will use the Wealden Community Strategy as a basis for preparing the Local Development Framework. Following consultation with local residents, the Community Strategy was prepared and adopted in 2002 by a wide range of *partner organisations,* and was revisited and updated on 21st June 2006[i]. It sets out the Community's vision and commitment to safeguard the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area and to improve the quality of life in Wealden by:

- basing a rich and diverse environment on sustainable principles;
- maximising the potential for good health;
- providing access to decent, affordable homes;
- promoting lifelong learning, education and skills;
- creating a dynamic economy which is prosperous and sustainable;
- supporting opportunities for sport, leisure, recreation and the arts;
- enabling people to feel safe and free from the fear of crime; and
- improving accessibility while reducing the impact of traffic.

2.13 Where appropriate, these commitments will be incorporated in documents forming part of the Local Development Framework. They will form part of the initial evidence base for the preparation of Local Development Framework documents, as will the Parish and Village Action Plans and various Town Healthchecks that have been produced since 2002.

i An updated Community Strategy was formally adopted by Wealden District Council on 21st February, 2007.

Aims and intentions

3.1 The Council's guiding principles to encourage people to become involved in the planning process will be:

- to ensure people know when and how they can participate;
- to provide encouragement and support for groups that have traditionally not been involved in the process;
- to provide opportunities to participate at the earliest stages; and
- to provide continuous feedback and information to encourage continuing involvement.

Background to the Production of this Statement of Community Involvement

3.2 This Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared as a result of comprehensive participation and input from a wide range of sources. The Council undertook an initial questionnaire consultation during the early stages of production (under Regulation 25) which helped to determine the most appropriate methods for encouraging participation and to gauge the amount of interest in particular issues.

3.3 An informal working group called the Statement of Community Involvement Project Board was established in order to review drafts and to channel ideas into the preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement. Consisting of representatives from District, Town and Parish Councils, Wealden's Portfolio Holder for Sustainable Development and Regeneration and the Chairman of Wealden's Local Strategic Partnership, the Board played a key role in developing the first draft of this document.

3.4 After producing a draft document, Wealden undertook extensive consultation (under Regulation 26) that included the following exercises:

- The draft document was made available for inspection at locations across the District and was sent to statutory and other relevant consultees;
- The draft document was published for electronic interactive consultation on the Council's website;
- A notice was published in local newspapers to inform people about the document;
- A summary leaflet and questionnaire was sent to every household in the District, together with individuals and organisations listed on the Council's Local Plan, Community Strategy and Business databases;
- Focus groups were organised for key representatives from the infrastructure, development and environmental sectors;
- A telephone help-line for the duration of the consultation and afterwards for information purposes was established;
- A series of public drop-in sessions were held during the afternoon/early evenings at locations across the District;
- A series of training events were held for representatives from District, Parish and Town Councils;

- Media press releases and articles were published in relevant newsletters including Wealden Business in Focus;
- Local radio interviews were conducted; and
- Presentations were made to various events of interested audiences across the District, including the Wealden Business Breakfast, Local Strategic Partnership meetings, the Wealden Association of Local Councils and the Wealden Federation of Small Businesses.

3.5 The Council has published a separate report on the issues raised during the Regulation 26 consultation on this Statement of Community Involvement. This is available on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk.

Key Principles

3.6 The key findings from previous consultations on a draft version of this document demonstrated a strong support for early involvement in the planning process. During the course of preparing Local Development Framework Documents, the Council will consult with statutory consultees (which are listed in Appendix 3 'Consultee Groups and Bodies') as well as a large number of other organisations and individuals with an interest in the Wealden area in accordance with statutory requirements and with the intentions set out in this document. Consultation will be as comprehensive as possible within resource limitations in order to maximise opportunity for participation.

3.7 The Council works with a number of key partner organisations through the Local Strategic Partnership. It is intended that those partners should be involved at an early stage in the preparation of all Development Plan Documents and in the case of Supplementary Planning Documents, will be kept informed of progress and offered opportunities for involvement.

Table 3 Current Membership of Wealden's Local Strategic Partnership

Action in Rural Sussex	Churches Together in Sussex	Eastbourne Downs Primary Care Trust	East Sussex County Council
East Sussex Fire Brigade	Environment Agency	Federation of Small Businesses	East Sussex Learning Partnership
National Farmers Union	Sussex Association of Local Councils	Sussex Downs and Weald Primary Care Trust	Sussex Police
Wealden District Council	Wealden Federation of Voluntary Organisations	Town and Country Housing Group	

3.8 The Council intends to apply the objectives and methods in its Consultation Strategy so as to understand the population's views and priorities through a more participative process. This means that:

- consultation will only be undertaken with a clear purpose;

- the processes will be robust in meeting the purpose of the consultation;
- best use will be made of existing data before undertaking new consultation;
- an appropriate time period will be given for responses to consultation subject to statutory limitations;
- we will try to ensure that we are consulting the right people and groups appropriate to the scope of the relevant document;
- the techniques used are suitable for the intended audiences;
- summaries and leaflets will be produced where appropriate;
- consultation will influence the decision making process as far as is practical and appropriate;
- all consultation will take place in accordance with the Council's values and having regard to prevailing best practice;
- District Councillors will be an integral part of all consultation so as to support their community leadership role;
- we will aim to provide feedback at every opportunity throughout the document preparation process;
- we will use the Local Strategic Partnership as a key contact for work on the Local Development Framework; and
- where possible, we will adopt joint approaches to consultation to avoid potential "consultation fatigue" and to make effective use of resources.

3.9 To ensure effective participation, training support will be offered to District, Parish and Town Councillors subject to demand and resources.

3.10 All dates for consultation will be published, in advance, on the Council's website. Adverts/notices will also be published in local newspapers as prescribed by regulations.

3.11 The Council intends that consultation on all Local Development Framework documents will take account of the Wealden Equality Scheme, something that is updated annually and can be viewed on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk or supplied on request. Summary information will be available upon request in large print, Braille, audio-cassette, CD-Rom, or in another language.

Hard to Reach Groups

3.12 The Government has urged local authorities to make a particular effort to engage "Hard to Reach groups" in the production of their Local Development Framework documents. These are people who traditionally, for whatever reason have not participated in planning processes. We believe the principal hard to reach groups in the District are those set out in the following table. This table is not definitive and new groups will be added if it becomes necessary to do so.

Table 4 Measures to Encourage Participation by Typically "Hard to Reach" Groups

Group	Possible obstacles	Specific measures
Black and ethnic minorities	English not as first language	Translation of literature into other languages Provision of interpreters Use of organisations such as the Southeast Interpreting and Translation Service Wealden's website has a text to speech facility that allows website content to be spoken aloud
Businesses, Retailers and working community	Traditionally low participation rate Business person may not have English as their first language Commercial pressures could deter participation. Employees residing outside of the District are difficult to identify	Use of organisations such as the Federation of Small Businesses, Sussex Enterprise and the Chambers of Commerce and Trade Alternative formats Distribution of information to businesses listed in Wealden's Business database Wealden's business website www.wealdenbusinesshelp.org.uk which can translate into several European languages and Chinese
Elderly people	Mobility difficulties Lack of access to internet and e-mail	Fully accessible Council buildings Local radio/media useful for those with mobility difficulties Hard copies available or sent on request Use of representative groups and lunch clubs Form greater linkages with other initiatives targetted at elderly groups
People with a Disability	Mobility difficulties Conventional formats may be inappropriate	Fully accessible Council buildings Local radio / media useful for those with mobility difficulties Alternative formats, such as large print or audiotape Wealden's website is enabled with a text to speech facility that allows website content to be spoken aloud
Travellers and Gypsies, and Travelling Showpeople	Lack of access to formal methods of representation and information	Use of representative organisations such as the Gypsy Council and the Gypsy and Traveller Liaison Group

Group	Possible obstacles	Specific measures
		Use of the Guild of Travelling Showpeople and the Travellers and Gypsies Forum
Young people	Outside of traditional consultative methods Traditional lack of interest	Use of Youth groups Use of the "Wealden Youth Matters" website www.w4y.co.uk Encouraging links to Community Colleges and schools
Carers, parents, families and commuters	Mobility difficulties for carers and parents Lack of time hinders participation	Encourage partnership working with the voluntary sector and offering evening events to enable involvement of commuters etc. Use of non-traditional locations for events to maximise catchment
Isolated rural communities	Lack of transport and access to facilities	Engage with radio and postal communication

3.13 For those with limited resources who wish to take part in planning processes, Planning Aid offers free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to communities and individuals. It is entirely independent from the Council, and assists people in becoming involved in planning issues. Planning Aid can be contacted by telephone on 0870 850 9806 or by email at sewc@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk.

3.14 The service can help people to understand and use the planning system; to participate in preparing plans; to prepare their own plans for the future of their community; to comment on planning applications; to apply for planning permission or appeal against refusal of permission; and to represent themselves at public inquiries.[i]

3.15 The Council's website has a text to speech facility that allows the user to hear the website content. This facility may be particularly helpful to those with mild visual impairments, low literacy and reading skills, dyslexia and those people for whom English is not their first language.

Resourcing and Reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement

3.16 The Council has ongoing provision in its Medium Term Financial Strategy for a small team of officers to progress the work required to prepare, within a reasonable timescale, the documents making up the Local Development Framework. Recent shifts in resources have provided additional staff time and new computer software for this work to take account of the Council's commitment to earlier and more participative community involvement. Community involvement will, as far as practical, be commensurate with the scope and potential impact as well as the type of document being prepared.

i taken from the Planning Aid website, www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

3.17 Provision has been made for the appointment of a community liaison officer to manage the Local Development Framework engagement process and to maximise the potential for effective participation.

3.18 It is likely that there will be modest variations in resource availability from year to year but the Council will endeavour to anticipate periods of peak workload so as to match resource requirements with workload. The Council will use existing information where it believes this is reliable and up-to-date. It will make best use of its links with *partner organisations*, including those on the Local Strategic Partnership.

3.19 The Council's Local Strategic Partnership Co-ordinator has been seconded to the policy team to facilitate linkages between the Partnership and the Local Development Framework process. The meetings programme for the Local Strategic Partnership will be linked to the Local Development Framework timetable.

3.20 Progress and adherence to the intentions set out in this Document will be monitored and reported on annually. An Annual Monitoring Report, prepared by the Council will review consultation procedures in light of the Statement of Community Involvement to determine whether modifications need to be made. In practice, this could lead to the implementation of additional and/or alternative consultation techniques if deemed appropriate. A review of this document would be triggered where the consultation techniques are proven to be ineffective and potentially when new priorities are established through a revised Local Development Scheme.

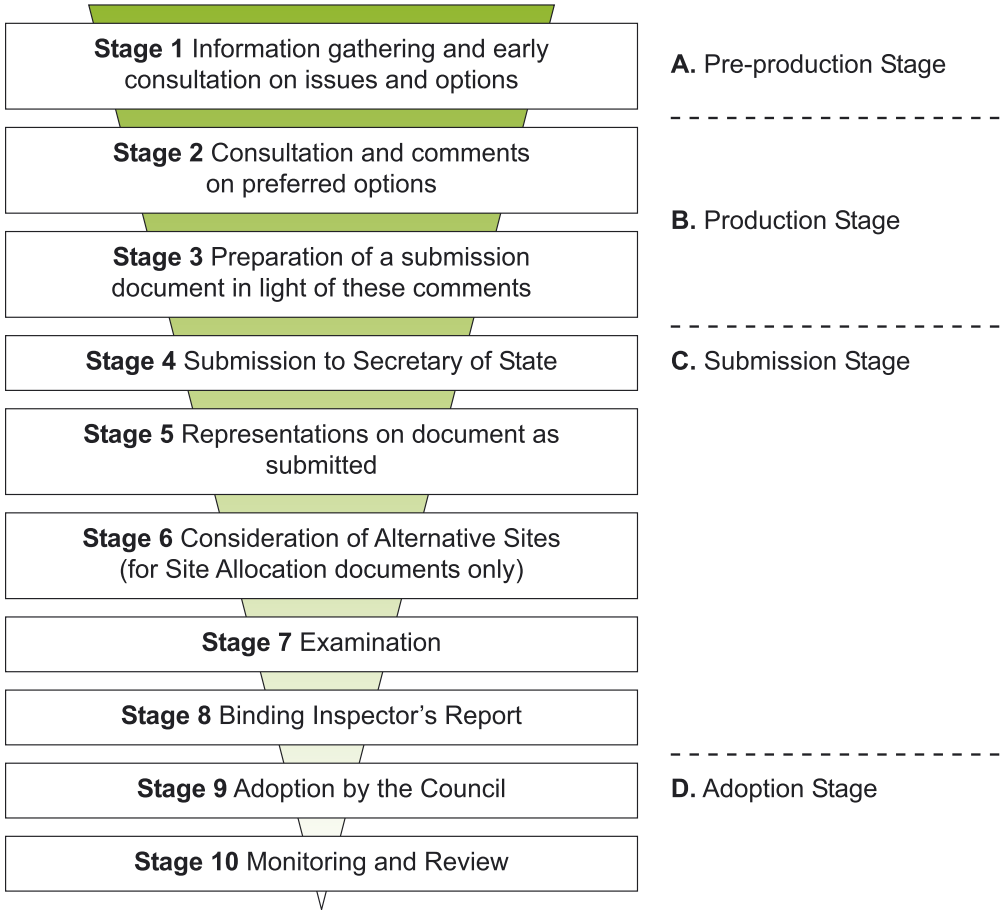
3.21 A review of the Statement of Community Involvement could also be triggered if the results of a Government White Paper on local government functions due to be published in October 2006, deem it necessary. Additionally, it is anticipated that if a National Park Authority is established for the South Downs then a scheme of delegation will be put in place in which Development Control functions are delegated to individual planning authorities. This could also be a potential trigger for a review of this Document.

