

**South Norfolk Statement of Community Involvement**  
**May 2017 (Formally Reviewed 2025)**



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## **1. Introduction**

### **Why we are preparing this Statement of Community Involvement?**

1. South Norfolk Council is always looking for ways for the community to become more engaged in planning matters. We want to encourage more people to be involved and to make that involvement as easy as possible. Local knowledge is important as it helps to ensure that development in South Norfolk maximises benefits for the community whilst protecting the special qualities of the district.
2. This South Norfolk Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is a 'code of practice' setting out how the Council will involve people in planning decisions. It identifies how and when participants from local communities and other partner agencies will be involved in the preparation of Local Plan documents. It also sets out the way in which the community can be involved in the determination of planning applications.
3. Once adopted, the Council must comply with the (updated) SCI in preparing any Local Plan document or when determining a planning application.

### **The need for review**

1. The requirement to prepare a SCI is set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004). South Norfolk Council first published a SCI in 2007 to explain how the Council intended to involve people in the preparation of its planning policy documents and engage them in the processing of planning applications. Since 2007 there have been a number of important changes to national planning policy which led to a full scale review of the SCI in 2017.
2. A full-scale review of the SCI took place in 2017, to inform the consultation approaches to be taken during the preparation of the Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP). A further amendment took place in 2019 to reflect the requirements of the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017. Given that legislation requires local planning authorities to review their SCI every five years, a further review of the document was undertaken in 2021/2022 which resulted in several updates.
3. This review took place during 2025, to include references to the new Greater Norwich Local Plan (adopted March 2024), the revised National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024) and also incorporates the continuing online engagement methods which were originally established during the Covid-19 pandemic. The conclusion of this update was that several minor, factual amendments were required. These do not materially change the Council's approach to community involvement in plan making.
4. Under the national planning system, the Council has to prepare a Local Plan to guide development and growth in South Norfolk over the next 10-20 years. The Local Plan shows how the Council intends to provide for new housing and employment growth in its area, how much development will be planned for and where it will go. A Local Plan also sets out what will and will not be allowed in certain areas and which areas must be protected from development altogether.

5. To be effective, plans need to be kept up to date. The National Planning Policy Framework, paragraph 34 (December 2024) states that policies in local plans should be reviewed to assess whether they need updating at least once every five years and should then be updated as necessary.
6. The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) was adopted in March 2024 and covers the combined area of Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, excluding the area within the Broads Authority. It includes strategic planning policies for the whole of the area, including identifying the number of homes and jobs that should be planned for and the infrastructure needed to support it. In South Norfolk, the GNLP identifies land for future development in the Norwich fringe, market towns and larger settlements.
7. A separate local plan, the Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP), is being produced by South Norfolk Council. Its purpose is to deliver sustainable growth within the villages of South Norfolk. Once adopted, the VCHAP will also become part of the Local Plan for South Norfolk.
8. The proposed Plan will allocate new sites for housing across 48 Village Clusters within the district. The sites allocated within the Plan, as well as those allocated or coming forward in specific Neighbourhood Plans produced by communities and certain specific sites being carried forward from the existing South Norfolk Site Allocations and Policies Plan (2015), will need to meet the minimum target of 1,200 new homes for the rural areas of South Norfolk, as set out in the adopted Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP).
9. The Council has also been involved, along with the other Norfolk local planning authorities, in the development of a broader Norfolk Strategic Framework (2017), which sets overall planning targets across the county as a whole. This Strategic Framework, the latest version of which was adopted in 2021, constitutes the Norfolk authorities' Statement of Common Ground, as required by the National Planning Policy Framework. The Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework can be found at: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/norfolk-strategic-planning-member-forum](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/what-we-do-and-how-we-work/policy-performance-and-partnerships/partnerships/norfolk-strategic-planning-member-forum)
10. The Council will need to strike a careful balance between meeting our obligations to the Government to review and update its plans with making sure that local people have a meaningful opportunity to comment on and influence what goes into those plans through the plan making process.
11. Since the 2007 SCI, the Government has made changes to national planning rules which mean that more kinds of development can now be carried out, and more kinds of premises can change their use, without planning permission – this is called *permitted development*. Also to encourage more housebuilding, the Government has changed and simplified the planning process for housing, granting automatic 'permission in principle' for new housing on previously developed sites which Councils have listed as suitable.
12. Taken together, the changes in the planning system will inevitably affect the way that Local Plans are prepared and how planning applications are made and dealt with. This means that the way we involve local people in the planning

process also needs to change. In cases where no planning application is needed (such as permitted development), the Council cannot always let people know about all development which is happening in their area, however applications which need prior approval under permitted development rights are included in the weekly list of planning applications published on the Council's website. The permitted development rule changes are designed to speed up the planning process, and make smaller scale building projects and minor changes easier. But this will sometimes mean that local people will have less opportunity than before to have their say.

### **South Norfolk Council Key Priorities**

13. The South Norfolk Council Strategic Plan 2024-2028 sets out several key priorities for the authorities. One of these is 'Enriching our Communities'. In meeting this priority from a planning perspective, the Council recognises that it needs to meaningfully involve communities and stakeholders in planning for the growth of the district, ensuring that communities have a stake in the area's future.

### **Our aims for community involvement**

14. Our aim is to give communities every opportunity to shape the way planning happens in South Norfolk. To achieve this, the Council has made the following four commitments:
  - We will work with town/parish councils