3.22 The Council may, in some instances, commission selected market research companies to determine the effectiveness of Wealden's consultation techniques. The results would help to identify those techniques that have proved successful in engaging the community, as well as identifying those that may be in need of review.

Development Plan Documents

4.1 *Development Plan Documents* form part of the Local Development Framework. They contain spatial planning policies and strategies to guide development in conjunction with the Regional Spatial Strategy and national policy. Each Development Plan Document will cover a specific topic such as the overall development strategy for the District or the allocation of land for housing and business use. Details of the Development Plan Documents we expect to produce can be found in Table 2 'Documents that Wealden Expects to Produce in the Future'. These documents will be subject to independent examination by a Planning Inspector. Once adopted, they will have full legal status for making decisions on planning applications. The procedures for producing Development Plan Documents are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, to which all planning authorities must adhere. The following diagram summarises the different stages involved in preparing a Development Plan Document, as defined in the Regulations.

Figure 3 Stages in Preparing a Development Plan Document



Community Involvement in the Preparation of Development Plan Documents

4.2 Wealden welcomes community involvement in planning for the District's future. During the preparation of Development Plan Documents we will encourage community involvement in a timely and accessible manner at specific stages of a document's production.

4.3 Details of our proposed consultation techniques, consultees and timescales at each stage of production of Wealden's proposed Development Plan Documents, and other requirements for developers involved in the Local Development Framework process appear in Appendix 4 'Engagement Methods'. In essence, the guiding principles are summarised below.

A. **Pre-production Stage**
We will encourage early and informal community involvement in order to identify particular areas of interest and concern in relation to the topics covered in the proposed Development Plan Document. As a planning authority we will consult statutory bodies from the outset. In the case of a site allocation document, we will endeavour to involve landowners and occupiers as early as possible and prior to the allocation of a specific site. Information gathered at this early stage will be considered by officers, who will use it to form an understanding of stakeholder views.

B. **Production Stage**
The results from the early involvement (pre-production) stage will be used to produce a *preferred options* document. A range of media will be used to publicise the launch of new documents including exhibitions, roadshows and group meetings. Other methods which are considered appropriate to the particular stage and document type may also be used, as described in Appendix 4 'Engagement Methods'. There will be a period of six weeks for the general public to comment on proposals that have been put forward. All comments will be considered by officers and reported to the Local Development Framework Cabinet Sub-Committee who will make decisions and recommendations as to how the document needs to change and policies developed in response to those comments. All Council meetings are open to the public and anyone with an interest can attend. The agendas are published on the Council's website in advance.

C. **Submission Stage**
The document will be submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. There will then be another six-week period for public participation and comment on the Tests of Soundness for Development Plan Documents which are available to view online at www.communities.gov.uk. Comments can be made in writing, either on the Council's website, or on a paper comment form. A series of exhibitions, meetings and other events will be held as appropriate. All comments made at the submission stage will then be assessed by the Inspector, who may then make recommendations in the light of them. It will be for the Inspector to decide what form the examination will take and whether to hold an "oral hearing". In the case of the Housing and Business Allocations

Development Plan Document (and any other site allocation Development Plan Documents that the Council may produce in the future), the 2004 Regulations also require further consultation to be carried out on any sites put forward by developers at the submission stage. A further 6 week period will be allowed for comments to be made. This Statement of Community Involvement also includes additional requirements for developers promoting omission sites, as set out in Table 14 'Developer Obligations for Omission Sites* '. Public exhibitions on the omission sites will be held, if appropriate.

D. **Adoption Stage**

Following examination, the Inspector will issue a report determining whether the document is sound and what, if any amendments must be made. The Inspector's Report is binding and the Council must adopt the document as modified. Adoption takes effect upon a resolution by the Council. Once a document has been adopted and has become Council policy, there will be further opportunity for involvement through feedback, monitoring and review processes. The Council will keep its website updated at all times to give feedback and progress reports if appropriate, and agendas and minutes from Council meetings will be available to view online. A status report will be available on the Council's website showing whether planning applications have been received for sites allocated in the Housing and Business Allocations Development Plan Document. There will also be an ongoing opportunity for anyone to comment on individual planning applications that may affect them.

Feedback, Monitoring and Review at All Stages

4.4 The Council is keen to ensure that community involvement is an ongoing process. At each stage of the process, a summary of comments will be published on the Council's website and copies of representations will be made available for inspection at Council Offices. Officers will be responsible for preparing reports to deal with the issues raised in consultations. These will be considered by the Council's Local Development Framework Sub-Committee, who along with Cabinet and Full Council[i] will make the decisions on how those comments are taken into account. This may include changes being made to policies and proposals, or alternative suggestions being taken on board. All of these Committee reports are published on the Council's website in advance of decisions being taken. Printed copies can be purchased or viewed at the Council Offices.

4.5 The Council will prepare consultation statements at the Preferred Options and Submission stages which will provide details of consultations that have been carried out. The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 require the Council to prepare a consultation statement at the Submission stage of the process which summarises what consultations have been carried out by the Council in order to comply with Regulations. These are made available at all deposit points during the statutory consultation period.

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i Depending on the nature and stage of the document.

4.6 Once a statutory consultation period has ended for a submission document, there is also a requirement for the Council to produce a summary statement setting out the total number of representation made, and the key issues raised for consideration through the exam process. Again, these statements will be published on the Council's website or will be available for inspection or purchase. They will also be reported to the Council's Cabinet LDF Sub-Committee.

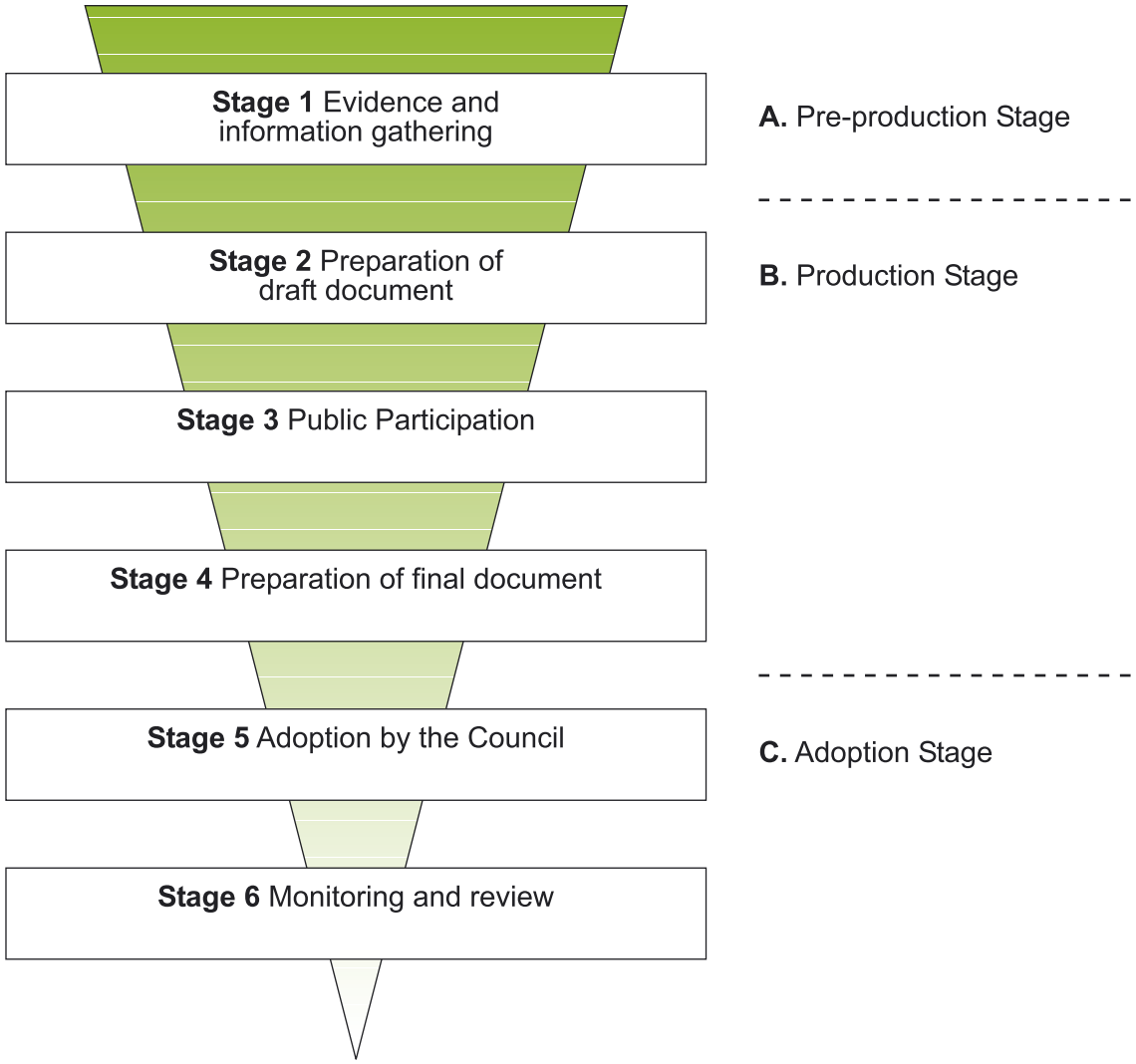
4.7 Annual Monitoring Report. The Council is required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report detailing progress on its Local Development Framework and in the implementation of planning policies. This report is published on the Council's website and is available for purchase or inspection. The Council also publishes annual monitoring data on housing land and business land.

4.8 Local Development Scheme. The programme and priorities for the Council's Local Development Framework are set out in the Local Development Scheme. Where new priorities emerge or a review of an existing Local Development Document is considered necessary this will be set out in a revised Local Development Scheme as appropriate. The Local Development Scheme will be approved by Full Council and all associated reports will be published on the website and will be available in printed copy.

Supplementary Planning Documents

4.9 *Supplementary Planning Documents* also form part of the Local Development Framework. They provide additional detailed guidance to supplement the proposals and policies within Development Plan Documents and will be a material consideration in determining planning applications. Unlike Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents are not subject to independent examination although they will be subject to monitoring and review. The procedures for producing Supplementary Planning Documents are also set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Details of the Supplementary Planning Documents we expect to produce can be found in Table 2 'Documents that Wealden Expects to Produce in the Future'.

Figure 4 Stages in Preparing a Supplementary Planning Document



Community Involvement in the Preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents

4.10 During the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents, we will encourage community involvement in a timely and accessible manner at stages A and B of the production process.

A. **Pre-production Stage**
We will invite stakeholders with a specialised interest in the Document's subject matter to participate at this stage. Letters, questionnaires, focus groups and any other methods and media considered appropriate to the stage and document (as described in Appendix 4 'Engagement Methods') will be used.

B. **Production Stage**
There will be a period of 4-6 weeks for consultation on the draft document. Each statutory consultee will receive a copy of the draft document at the start of the consultation period and other relevant consultees will be notified as appropriate. In addition to questionnaires, letters and e-mail, other appropriate methods described in Appendix 4 'Engagement Methods' will be used at this stage.

C. **Adoption Stage**
At this stage we will publicise the fact that the document is to take effect on our website. The Council will monitor the effectiveness of its Supplementary Planning Documents through its Annual Monitoring Report process.

4.11 Stage-by-stage information on consultee types, engagement methods and timescales for the production of Wealden's Supplementary Planning Documents appears in Appendix 4 'Engagement Methods'.

Other Guiding Principles for Involvement

4.12 We aim to provide feedback at every opportunity. Those who submitted representations will be advised of their progress. Information on when those representations will be considered, and dates for forthcoming committee meetings will be made available on the Council's website. Additionally, it will be possible to view representations made by other consultees on the Council's interactive consultation website.

4.13 Where focus groups or stakeholder meetings have taken place, the Council will produce a report summarising the proceedings. This will be made publicly available and will be circulated to those attending the meeting by email and hard copy if required.

4.14 Before documents are published for consultation or submission to the Secretary of State they must be approved by certain decision-making bodies within the Council. At the production stage, decisions regarding the content of Development Plan Documents will be made by the Council's Portfolio Holder working in conjunction with the Cabinet and the Cabinet Sub-Committee. Representations will then be considered by the Cabinet

Local Development Framework Sub-Committee, before a submission document is approved. Adoption of any development plan document will take place by resolution at Full Council. Decisions regarding the content of Supplementary Planning Documents will be made by the Council's Portfolio Holder, although a Cabinet Decision may be required for the adoption stage.

4.15 By their nature, Local Development Frameworks are contentious and controversial and inevitably it will not be possible to reach a consensus of views on every aspect. The role of the Council is to balance these views and find a way to take matters forward.

4.16 The capacity of local infrastructure is a major local concern. Where appropriate, the Council will publish reports detailing local infrastructure matters and issues.

Potential Consultation Methods

4.17 The following table indicates some of the ways the Council intends to consult with organisations and individuals in developing proposals and options for any of the documents we produce for the Local Development Framework. These will be adjusted to take account of the type of document which is prepared and the topic or topics being covered. More detail about our intentions in this respect appears in Appendix 4 'Engagement Methods'.

Table 5 Consultation Methods, Benefits and Resource Implications for Particular Groups

	Members of public	Parish and Town Councils	Government statutory consultees and local groups	Internally, Local Strategic Partnership	Benefits of method	Resource Implications
Hard copy	✓	✓	✓	✓	**Traditional, acceptable format** **Can be reproduced in alternative formats including Braille**	**Costs of printing, paper, postage** **Costs of translation and printing in alternative formats**
E-mail copy	✓	✓	✓	✓	**Able to reach a large number of people very quickly at relatively little cost** **No paper (environmentally friendly)**	**Staff time to write and respond to emails**
Council website for information and online consultation	✓	✓	✓	✓	**Available 24 hours a day** **Interactive consultation[ii]** **Reference point for information and links for further contacts**	**Website already functioning, although additional staff time needed for updating information**

ii the Council's interactive consultation website allows consultees to view other people's representations

	Members of public	Parish and Town Councils	Government statutory consultees and local groups	Internally, Local Strategic Partnership	Benefits of method	Resource Implications
						Online interactive website is a very resource efficient way of collecting comments and views
Local Development Framework documents available for Inspection at Council Offices and other venues	✓	✓		✓	Useful publicity opportunity A quiet library environment may help people absorb and understand information	Printing, distribution and replenishment of publicity Difficult to obtain representative sample of views
Exhibitions and/or roadshows	✓	✓		✓	Offers an interactive opportunity for people to gain information and ask questions Introduces issues to specific communities Comments book will be available for noting any observations	Staff time for preparation and attendance Cost of venue hire (if applicable) Purchase of display equipment Design, printing and preparation of display material
Information leaflets, questionnaires and newsletters	✓	✓	✓	✓	Presents information in a concise and non-technical format Suitable for use in hard copy and electronic format Questionnaires useful for gathering structured views on specific issues and likely to encourage wider participation	Staff time for preparing leaflets/questionnaires Paper and printing costs Distribution logistics and expenses Staff time for analysing questionnaire results Opportunity to link with other corporate consultations and activities
Focussed discussion groups	✓	✓	✓	✓	Offers an excellent communication opportunity for those with a specialist interest May provide further opportunity to develop in-depth relationships through discussion and formulation of opinions A good mechanism for mediation of conflicting interests	Staff time for preparation, attendance and note-taking at meeting Writing up and providing feedback after meeting Possible need for skilled facilitator

	Members of public	Parish and Town Councils	Government statutory consultees and local groups	Internally, Local Strategic Partnership	Benefits of method	Resource Implications
					Where appropriate can be held in the public domain	Must be accompanied by other methods to ensure representative results
Parish and/or Town Council meetings	✓	✓			Offers a useful communication and debate opportunity for Parish and Town Council residents and representatives	Staff time for preparation for and attendance at meeting Resource intensive if numerous meetings require attendance Public meetings may not provide a representative sample of wider community views Parish/Town Council cluster groups may be effective in certain key issues
Individual and /or Group meetings /drop-in sessions (at a range of times and venues subject to resources)	✓		✓	✓	Opportunity for people to gain information, express opinions and ask questions A good mechanism for mediation of conflicting interests Venue to suit needs of participants including site meetings where appropriate Scope for local Councillor involvement where appropriate	Staff time for preparation and attendance Cost of venue hire and purchase of display equipment (if applicable) Design, printing and preparation of display material
Use of local media	✓				Prompts local interest Reaches wide audience in a traditional format, including hard to reach groups	Staff time for preparation of adverts and articles Possible financial cost if advertising involved Dependent on support of local broadcasters and newspaper editors
Telephone poll	✓	✓		✓	Feedback on effectiveness of consultation Quick and easy	Only obtains a small sample of views Possible financial cost if external company is employed to conduct survey

	Members of public	Parish and Town Councils	Government statutory consultees and local groups	Internally, Local Strategic Partnership	Benefits of method	Resource Implications
Citizen's Panel/ People's Panel[iii]	✓				**Good for gauging general reactions** **A variety of methods such as surveys, questionnaires, focus groups and discussion meetings can be used**	**Not appropriate for specific discussion topics** **Staff time and resources for facilitating meetings and for designing questionnaires and leaflets**

Sustainability Appraisals

4.18 The Council is required to carry out a *Sustainability Appraisal* on each of its documents except for the Local Development Scheme, the Statement of Community Involvement and the Annual Monitoring Report.

4.19 A Sustainability Appraisal evaluates the social, environmental and economic impacts of the strategies and policies within a document. Its purpose is to ensure that the Council's objectives in delivering sustainable development are being met, and that decisions are made in accordance with these. Sustainable development objectives are defined by the Government as:

- Social progress which recognises the needs of everyone;
- Effective protection of the environment;
- The prudent use of natural resources; and
- The maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

4.20 In developing the initial scoping report for Wealden's Sustainability Appraisal and the evidence base for each of the documents in the Local Development Framework, we will consult[iv] the following bodies in accordance with Government regulations:

- The Countryside Agency
- English Heritage
- English Nature
- The Environment Agency

4.21 From October 2006, some of these agencies will merge into a new organisation called Natural England, and will be consulted under their new title.

iii To get involved in the People's Panel, please contact the Policy and Review Office on 01323 443184.
iv This consultation took place in September 2006.

4.22 In addition, Parish Councils, District Councillors, the highway authorities, the Local Strategic Partnership, the South Downs Joint Committee and the High Weald AONB Unit will be given the opportunity to comment on a draft scoping report.

4.23 Sustainability Appraisal reports will be published alongside the relevant Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents to which they relate and the public will therefore have the opportunity to comment on them at the same time. In line with the guiding prinicples set out in Chapter 3, all appraisals will be undertaken on a "fit for purpose" basis having regard to the scope and nature of documents to be produced.

Legal requirements

5.1 There are certain legal requirements concerning publicity on planning applications with which Wealden District Council must comply. The type of publicity varies according to the type of proposed development, with additional publicity requirements in relation to major planning applications. The statutory obligations are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order, 1995, which is available to view online at www.opsi.gov.uk. These obligations are summarised in the table below.

Table 6 Publicity Requirements for Planning Applications

Type of Development	Publicity Required
Where the application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement Where the application is a departure from the Development Plan Where a public right of way is affected	Notice in the local newspaper(1) and site notice(2)
Major development The definition of "Major Development" is a. For residential development, 10 or more dwellings, or if the number of dwellings is not known where the site is 0.5 hectares or more b. For other uses, where the floor space is 1000sq metres or more, or the site area is 1 hectare or more	Notice in local newspaper(1) and either site notice(2) or neighbour notification(3)
Other development	Neighbour notification(3) or site notice(2)
Where the setting of a listed building is affected	Notice in local newspaper(1) and site notice(2)
Where the character or appearance of a Conservation Area is affected	Notice in local newspaper(1) and site notice(2)

1. Period for comment is 21 days from the date of publication in the local newspaper
2. Period for comment is 21 days commencing on the date the site notice was initially displayed
3. Period for comment is 21 days commencing on the date of the neighbour notification letter

5.2 Applications for Conservation Area and Listed Building Consent have additional compulsory minimum requirements for publicity through local newspaper and site notices.

5.3 Publicity obligations are also placed on developers in the following instances:

- Where an Environmental Statement is submitted after the application has been made; or
- Where an advance application to the Council is made in order to determine whether prior approval is required, for instance, in the case of some forestry and agriculture development.

5.4 Parish and Town Councils are consulted on all planning applications and have a statutory period of 21 days in which to make any comments. Bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.

5.5 The results of any such consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, the Council.

5.6 Legislation contains a presumption in favour of development which is in accordance with relevant development plan policies.

5.7 Wealden's Development Control Service is working to meet national targets set by Government to determine:

- 65% of Minor applications within 8 weeks
- 60% of Major applications within 13 weeks
- 60% of applications requiring Environmental Impact Assessments within 16 weeks
- 80% of applications not falling within the above categories within 8 weeks.

Additional consultation measures implemented by Wealden

5.8 Over and above the minimum statutory requirements set out above, Wealden has implemented additional publicity measures to make its planning process as accessible as possible by providing opportunities for community involvement at every stage. The Development Control Service Charter sets out the service standards Wealden aims to deliver and which one can expect to receive. This is re-produced in Appendix 5 'The Development Control Service Charter' and is also available to view online at www.wealden.gov.uk. The following section sets out Wealden's current procedures, which are in accordance with this Charter. Whilst it is possible that some of these procedures could be subject to change, the Council will endeavour to maintain enhanced consultation procedures wherever possible.

5.9 Developer obligations for major applications. Planning Officers of the Council will, in the process of pre-application discussion with developers actively encourage prospective applicants to undertake public consultation prior to submission of planning applications, including meetings with relevant parish councils and local District Members. Additionally, the Council will encourage meetings between the Highways Authority, developers and key infrastructure groups. The submission of a statement of consultation prior to the submission of a planning application will also be encouraged. An indication of groups that should be consulted is made in Table 7 'Methods of Consultation Prior to the Submission of a Planning Application'.

5.10 Developers are encouraged to use the following methods of consultation before submitting a planning application to the local authority:

Table 7 Methods of Consultation Prior to the Submission of a Planning Application

	Type of Application	
	Major- Broadly Compliant with Local Plan/emerging Local Development Framework but raise controversial issues or points of detail[1] by virtue of scale/location	Major-Contrary to Local Plan/emerging Local Development Framework[2]
Discussion with the local planning authority	✓	✓
Discussion with other relevant agencies[3]		✓
Discussion with Town and Parish Councils	✓	✓
Workshops/local meetings	✓[4]	✓
Public exhibition	✓	✓
Development briefs/leaflets		✓
Media		✓

1. Broadly compliant, although by virtue of the size, loction or nature of the development, significant issues are likely to be raised locally
2. These applications would include those that are departures from the Local Plan, including the Non-Statutory Plan
3. These discussions should involve agencies such as the Highways Authority, infrastructure organisations including East Sussex County Council and Social Services (usually through the County Development Contributions Officer), and the District Council's Housing department, (particularly if affordable housing is required)
4. These methods are unlikely to be required at the outline application stage

5.11 Prior to the submission of a planning application, the applicant may pre-book an appointment at the Council offices to speak to a planning officer for general information and advice. This is on an entirely "without prejudice" basis although, for future reference, an informal record will normally be kept by the officer involved. This record is available for public inspection if necessary. The meeting should allow the prospective applicant to determine whether the principle of a proposed application is likely to be acceptable, and to discuss the nature of the plans required by the Council in submitting a planning application. Procedures for pre-application discussions, including the possibility of charging could be subject to change by a forthcoming review of Council resources and budgets. In addition the Council is introducing a requirement for some applications to be accompanied by a Sustainability Audit Checklist.

5.12 The Council sends out guidance notes with all planning application forms that give step-by-step instructions on how to complete the forms and the drawings required to accompany the application. Guidance notes are available to download from the Council's website and applications can be submitted online.

5.13 From the 10th August 2006, the submission of a Design and Access Statement will be required for all planning applications. This Statement covers both design principles and concepts in relation to the application and details how issues relating to access have been addressed. All listed building consent applications will also require a Design and Access Statement.

5.14 In the case of telecommunications installations, pre-application discussions between operators and the Council on specific proposals is encouraged. Operators should also discuss proposals with other organisations with an interest in the proposed development, such as English Nature, The Countryside Agency, English Heritage, The Highways Agency, local highway authorities, residential groups, Parish Councils or amenity bodies.[i] For masts near schools or colleges, operators should discuss the proposal with the school or college prior to submitting a planning application.[ii]

5.15 *Planning surgeries* have been set up for both the North and South of the District and are operated on a weekly basis. They are attended by a planning officer and are held by prior appointment at the Council offices in Crowborough and Hailsham and at the Town Council offices in Polegate. Please contact the Council using the contact details at the front of this document for the latest surgery times and appointments.

5.16 Officers of the Council may attend Parish or Town Council and other public meetings to discuss larger development proposals with the community both at the pre-submission stage and during the processing of major planning applications.

5.17 During the processing of an application, Wealden consults more widely than the minimum requirements detailed in Table 6 'Publicity Requirements for Planning Applications'. The Council sends letters to neighbouring property owners on virtually all the planning applications it receives and additionally requires a site notice to be posted for all planning applications. Furthermore, officers will send letters to occupiers of property in the vicinity of as well as adjoining application sites if they consider that the proposed development would have a material impact on the amenities of their property, in accordance with the Council's adopted Neighbour Notification Policy. Letters sent to neighbouring properties contain guidance on how to comment on an application and what can be taken into account when submitting an objection in writing.

5.18 Individual neighbours or interested parties may discuss concerns regarding proposals with planning officers if apparent conflict arises. During the normal statutory period for deciding planning applications, additional consultation measures (including site-meetings

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i As set out in Planning Policy Guidance 8: Telecommunications - published by the Department for Communities and Local Government

ii As set out in Planning Policy Guidance 8: Telecommunications - published by the Department for Communities and Local Government

with the applicants/agents, statutory consultees, residents and others) may be undertaken as appropriate. Anyone can pre-book a meeting with a planning officer to discuss a planning application under consideration.

5.19 Where applicants make significant amendments to their plans, neighbours and statutory consultees will be re-notified and given a further 14 days to comment on the changes. The decision to re-notify is made at the officer's discretion based upon the nature of the changes and taking into account the requirement to determine the majority of planning applications within 8 weeks. Developers and applicants will be positively encouraged to submit a statement regarding any amendments made to an application for onward dissemination to consultees.

5.20 A weekly list of planning applications received is made available to the local media and is placed on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk. The list is e-mailed to all District Councillors and to organisations including Town and Parish Councils, and individuals that have requested it. The Environmental Services Directorate holds a database of subscribers and, for a fee, anyone can ask to be included. Parish and Town Councils are encouraged to display planning notices on their noticeboards and in most circumstances planning applications can be viewed at Parish and Town Council offices.

5.21 Parish and Town Councils discuss local planning applications at their respective planning committees. These meetings are open to the public and the contact details for all Parish and Town Councils are available on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk.

5.22 Where the Council is a statutory consultee, for example, on a County Matter application or by an adjoining planning authority, receipt of the application will appear on the Council's weekly list, but local consultation arrangements are carried out by the determining planning authority.

5.23 Hard copies of current planning applications are kept at the Council Offices in Crowborough for public viewing. Applications dating back 5 years or more are kept on microfiche and are available to view at the Crowborough Council Offices only. 24 hours notice is required for microfiche inspection. If required, hard copies of individual applications can be made available for inspection at the Council's Hailsham Office. In accordance with the Council's Freedom of Information Publication Scheme (which is available to view at www.wealden.gov.uk), advance notice is required for inspection of plans.

5.24 Current planning applications are also available for viewing on the Council's website and after a decision has been issued, will remain on a searchable online database for reference. Comments on planning applications can also be made direct via the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk and can be viewed by others.

5.25 When objections are received on an application, and the scheme of delegation[iii] (an arrangement which enables the Council's Head of Planning, Development and Building Control to make decisions on certain types of development proposals) is not considered appropriate, the application is reported to members of the relevant Planning Sub-Committee. This Committee's role is to make decisions on planning applications. Meetings for each of the North and South parts of the District are held on a regular basis, based upon an agreed schedule of meetings, the dates and agendas of which are published on the Council's website. Letters are sent to all those who submitted representations on a planning application inviting them to attend the Sub-Committee meeting and advising of procedures for public speaking. Anyone can make an objection to a planning application, whether or not they are a neighbour.

5.26 Public speaking arrangements are in place, which allow members of the public, applicants or their agents to attend Development Control Sub-Committee meetings and speak in respect of any application, either for or against. Further details are supplied in the leaflet "Public Participation-Planning Sub-Committee Meetings" which is reproduced in Appendix 6 'Arrangements for Speaking at Development Control Meetings' or alternatively please contact the Member Services Department using the contact details at the front of this document. An electronic version of the leaflet can also be viewed on www.wealden.gov.uk.

5.27 After a decision has been issued on the application, letters are sent as soon as possible to all those who submitted representations, informing them of the decision. Copies of all decision notices are sent to the relevant Town and Parish Council and the decision is published on the Council's website. If an application has been refused, and an appeal is lodged against that decision[iv], letters are sent to all those who made representations informing them of the appeal and giving details of how to write to the Inspector. Copies of any letters and all other representations received during the planning application process are sent to the Inspector for consideration.

5.28 In all planning appeal cases, third parties will be notified of the appeal and relevant procedures within two weeks of the date of the Planning Inspector's letter (known as the *start date*). In the case of a public inquiry or a hearing, notification will take place at least four weeks before the start date. The Council's notification letter will tell people which procedure is being followed and the ways in which they can get involved.

5.29 For written appeals, if comments were submitted in writing to the Council during the consideration of the application, further comments can be addressed to the Inspector within the time limit specified in the Council's letter. Copies of the appeal documents can be inspected at the Council Offices by prior arrangement.

iii The scheme of delegation means that in some circumstances, officers are able to make decisions on planning applications on behalf of the Council. If objections have been received on an application, the ward Member is required to authorise the decision. All delegated decisions must be made in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation, which is available on the Council's website www.wealden.gov.uk

iv Applicants currently have up to 6 months in which to lodge an appeal to the Secretary of State

5.30 In the case of hearings there will be an opportunity to speak at that hearing. For those who do not wish to attend, written representations can be made. Procedural details will be made clear in the Council's letter.

5.31 Formal inquiries are open to members of the public and anyone who is interested in the case is usually offered the opportunity to speak. Representations can also be made in writing. The Council's notification letter will contain all the procedural information required to participate in a formal inquiry.

5.32 Following an appeal decision, the Council will notify the following: any interested parties on the Council's "response" list; any consultees relevant to the application; Development Control North and South Team Leaders and officers; the local press; the Chairman and the Deputy of the Development Control North and South Regulatory Committee; relevant ward Councillors; and other relevant Council departments and officers.

5.33 **Planning Enforcement** procedures are in place, which allow investigation into any apparent breaches of planning control. Wealden has powers of enforcement which can be used in cases where development has been carried out before the necessary permission has been obtained or contrary to the scheme permitted. This may take the form of an enforcement notice, which requires the contravention to be remedied, a stop notice, which requires the work to cease immediately, and a breach of condition notice, which is served when planning conditions are not being complied with. A retrospective planning application may also be submitted. Appeals involving written representations, informal hearings or public inquiries may follow an enforcement decision. Details of how to get involved in these appeals will be made clear in the notification letter which the Council sends to all relevant third parties.

5.34 Although officers are obliged to investigate any alleged breaches of planning control, the Council has an enforcement strategy in place, against which priorities will be identified. Officers aim to visit sites, and report the progress of their investigations by telephone and/or letter to complainants within four weeks of the receipt of the original complaint. Whilst the Council's powers to take enforcement action are discretionary, where action is clearly necessary to prevent or put a stop to breaches of planning control then appropriate action will be taken.

5.35 Further information relating to enforcement matters can be viewed on Wealden's website www.wealden.gov.uk along with a series of guidance notes on planning, building control, listed buildings, trees and appeals. Alternatively please contact the Council using the contact methods at the front of this document for more information.

Other methods of communication in Development Control

5.36 Other methods of communication in Development Control include:

- A regular Environmental Services newsletter which is sent to District Councillors, Town and Parish Councils, Team Leaders within the Environmental Services department for circulation to staff, the Chief Executive, Directors, and which is made available on the Councils intranet;
- An annual agents forum, where officers liaise with agents who are active in the District;
- Quarterly agents panel, where a group of nominated agents meet with a delegation of officers to discuss current issues and possible improvements to the service;
- The annual Planning Parish Conference attended by representatives from Parish and Town Councils and the proposed Parish Planning Panel; and
- An Annual Parish Clerks Conference.

5.37 Additionally, there are opportunities for community involvement in other planning functions within the Council. These are:

5.38 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. Recent guidance from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs requires the establishment of Local Sites Partnerships that draw together areas of expertise and interest in biodiversity and geological conservation. There will be opportunities for community involvement throughout the selection process for these sites as Wealden establishes its Local Sites Partnership.

5.39 Designation of Conservation Areas. There is no statutory requirement for community involvement in the designation or review of conservation areas, but Wealden intends to hold at least one public meeting in such instances.

5.40 Tree Preservation Orders. In the case of making new tree preservation orders, consultation will take place with the owner/occupier of the land and those people whose property abuts the land on which the tree is situated. Additionally, relevant Parish Councils are notified. Consultees have 28 days to comment in writing. The Tree Preservation Order is discussed at the relevant Development Control Sub-Committee, and legislation requires the Council to make every endeavour to overcome objections and come to a mutual agreement.

5.41 Listed Buildings. Anyone can apply to English Heritage for a building to be listed. The application should be supported by as much information as possible including location details, reasons why the building may merit listing, clear internal (if available) and external photographs, a site location plan and the owner's contact details. Currently there is no right of appeal in relation to a new listing.

5.42 Stakeholder Feedback. Surveys are carried out with applicants and objectors to establish views on the quality of the service.

The following terminology appears in italics the first time it is used throughout the document

Term	Description
Adoption	The date upon which a Document becomes effective in law.
Annual Monitoring Report	A report on the progress, implementation and delivery of the Local Development Framework.
Area Action Plan	Specific Development Plan Documents that provide planning frameworks for areas that have been identified as in need of significant conservation or change.
Community Strategy	This is a document, developed in 2002, by a range of partner organisations in the light of information from residents about the quality of life locally. The Strategy has been implemented, monitored and updated since by the partner organisations forming the Local Strategic Partnership.
Development Plan Documents	Documents that form part of the Local Development Framework. They contain spatial planning policies and strategies that will guide development in conjunction with the Regional Spatial Strategy and national policy. These documents are subject to independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
Hard to Reach Groups	Specific sections of the community that have traditionally played little or no part in planning processes.
Independent Examination	The independent examination of a draft Development Plan Document by an independent Inspector, appointed by the Secretary of State, taking into account any public views received.
Key Local Stakeholders	A generic term used for bodies and organisations with a significant interest in the Wealden District, such as representatives from health, infrastructure and education.
Local Development Documents	The general name given to the Council's planning documents that set out the policies relating to land use and development. This includes Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.
Local Development Framework	The entire collection of Local Development Documents that collectively will guide development.
Local Development Scheme	The project management plan that describes the Council's intentions for producing its Local Development Documents. It will be subject to revision as necessary.

Term	Description
Local Strategic Partnership	A group of key local stakeholders from the public, private and voluntary sectors with an instrumental role in Wealden's Community Strategy. Through a co-operative approach to joint working at a local level, they are able to address multi-faceted problems by providing a range of responses.
Omission Sites	In the case of site allocation documents only, these are sites that have not been included in the submission document but have been proposed *after* the document has been submitted to the Secretary of State.
Partner Organisations	Organisations from a wide range of subject areas that are involved in the work of Wealden's Local Strategic Partnership. Some of these are listed on the Local Strategic Partnership's website http://www.wealdencommunitystrategy.co.uk.
Planning Inspectorate	An independent Government agency that deals with appeals, inquiries and other planning and enforcement related issues.
Planning Policy Statements	Government guidance on planning related subject areas published by the Department for Communities and Local Government.
Planning Surgery	An opportunity for prospective applicants to pre-book an appointment with a planning officer and discuss, on a without-prejudice basis whether their application is acceptable in principle.
Preferred Option	The Council's most favoured course of action, based upon evidence collected from the early consultation stage of document production.
Regional Spatial Strategy	Also known as the South East Plan, it provides the strategic context in which the Local Development Framework is located.
Soundness	A Development Plan Document will be considered sound if it has been prepared in accordance with the criteria set out in Government guidance and the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.
Start Date	In the context of planning appeals, this is the date of the letter from the Planning Inspectorate to the Council, giving notification that an appeal has been lodged.
Statement of Community Involvement	A public statement of the Council's intentions for involving the community in the production of its Local Development Documents, and in ongoing development control (planning application) decisions.

Term	Description
Strategic Environmental Assessment	A process for evaluating the environmental consequences of proposals and to ensure that environmental considerations and the decision making process are fully integrated.
Statutory Consultees	Groups and organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors, including the specific and general consultation bodies as defined by the Regulations which have been identified by Government as having a potential interest in the preparation of the Council's Local Development Documents. Legislation requires that the Council consults these groups during the process of document preparation.
Supplementary Planning Documents	These documents provide additional guidance to supplement the proposals and policies within a Development Plan Document. Unlike the latter, they are not subject to independent examination and do not form part of the Development Plan.
Sustainability Appraisal	An evaluation of the social, economic and environmental impacts of policies and strategies in a Local Development Document to ensure the policies and strategies are in accordance with Sustainable Development objectives.
Sustainable Development	"Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (The Brundtland Commission Report - Our Common Future, 1987).

Table 8 Council Offices and Libraries in Wealden

Council Offices	
Wealden District Council	Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex TN6 1DH Telephone 01892 653311 Office hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm
Wealden District Council	Council Offices, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 2AX Telephone 01323 443322 Office hours Monday to Friday 8.30am to 5.30pm
East Sussex County Council	County Hall, St Annes Crescent, Lewes, East Sussex, BN7 1UE tel:01273 481000
Libraries	
Crowborough	Pine Grove, Crowborough, TN6 1DH, tel. 01892 664426
Forest Row	The Community Centre, Hartfield Road, Forest Row RH18 5DZ, tel. 01342 825331
Hailsham	Western Road, Hailsham BN27 3DN, tel. 01323 840604
Heathfield	21 High Street, Heathfield TN21 8LU, tel. 01435 863975
Polegate	Windsor Way, Polegate BN26 6QP, tel. 01323 482155
Uckfield	High Street, Uckfield TN22 1AR, tel. 01825 763254
Wadhurst	The Institute, High Street, Wadhurst TN5 6AP tel. 01892 783649

Locations at which Documents can be Inspected

Town and Parish Council Offices	
Crowborough Town Council	Town Hall, The Broadway, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1DA, tel. 01892 652907
Forest Row Parish Council	Forest Row Community Centre, Hartfield Rd, Forest Row, tel. 01342 822661
Hailsham Town Council	Inglenook, Market Square, Hailsham, East Sussex, BN27 2AE, tel. 01323 841702
Heathfield and Waldron Parish Council	92 High St, Heathfield, East Sussex, TN21 8JD, tel. 01435 865700
Maresfield Parish Council	Parish Office, Churchfields, Nutley, East Sussex, TN22 3NA, tel. 01825 714555
Polegate Town Council	49 High Street, Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 6AL, tel. 01323 488114
Uckfield Town Council	Civic Centre, Uckfield, East Sussex, TN22 1AE, tel. 01825 762774
Willingdon and Jevington Parish Council	3 Gorringe Valley Rd, Willingdon, East Sussex, BN20 9SX, tel. 01323 489603

The following tests (as set out in paragraph 3.10 of Chapter 3, Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks-published by the Department for Communities and Local Government) will be applied to this Statement of Community Involvement during examination. These tests are also available to view electronically at www.communities.gov.uk. The Statement will be considered sound, unless shown to be otherwise by the application of these tests and evidence considered at the examination. The Inspector will determine whether

1. The local planning authority has complied with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004

2. The local planning authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives such as the Community Strategy

3. The Statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted

4. The Statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner

5. Whether the proposed methods of consultation are suitable for the intended audience and for different stages of preparation of local development documents

6. Whether there are resources available to manage community involvement effectively

7. The Statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents

8. The authority has mechanisms in place for reviewing the Statement

9. The Statement clearly describes the policy for consultation on planning applications.

Tests of Soundness

3.1 The Council must consult with certain bodies at specific stages in document preparation, as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004.

3.2 Regulation 25[i] sets out the requirements for consulting at the early "issues and options" stage of document production while Regulation 26[ii] sets out the range of procedures that must be followed during the "preferred options" public participation stage.

3.3 The following bodies are specific consultation bodies as set out in Annex E of Planning Policy Statement 12 and must be consulted in accordance with the Act and Regulations[iii].

Please note, this list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations occur.

Table 9 Specific Consultation Bodies

The Regional Planning Body if the local planning authority's area is in a region other than London
The Mayor of London if the authority is a London Borough
A relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the areas of the local planning authority
The Environment Agency
Highways Agency
The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
Natural England
Network Rail
A Regional Development Agency whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority
Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106 of the Communications Act 2003
Any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local planning authority; and
Any of the bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the local planning authority Strategic Health Authority

i The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
ii The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
iii The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

Person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1) (b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989 Person to whom a licence has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986 Sewerage undertaker Water undertaker

3.4 Consultations on Development Plan Documents will involve the range of bodies set out in the following list. In the case of Supplementary Planning Documents, any *relevant* bodies from the list will be consulted. This is in addition to the Statutory Consultees detailed above and in Planning Policy Statement 12.

Table 10 Additional Consultation Groups

Business Representatives	Representative Groups for Disabled Persons
Church Representatives	Representative Groups for Ethnic Minorities
Education Representatives	Representative Groups for Housing
Government Departments	Representative Groups for Residents
Health Representatives	Representative Groups for Travellers
Local Environmental/Sustainability Groups	Representative Groups for Youths
Local Strategic Partnership Members	Sports and/or Recreation Organizations
Local Transport Groups	Town Partnerships
Members of Parliament	Voluntary and/or Charity Groups
Police Authority	Women's Groups

3.5 Prior to preparation of the Draft Statement of Community Involvement and in accordance with Regulation 25[iv] and Planning Policy Statement 12 [v] the Council consulted with the following bodies. The following listing is in alphabetical order by each major grouping. The table below will also guide consultation on other Local Development Framework documents subject to updating as appropriate. We will only consult the bodies if the subject matter of the document is likely to affect them and we may need to consult additional bodies if necessary. If you wish to be added to the consultee database please contact:

Planning Policy Team,Council Offices, Pine Grove, Crowborough, East Sussex, TN6 1DH Telephone 01892 602007 Email ldf@wealden.gov.uk

iv The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004
v published by the Department for Communities and Local Government and which can be viewed online at www.communities.gov.uk)

Table 11 Statement of Community Involvement List of Principal Consultees

Neighbouring Borough and District Councils		
Eastbourne Borough Council	Lewes District Council	Mid Sussex District Council
Rother District Council	Sevenoaks District Council	Tandridge District Council
Tunbridge Wells Borough Council		
County Council		
East Sussex County Council		
Other Councils (excluding Parishes which appear below)		
Brighton and Hove City Council	Hastings Borough Council	Kent County Council
Surrey County Council		West Sussex County Council
Parishes Within Lewes District		
Barcombe Parish Council	Chailey Parish Council	Firle Parish Council
Glynde and Beddingham Parish Council	Lewes District Council	Newick Parish Council
Ringmer Parish Council	Seaford Town Council	South Heighton Parish Council
Parishes Within Mid Sussex District		
Ashurst Wood Parish Council	East Grinstead Town Council	Horsted Keynes Parish Council
Mid-Sussex District Council		
Parishes Within Rother District		
Ashburnham and Penhurst Parish Council	Burwash Parish Council	Catsfield Parish Council
Crowhurst Parish Council	Dallington Parish Council	
Ticehurst Parish Council		
Parishes Within Sevenoaks District		
Chiddingstone Parish Council	Cowden Parish Council	Penshurst Parish Council
Parishes Within Tandridge District		
Crowhurst Parish Council	Dormansland Parish Council	Lingfield Parish Council

Consultee Groups and Bodies

Parishes Within Tunbridge Wells District		
Bidborough Parish Council	Speldhurst Parish Council	Tunbridge Wells Borough Council
All Parishes Within Wealden District		
Forty two in number		
General		
Countryside Agency	Department for Transport	English Heritage
English Heritage (South East Region)	English Nature	Environment Agency (Kent)
Environment Agency	Highways Agency	South East England Development Agency
South East England Regional Assembly	Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority	
Communications		
BT Group plc	Mobile Mast Info	Mobile Operators Association
NTL	O2 UK Ltd	Orange Personal Communication
T-Mobile (UK) Ltd	Vodaphone Ltd	
Utilities		
British Gas Properties	Mid Kent Water Co.	South East Water
Southern Water	Transco South East	Seeboard Energy
Government Departments (the E2 group)		
Defence Estates	Department for Culture, Media and Sport	Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
Department of Constitutional Affairs	Department of Work and Pensions	Ministry of Defence
Home Office	Office of Government Commerce (Property Advisors to the Civil Estate)	
Government Office for the South East (for Dept for Education and Skills; Dept for Transport; Dept of Health; Department for Trade and Industry)		
General and Other (the E3 group)		
Agents (ninety seven in number)	Arts Council England South East	Action in Rural Sussex

Bexhill and Rother Primary Care Trust	Care for the Carers	Churches Together in Crowborough
Churches Together in Hailsham	Churches Together in Sussex	Churches Together in Uckfield
Churches together in Wadhurst	Churches Together in Willingdon and Polegate	Citizens Advice
Community Colleges	County Councillors	District Councillors
United Reform Church-President East Sussex	East Sussex Association for the Blind	East Sussex County Healthcare NHS Trust
East Sussex Disability Association	East Sussex Federation of Women's Institutes	East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust
Eastbourne Downs Primary Care Trust	English Federation for Disability Sport	Federation of Small Businesses
Forest Row Churches	Freedom Leisure	Hearing Resource Centre
Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	Members of the European Parliament (representing the Wealden area)	Members of Parliament (representing the Wealden area)
National Farmers Union	Rural Dean of Rotherfield	Rural Dean of Uckfield
Sompriti	Sussex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	Sussex Association of Local Councils
Sussex Association of Trade Councils	Sussex Deaf Association	Sussex Down and Weald Primary Care Trust
Sussex Police	Sussex Police Authority	Tourism South East
Uckfield and District Volunteer Bureau	Wealden Federation of Voluntary Organisations	Wealden Independent Mediation Service
Other (the E3 group)		
A27 Action Group	ADAPT	Age Concern (East Sussex)
Alfriston and District Amenity Society	Anchor Staying Put	ARRIVA (Southern Counties)
Ashdown Friends of the Earth	Auto point Coaches	Battle Community Transport
Bells Yew Green Society	Brighton and Hove Bus and Coach Company	British Chemical Distributors and Traders Association
British Geological Survey	British Horse Society	British Waterways
Business Link Sussex	Campaign to Protect Rural England	Care for the Carers

Consultee Groups and Bodies

Centre for Ecology and Hydrology	Civil Aviation Authority	Clued up Info- Crowborough
Coastal Coaches	Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment	Commission for Racial Equality
Conservators of Ashdown Forest	Country Landowners Association	Cousley Wood Association
Crowborough and District Sports Association	Crowborough Business Association	Crowborough Town Partnership
Crown Estate	Cuckmere Community Bus	Cuckmere Valley Society
Diocesan Board of Finance	Disability Rights Commission	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
Downland Affinity HG	Early Years and Childcare Development Partnership	East Sussex Rural Transport Partnership
East Sussex Transport 2000	East Sussex Travellers Association	East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
Eastbourne and District Chamber of Commerce	Eastbourne and District Enterprise Agency Ltd	Eastbourne Buses
English Partnerships	Environment Hailsham	Equal Opportunities Commission
Farming and Rural Conservation Agency	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group	Federation of Sussex Amenity Societies
Forest Row Business Forum	Forestry Commission	Frant Business Association
Freight Transport Association	Friends of the Earth (East Sussex)	Gatwick Airport
Gypsy Council	Hailsham and District Chamber of Commerce	Hailsham and District Sports Association
Hailsham Sports Federation	Hailsham Trust	Harmers Hay Residents Association
Health and Safety Executive	Heathfield Chamber of Commerce	Heathfield Town Partnership
Help the Aged	High Weald AONB Unit	High Weald Bridleways Group
Home Builders Federation	Housing Corporation	Hoverspeed (Newhaven)

Institute of Directors (South)	Land Access and Recreation Association	Mayfield and Five Ashes Society
Mayfield Chamber of Commerce	Mayfield Partnership	Metrobus Couth Coast and East Surrey
Moat Housing	National Express	National Grid Co.
National Playing Fields Association	National Trust Regional Office	Network Rail
Old Heathfield and Cade Street Amenity Society	Orbit Housing Association	Pevensey Community Action Group
Polegate and Uckfield Town Partnerships	Polegate Residents Association	Post Office Property Holdings
Pre-School Learning Alliance	Princes Trust	Raglan Housing Association
Rail Freight Group	Rail Passengers Committee for Southern England	Ramblers Association, Sussex Area
RDH Services	Regional Flood Defence Committee	Regional Sports Board
Road Haulage Association-Southern and Eastern	Robin Post Local Residents Association	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds- South East
School of the Environment-University of Brighton	Seeboard Energy	Soroptimist International Lewes and District Club
South Coast Buses	South Downs Society	South East Employers
South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)	South East Regional Housing Board	South Eastern Trains
Southern Housing Group	Southern Railway	Sport England South East Region
Sussex Air Quality Steering Group	Sussex Careers Ltd	Sussex Downs Conservation Board
Sussex Enterprise	Sussex Gardens Trust	Sussex Learning and Skills Council
Sussex Pollution Study Group	Sussex Sports Partnership	Sussex Wildlife Trust
Sustrans	Town and Country Housing Group	Town Farm Estate Residents Association

Transport for London	Traveller Law Reform Society Coalition	Uckfield and District Preservation Society
Uckfield Chamber of Commerce	Uckfield Inter-Agency Forum	Uckfield Railway line Parishes Committee
Wadhurst and District Business Association	Wadhurst Partnership	Warden Housing Association
Wealden Line Campaign	Wealden Tenant Involvement Group	Wealden Youth Action
Willingdon Residents Association	Women's Institute	Women's National Commission
Woodland Trust	Youth Clubs Sussex Ltd	Youth Development Service

3.6 In accordance with Regulation 26[vi], consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement took place with all those bodies listed above and additionally with a wide range of groups and individuals listed in the Additional Consultation Groups table. We also consulted with those on the Council's Community Strategy database, Wealden's Business Directory, and all those who previously submitted representations on the Council's Local Plan Review.

vi The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

3.7 In the case of major planning applications, the Council is obliged to consult the following bodies, in the following instances, in accordance with Regulation 10 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.

Table 12 Statutory Consultees for Major Planning Applications

Paragraph	Description of Development	Consultee
(a)	Development likely to affect land in Greater London or in a metropolitan county	The Local planning authority concerned
(b)	Development likely to affect land in a non-metropolitan county, other than land in a National Park	The district planning authority concerned
(c)	Development likely to affect land in a National Park	The county planning authority concerned
(d)	Development within an area which has been notified to the local planning authority by the Health and Safety Executive for the purpose of this provision because of the presence within the vicinity of toxic, highly reactive, explosive or inflammable substances and which involves the provision of - (i) residential accommodation; (ii) more than 250 square metres of retail floor space; (iii) more than 500 square metres of office floor space; or (iv) more than 750 square metres of floor space to be used for an industrial process; or which is otherwise likely to result in a material increase in the number of persons working within or visiting the notified area.	The Health and Safety Executive
(e)	Development likely to result in a material increase in the volume or a material change in the character of traffic –	
	(i) entering or leaving a trunk road; or	In England, the Secretary of State for Transport and, in Wales, the Secretary of State for Wales
	(ii) using a level crossing over a railway	The operator of the network which includes or consists of the railway in question, and in England, the Secretary of State for Transport and, in Wales, the Secretary of State for Wales
(f)	Development likely to result in a material increase in the volume or a material change in the character of traffic entering or leaving a classified road or proposed highway	The local highway authority concerned

Paragraph	Description of Development	Consultee
(g)	Development likely to prejudice the improvement or construction of a classified road or proposed highway	The local highway authority concerned
(h)	Development involving –	
	(i) the formation, laying out or alteration of any means of access to a highway (other than a trunk road); or	The local highway authority concerned
	(ii) the construction of a highway or private means of access to premises affording access to a road in relation to which a toll order is in force.	The local highway authority concerned, and in the case of a road subject to a concession, the concessionaire
(i)	Development which consists of or includes the laying out or construction of a new street	The local highway authority
(j)	Development which involves the provision of a building or pipe-line in an area of coal working notified by the Coal Authority to the local planning authority	The Coal Authority
(k)	Development involving or including mining operations	The Environment Agency
(l)	Development within three kilometres of Windsor Castle, Windsor Great Park, or Windsor Home Park, or within 800 metres of any other royal palace or park, which might affect the amenities (including security) of that palace or park	The Secretary of State for National Heritage
(m)	Development of land in Greater London involving the demolition, in whole or part, or the material alteration of a listed building	The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
(n)	Development likely to affect the site of a scheduled monument	In England, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, and, in Wales, the Secretary of State for Wales
(o)	Development likely to affect any garden or park of special historic interest which is registered in accordance with section 8C of the Historic Buildings and Ancient Monuments Act 1953 (register of gardens) and which is classified as Grade I or Grade II*.	In England, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England, and, in Wales, the Secretary of State for Wales
(p)	Development involving the carrying out of works or operations in the bed of or on the banks of a river or stream	The Environment Agency
(q)	Development for the purpose of refining or storing mineral oils and their derivatives	The Environment Agency
(r)	Development involving the use of land for the deposit of refuse or waste	The Environment Agency

Paragraph	Description of Development	Consultee
(s)	Development relating to the retention, treatment or disposal of sewage, trade-waste, slurry or sludge (other than the laying of sewers, the construction of pumphouses in a line of sewers, the construction of septic tanks and cesspools serving single dwellinghouses or single caravans or single buildings in which not more than ten people will normally reside, work or congregate, and works ancillary thereto)	The Environment Agency
(t)	Development relating to the use of land as a cemetery	
(u)	Development - (i) in or likely to affect a site of special scientific interest of which notification has been given, or has effect as if given, to the local planning authority by the Nature Conservancy Council for England or the Countryside Council for Wales, in accordance with section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (areas of special scientific interest); or (ii) within an area which has been notified to the local planning authority by the Nature Conservancy Council for England or the Countryside Council for Wales, and which is within two kilometres of a site of special scientific interest of which notification has been given or has effect as if given as aforesaid.	The Council which gave, or is to be regarded as having given, the notice
(v)	Development involving any land on which there is a theatre	The Theatres Trust
(w)	Development which is not for agricultural purposes and is not in accordance with the provisions of a development plan and involves - (i) the loss of not less than 20 hectares of grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land which is for the time being used (or was last used) for agricultural purposes; or (ii) the loss of less than 20 hectares of grades 1, 2 or 3a agricultural land which is for the time being used (or was last used) for agricultural purposes, in circumstances in which the development is likely to lead to a further loss of agricultural land amounting cumulatively to 20 hectares or more.	In England, the Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and, in Wales, the Secretary of State for Wales

Paragraph	Description of Development	Consultee
(x)	Development within 250 metres of land which - (i) is or has, at any time in the 30 years before the relevant application, been used for the deposit of refuse or waste; and (ii) has been notified to the local planning authority by the waste regulation authority for the purposes of this provision.	The waste regulation authority concerned
(y)	Development for the purposes of fish farming	The Environment Agency

The following methods will be used to a greater or lesser extent according to the potential impact of the document and the amount of interest in each document. Supplementary Planning Documents will, for example, generally be prepared more quickly than Development Plan Documents because they are more specialised and fewer organisations and individuals are likely to want to comment on them. This was reflected in the results from the initial Regulation 25 consultation on this Statement of Community Involvement.

Table 13 Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assesment - Engagement Methods

Stage	Consultee	On What Basis	Engagement Methods
Scoping Report	Countryside Agency* English Heritage English Nature* Environment Agency	Statutory consultees in accordance with the Regulations	Correspondence via letter and email Hard copy of Scoping report to be supplied for comment
	Government Office for the South East Parish and Town Councils District Councillors Highway Authorities Local Strategic Partnership	Informal consultation to give early opportunity for involvement and feedback	Correspondence / website links or hard copy
Engagement at all subsequent stages through to adoption will be as per the Development Plan Document and Supplementary Planning Document stages listed in tables 15 and 16			

*From October 2006, these agencies merged into a new organisation called Natural England.

Where alternative sites are being considered, developer obligations are set out in the table below.

Table 14 Developer Obligations for Omission Sites*

In what instance	Developer Obligation
For all omission site submissions	Provision of exhibition material for public display. Developers will be invited to attend relevant public exhibitions
	A statement indicating what community involvement has been carried out in relation to the proposals
	Submission of a Statement which sets out the extent to which the site submission accords with Wealden's submitted Core Strategy
For major site submissions	Submission of a transport and environmental assessment and infrastructure statement confirming what mitigation measures will be necessary to enable the proposed development to proceed
	A full Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment in accordance with Wealden's adopted Scoping Report

*Developer obligations are in relation to Regulation 32 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

Indicative Consultation Measures for Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents by Stage

Table 15 Core Strategy and Site Allocation* Development Plan Documents. Possible Engagement Methods For Each Key Stage of Document Production

Consultee	Basis of Consultations	Possible Engagement Methods	Other Comments
Early Engagement (issues and options) Regulation 25 NB. No defined statutory time limits on consultations, but an iterative and continuous process, with opportunities for informal methods			
General public	Representative sample groups only	Citizen's Panel	Could help in getting feedback on key concerns and formatting of document for Regulation 26, although not fully representative
	Representative sample groups only	Telephone polls	A possible means of obtaining views and feedback but not fully representative

Consultee	Basis of Consultations	Possible Engagement Methods	Other Comments
	Those expressing a specific interest to be involved through Statement of Community Involvement consultations	Website	Possible use of website as a discussion forum on key themes and topics Resource efficient way of early engagement but unlikely to be fully representative of the wider community
	Wider public	Council's interactive website	Possible use of website as a discussion forum on key themes and topics Resource efficient way of early engagement, given no statutory requirement to do so at this stage
Local Councillors	Elected Representatives	Discussion groups on key themes and issues, possibly working on area/ topic based clusters	This will be supplemented by a program of key training events as necessary
Statutory Consultees	In Line with Regulations	Written consultations, meetings and focus groups as appropriate	It may be appropriate for some meetings, such as in relation to infrastructure to be held in public or alternatively for minutes to be published
General Consultation bodies	Representative groups reflecting bodies listed in the Regulations	Written consultations, meetings and focus groups where appropriate	Skilled facilitators may be required for meetings
Specific Consultation bodies	As defined in the Regulations	Written consultations and use of web site. Meetings where appropriate	Skilled facilitators may be required for meetings
Developers	Informal exchange of ideas including for site allocation documents	Discussion groups, e-mail and web site	Useful for early debates on capacity and potential candidate sites
Other interested bodies, Local Strategic Partnership etc	Informal exchange of ideas and discussions on priorities	Attendance at events, meetings and discussion forums, supported by written consultations	Skilled facilitators may be required for discussions
Government Office for the South East	Exchange of views on approach for producing document	Correspondence/ meetings as appropriate	To ensure presentation and approach proposed for Regulation 26 is acceptable

Engagement Methods

Consultee	Basis of Consultations	Possible Engagement Methods	Other Comments
All of the above	Feedback on outcome of consultations	Web site, e-mail and written correspondence	To ensure that people understand the decision making process and how views have been taken into account
Regulation 26 Preferred Options stage Statutory 6 week formal consultation on published document			
All statutory consultees in accordance with regulations	Statutory/ formal	Written/ e-mail Supported by meetings where appropriate	Hard copy/ electronic copy of document provided where appropriate
All bodies/ individuals consulted at regulation 25, including General and Specific Consultation bodies defined in the regulations	Statutory/ formal	Written/ e-mail supported by meetings where appropriate	Hard copy/ electronic copy of document provided where appropriate, or alternatively a link to the Councils website
Other interested parties, including those expressing an interested to be involved and those listed on the data base	Statutory/ formal	E-mail alerts with links to web site / corrpespondence	Hard copies chargeable and available on request
General public	Statutory/ formal, although supported by extensive publicity campaign to maximise involvement at options stage	Summary leaflets and questionnaires sent to households, businesses and other interested groups with possibly more targeted distribution for Site Allocations Development Plan Document Local Advertisement Exhibitions/ Roadshows Public meetings Documents available for inspection at deposit points Use of all local media to maximise publicity Possible telephone polls	All comments must be made in writing, via e-mail, letter or directly via web site Questionnaires could prove useful in assisting in this process and maximise involvement at the early stage Hard copy of full Draft Document available on request (chargeable publication) Engagement methods identified on the left, relate to ways of disseminating information and helping to promote an exchange of ideas/ views in public domain

Consultee	Basis of Consultations	Possible Engagement Methods	Other Comments
		Attendance at meetings/ events organised by other bodies	Consultations methods should maximise linkages with other community engagement methods where possible. Local area meetings could be used to debate options in Site allocations for individual settlements/ parishes as appropriate. These could take the form of "planning for real" type exercises Core Strategy consultations can help inform future Community Strategy updating
Local Councillors	Informal	Meetings and discussion groups	A means of disseminating information to elected representatives
Developers	Informal Developers also have opportunity for formal participation as above	Written/ e-mail/ round table discussions only where appropriate	Encourage developers to make site submission material available early. For use in production of Site Allocations Document. *For Site Allocations Document, also invite site submissions at this stage*
Hard to reach groups	Formal and dissemination of information	Targeted methods as identified in SCI working with key partners and the Local Strategic Partnership	To encourage involvement of hard to reach groups in planning process
All of the above	Feedback	Written/ electronic/ web site	Information on decision making process and how comments have been taken into account Opportunity to also provide information about next stages
Submission Stage (Regulation 28) Formal 6 week consultation on revised document. Representations can only be submitted in relation to tests of soundness			

Engagement Methods

Consultee	Basis of Consultations	Possible Engagement Methods	Other Comments
Statutory consultees as defined in the Regulations, and all of those submitting representations at previous stages	Formal	Written consultations/ web site and e-mail alerts Meetings where appropriate with invited groups	Summary (electronic or hardcopy) or web-link to published document provided to all automatically Hardcopy of full document available on request (chargeable publication) To include all general and specific consultation bodies as defined in the Regulations
General Public, excluding the above	Formal supported by publicity, although on a more limited scale than at regulation 26, given that options already debated and representations are specifically in relation to tests of soundness	Written consultation - e-mail/ web site Use of Planning Inspectorate's model representation form likely Local advertisement Summary leaflets (possibly targeted distribution) Exhibitions/ road shows Public meetings, if appropriate Documents available for inspection at deposit points Local media campaign	Hard copy of full document available on request (chargeable publication) Assume most people wishing to make comments will have done so already through the regulation 26 stage, so a more limited publicity campaign is considered appropriate at this stage Measures listed to the left are intended primarily to disseminate information and to help people understand how to make representations. They are also an opportunity to explain the decision making process in reaching this stage All representations must be made in writing and only in relation to defined tests of soundness. Use of web sites to be strongly encouraged for this purpose, particularly for the Site Allocations

Consultee	Basis of Consultations	Possible Engagement Methods	Other Comments
			given the anticipated number of representations
Developers	Formal	Written meetings where appropriate	*Developers likely to be issued with a "checklist" if seeking to submit representations on "omission" sites Developers promoting omission sites will be expected to provide supporting information on Sustainability Appraisal and Infrastructure capacity and to have demonstrated public involvement to support their representations in line with the table above*
Local Councillors	Informal/advisory	Workshop/discussions	Supported by training
All of the above	Informal feedback	Website/written and email correspondence, with links to website where appropriate	Opportunity to explain approach for site representations on Site Allocation Development Plan Document
Regulations 32/33 *Formal six week consultation period for written representations*			
All of the above, generally	*Formal*	*Email alerts, website and written correspondence*	*To inform relevant parties about Site representation*
Statutory consultees and other Key bodies	*Formal/Informal*	*As above plus meetings and discussions to discuss implications of submissions (on-going)*	
General public	*Formal/Informal*	*Website, email, written consultaitons* *Local advertisement* *Meetings-targeted, where necessary* *Leaflets/summaries (targeted distribution) if necessary*	*Public events targeted to affected communities Developers will be required to provide sufficient material for all deposit points and Council offices. Developers will also be expected to provide material for displays at exhibitions and may be*

Consultee	Basis of Consultations	Possible Engagement Methods	Other Comments
		Information deposited at identified deposit points	*required to attend the exhibition(s) to explain their proposals*
Developers	*Informal*		*Developers may be invited to attend public and or Council meetings if deemed helpful and appropriate*
Local Councillors	*Statutory/Informal*	*Committee meetings*	*Purpose of meetings to obtain feedback on submissions and to agree formal Council position to take to Examination*
All of the above	*Informal*	*Feedback on the above process and information about the next stages*	
Examination through to adoption stages In line with Regulations			
Formal objectors/those submitting representations	Formal	Written representations or public hearing	Form of examination depends upon nature/volume of representations and is determined by the Planning Inspectorate
General public/interested parties	Informal	Publicity information in media about examination Local advertisement Website	
Wealden District Council	Formal	Meetings to agree Council's position and evidence for Examination Meeting to resolve adoption upon receipt of Inspector's binding report	Meetings to resolve adoption are held in public
All of the above and anyone specifically asking to be notified	Informal	Feedback	Information about outcome of examination and adoption

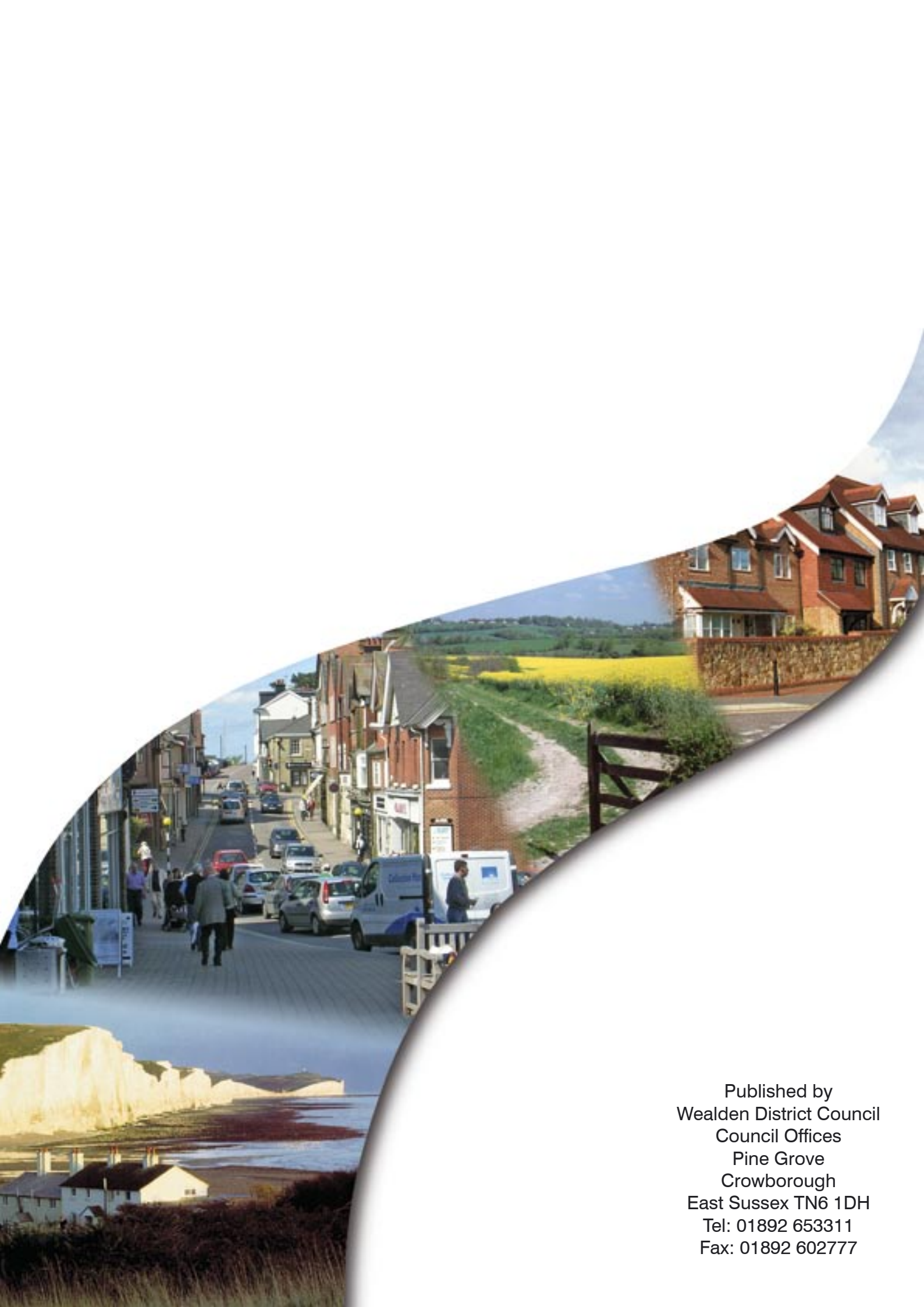
*Table footnote: Arrangements in Italics relate only to the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.

Table 16 Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document

Consultee	Basis of Consultation	Engagement Methods	Other Comments
Early Engagement and Evidence Gathering			
Local Councillors	Informal Elected representatives	Workshops for District, Parish and Town Councillors	Additional events as necessary
Other interested bodies and groups	Informal Those with a specific interest in the subject matter of the document including those that have requested to be included on data base	Workshops	
Citizen's Panel	Informal	Workshops	Invited audience
Local Strategic Partnership	Informal	Attendance at Local Strategic Partnership meetings	
Specialist Groups including architects, developers and agents	Those with expert knowledge and specialist interest in the subject matter	Discussion groups, workshops	Opportunity to gain specialist input to inform the content of the document
Wealden District Council officers	Informal	Workshops	Workshops for training purposes
Representatives from all of the above groups	Plenary feedback session on consultation outcomes and incorporation of comments into draft document	Workshop Written and/or email feedback	To ensure that people are kept informed and updated throughout the production process
Public Participation (Regulation 17) Timescale between 4 and 6 weeks in accordance with Regulations			
Statutory Consultees	Formal In accordance with regulations	Illustrated written draft document published for comment Notification letter with link to Council's consultations on web site Meetings as appropriate.	Electronic methods of communication will be used where possible to help limit use of resources Hard copy of the document

Engagement Methods

Consultee	Basis of Consultation	Engagement Methods	Other Comments
Specific and General Consultation Bodies and other interested parties	Formal Representative groups reflecting those in the Regulations	Council's website Written representations by letter/email Meetings only if appropriate	Staffing resources for facilitating meetings Hard copy of the draft document or electronic link
Local Councillors	Formal/Informal	Draft document available for comment on the Council's website Written representations by email/letter	Councillors may attend other workshops in an observer capacity
Previous consultees	Formal Those who participated in earlier consultation exercises and are recorded on the Council's consultation database	Email shots and/or letter with links to Council's website	To ensure continuity in consultation and offer ongoing opportunities for involvement Hard copy (chargeable) available on request
General public	Formal	Website and email notification Draft document published on Council's website Local media advertisement Draft document available at deposit points	Hard copy (chargeable) available on request
All of the above	Feedback on consultation	Written/ electronic/ Council's website	Information on decision making process and how comments have been taken into account in the preparation of the Supplementary Planning document
Stages to Adoption (Regulation 19)			
Local Councillors	Formal decision making on Supplementary Planning Document	Committee meetings and agenda papers	Meetings to discuss Resolution to adopt will be held in public
All respondents from above stages and anyone else asking to be notified	Informal feedback	Website, email and letters where appropriate	Confirmation of adoption



Published by
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East Sussex TN6 1DH
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We take providing a good service to all our customers very seriously and hope this Service Charter will assist you in understanding our service targets. If you feel we have not met our service standards then we would like to know. Please contact the Administration and Technology Manager, either by e-mail, telephone, or in writing. Contact details are overleaf.

Some of our targets are set by Central Government. Others are local targets, based on realistic performance and customer expectations.

- We welcome discussions with people before they put in planning applications
  - householders can call in and see someone without an appointment for general information and advice
  - businesses and agents will be given a mutually agreed date for an appointment within 5 working days of requesting one
  - weekly surgeries with a planning officer are held, by prior appointment, at Crowborough, Hailsham and Polegate.
- We will provide a development team approach for major sites/ developments

Development Control Service Charter

- We publicise all applications to a standard above that required by Government
- Details of planning applications including accompanying plans, committee reports (where appropriate) and decision notices are published on our website www.planning.gov.uk
- We can arrange translations if required
- We provide a fully accessible reception service for people with a disability
- All letters requiring a response will be answered within 10 working days or an acknowledgement letter sent explaining why it may take longer
- E-mails will be responded to within 2 working days
- Complaints will be answered within 10 working days
- Telephone messages will be returned within 1 working day
- We aim to register 90% of complete applications within 3 working days of receipt
- Applicants/Agents and third parties will be notified of the name of the person dealing with an application
- We aim to determine 60% of major applications within 13 weeks
- We aim to determine 65% of minor applications within 8 weeks
- We aim to determine 80% of other/ householder applications within 8 weeks
- If an application is to be considered by Committee, we will write advising the Applicant/Agent, and anyone who made a representation about the application 5 working days before the committee date
- We allow public speaking where applications are reported to the Sub-Committee
- We will send out a notice of decision on an application within 3 working days of the application being determined
- We will aim to advise anyone who wrote in about a particular application of the Council's decision within 10 working days of that decision being made
- We will visit all urgent planning enforcement sites within 24 working hours of receipt of a complaint where a Stop Notice may be required.

Further Information

Should you require any information in this document in a different format (such as on tape, larger print, or in Braille) please let us know.

Useful Telephone Numbers

Corporate Director - Environmental Services
01892 602405

Head of Development and Building Control
01892 602471

Development Control Team Leader (North)
01892 602509

Development Control Team Leader (South)
01892 602476

Building Control and Planning Enforcement Manager
01892 602484

Administration and Technology Manager
01892 602472

Wealden Parishes

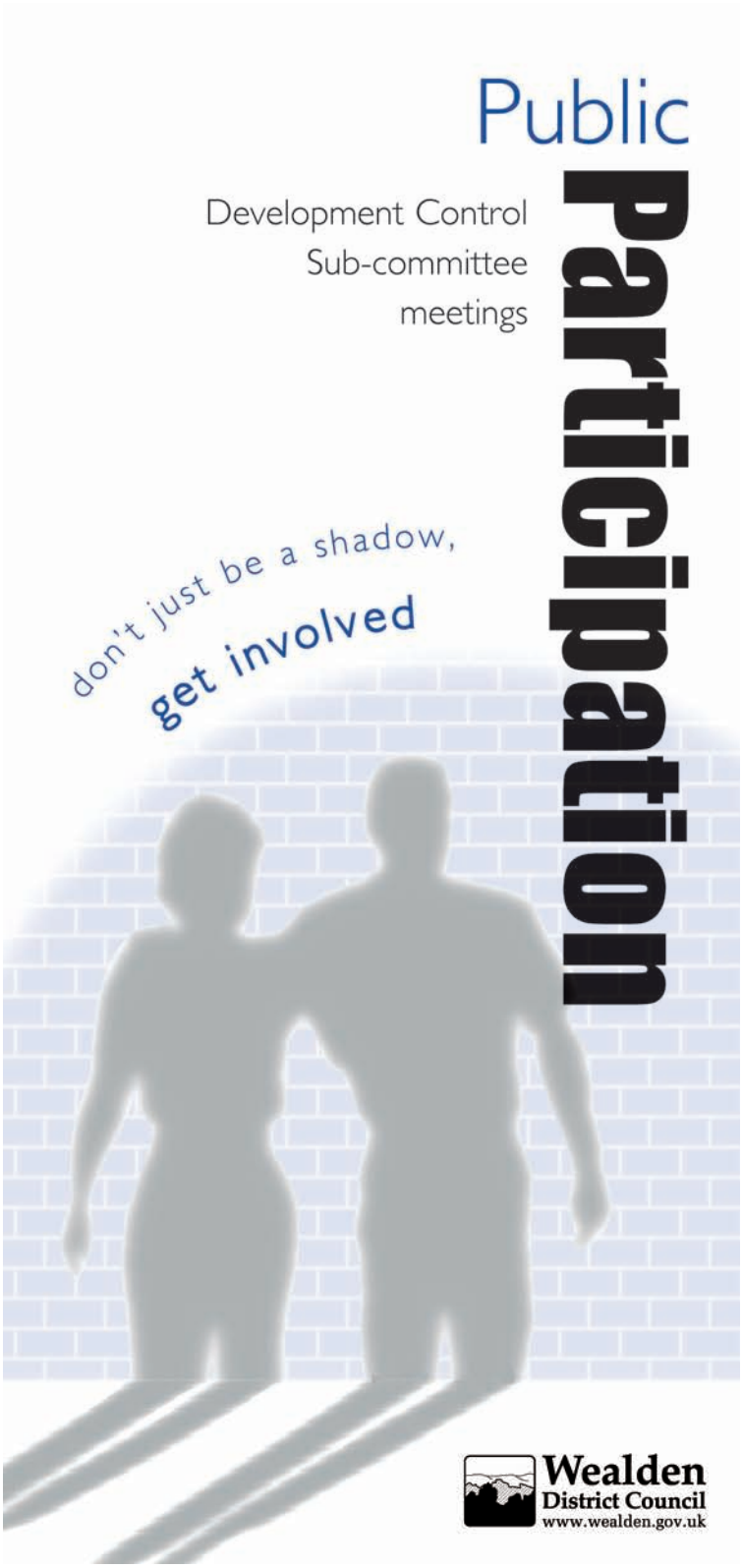


Highlighting the departments administrative north/south divide

Environmental Services
Wealden District Council
Council Offices
Pine Grove
Crowborough
East Sussex
TN6 1DH

Telephone: 01892 653311
Fax: 01892 602777
e-mail: planning@wealden.gov.uk
Website: www.wealden.gov.uk/planning
Planning applications on the web:
www.planning.wealden.gov.uk

The Development Control Service Charter


Public
Participation
Development Control
Sub-committee
meetings
don't just be a shadow,
get involved
Wealden
District Council
www.wealden.gov.uk

Introduction

Wealden District Council encourages public involvement in the planning process. It consults widely on and gives publicity to planning applications, the preparation of all documents which will comprise the LDF and on development strategies for all towns, villages, settlements and countryside in the District. New ideas for community involvement have been introduced.

The Council provides the public with the opportunity to speak at the Development Control Sub-committee meetings at which certain planning applications are reported and considered by members. This opportunity to speak is also available to Parish and Town Councils, objectors and applicants and/or their agents and supporters.

This leaflet explains the procedures. These are intended to be as simple as possible and to ensure that the scheme operates fairly for the benefit of all parties with a genuine recognised connection with an application.

The District Council will continue to publicise planning applications by making available weekly lists of applications received, including in the local press, on the Council's website **www.planning.wealden.gov.uk** and by sending letters to those persons who are considered likely to be affected materially by a proposed development. In addition, site notices will continue to be displayed at or near a site when these are required, and in other cases applicants will be asked to display a notice on site. Local residents will continue to have 21 days to comment in writing on an application and all letters/e-mails received will be acknowledged. People who have sent in comments will be notified of the Council's final decision or if the application is withdrawn but, with limited resources available, we regret it is not normally possible to enter into detailed correspondence on individual applications.

The Sub-committee meetings - venues and frequency

Unless otherwise announced, all Development Control NORTH Sub-committee meetings to consider planning applications for sites within the northern half of the District are held in the Council Chamber, Pine Grove, Crowborough, and all Development Control SOUTH Sub-committee meetings to consider those in the southern half of the District are held in Committee Room 1 at the District Council offices, Vicarage Lane, Hailsham. These meetings, which are open to the press and public to attend, are normally held regularly on a 4-weekly cycle commencing at 10.00 on a Thursday morning. However, you are advised to contact the Council to check the date and venue of these meetings to ensure that you do not have a wasted journey.

Items on which members of the public are entitled to speak

The two Development Control Sub-committees also deal with planning matters other than planning applications. Some of these, such as enforcement cases, may involve exempt (confidential) matters and the right to speak does not apply to these. Accordingly, the right to speak only applies to all planning applications, including Conservation Area, Listed Building, applications for works to trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order and Advertisement consent applications and for Certificates of Lawful Development, which are the subject of written reports to be considered by the Sub-committees.

Reporting Letters of Representation to Sub-committee meetings

Where applications are reported to the Development Control Sub-committee meetings, the Planning Officers will continue to summarise letters received, either in the written reports or verbally, during their updates at the meetings and prior to public speaking and consideration by the Members.

Deciding whether to speak

All members of the public are welcome to attend the Council's meetings. While there is an opportunity to speak at the Development Control Sub-committee meetings on planning applications, there is no legal obligation to do so. Comments sent in writing will still be taken into account prior to making a final decision, whether or not you choose to speak at a meeting.

For each application reported, the Planning Officer's recommendation will be made available to the Councillors and is available to the public, including applicants and/or their agents, 5 working days before the Sub-committee meeting. However, it would be worth checking first to see whether the application in which you are interested is being reported to a particular meeting, since the majority of applications are dealt with in accordance with the Council's Scheme of Delegation and are not reported to committee for consideration. When you know the officer's recommendation, you might decide that you do not wish to speak at the meeting. However, it is important to remember that Councillors are not obliged to follow their officers' recommendations, though in the majority of cases they do.

Your local District Councillor may be a Member of the Development Control Sub-committee covering your area and will have an important role in the consideration of applications at the meetings. If you wish to discuss the application with them prior to the meeting, the Committee Services Section will tell you how to get in touch.

In addition to objections received, the applicants / agents and supporters views will continue to be summarised and reported to the Sub-committees. They will also have the right to speak in support of their proposals, whether or not objectors or Parish or Town Councils are being heard at the meeting, and irrespective of the officer's recommendation. It will be important, therefore, for them to check if anyone has registered to speak.

Asking questions

Speakers do not have the right to ask other speakers, officers or Councillors questions at the meetings. Generally, it is not anticipated that Councillors will ask questions of the speakers. However, occasionally there may be the need for clarification and therefore Councillors may ask questions on a point of clarification and at the discretion of the Chairman.

Making arrangements to speak at the meeting

Sub-committee Agendas are prepared approximately 5 working days in advance of the meetings. At that time, for all applications which are the subject of a written report, we will write to the relevant Parish / Town Council, the applicant / agent and objectors and supporters who have made representations, advising them of the Officer's recommendation and that the application is due to be considered at a forthcoming meeting.

Only speakers with a genuine recognised connection with an application will be allowed to speak at the meeting. The Chairman's ruling on this will be final. Where more than one person has registered to speak in support of an application, the applicant / agent should decide the order in which such speakers will be taken.

Where more than one person has registered to speak against an application, those speakers should decide amongst themselves who should speak and their order of speaking. Where no agreement can be reached, the first registered shall take priority.

Should further letters be received after publication of the agenda, we will still write to those people and ask them to notify the Committee Clerk if they wish to speak at the meeting. However, where letters are received just before the day of the meeting there will be insufficient time to write. Sometimes the officer's recommendations are changed or applications withdrawn before the meetings and if this happens we will try to let you know. For these reasons, please always include your telephone number or e-mail address so that we may be able to contact you quickly.

You should note that many of the applications are reported on the Sub-committee agendas before the end of the 21 day consultation period for comment. Any representations received up to the time of the meeting will be brought to the Sub-committee's attention by the officers. However, there will be occasions when the Sub-committee will give consideration to an application before the consultation period expires. In such cases, if contrary views which have not been raised previously are received after the meeting, arrangements can be made for the application to be reported back to the Sub-committee when the opportunity to speak again will be available. Similarly, the Sub-committee may defer an application, in which case the process for public speaking will be repeated, if necessary, at a following meeting.

Arrangements for speakers

All those persons who wish to speak at a Sub-committee meeting on a planning application which is the subject of a written report on the agenda are requested to arrive at the meeting venue after 9am and to pre-register their interest with the Committee Clerk no later than 9.45 on the morning of the meeting.

An agreed list of speakers for and against the applications and the connection the speakers have with an application will be provided to the Chairman at the start of the meeting. Up to 2 speakers for and 2 speakers against an application (3 for and 3 against for major applications with 3 minutes to speak) will be allowed to address the Sub-committee, to be taken in the order to be announced by the Chairman of the Sub-committee. Following any update by the officers on the application and prior to any discussion by the Sub-committee Members, the registered speakers will be called forward in the agreed order by the Chairman to a set-aside position and given a maximum of two minutes each to speak.

The Council needs to strike a balance between providing the opportunity for people to be heard at the meetings and ensuring that the applications are dealt with efficiently and within a reasonable length meeting. This is why it is considered necessary to adhere strictly to a time limit on speakers.

This time limit of two minutes per person will be strictly maintained and regulated by the Chairman. Speakers will then be asked to return to their seats in the public seating area. Thereafter, Councillors will discuss the planning application, involving the officers as necessary. There will be no further opportunity given for others to address the Sub-committee.



Planning applications will normally be considered in the order in which they appear on the published Sub-committee agendas. Any person wishing to speak, therefore, needs to be aware that it may be some time before the item in which they are interested is considered, although in practice, those applications which are to be the subject of public participation, are at the Chairman's discretion, considered earlier at the meetings.

Relevant Planning Considerations

The Council, acting as the local planning authority, may decide applications only within strict guidelines and limitations set by central Government and the Courts. This means that Councillors should only have regard to certain 'relevant' matters during their proper consideration of a planning application. As a guide, some examples of "relevant" and "irrelevant" matters are listed below :-

Relevant	Irrelevant
Structure & Local Plan policies Government policy guidance Case law and previous decisions Site location Highway safety, traffic & parking Noise, disturbance, smells. Design, appearance, materials, Character, layout & density Overshadowing, loss of privacy, Loss of trees, hedgerows Effect on Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas & their settings.	Matters covered by other legislation e.g.licensing, health & safety Private property rights / covenants Effect on property values Personal & financial circumstances, other than in exceptional cases Loss of view Moral & religious issues

You must also be careful not to make any improper, defamatory or slanderous statements. There is no legal protection for comments made at the meetings.

Arrangements for Speaking at Development Control Meetings

Finally, should you have any further queries about this Council's scheme of public participation at planning meetings, please contact the Committee Services Section on 01892 602436 (for Southern area) or 602577 (for Northern area) or write to / e-mail the Member Services Manager at:-

Wealden District Council
Pine Grove,
Crowborough,
East Sussex
TN6 1DH
or
martyn.garrett.@wealden.gov.uk

Please note : Copies of the Development Control Sub-committee agendas and minutes of the meetings can be found on the planning pages of Wealden District Council's Website, the address of which is :-

www.wealden.gov.uk/moderngov/uucoverpage.asp

Details of planning applications can be found at

www.planning.wealden.gov.uk

Revised September 2006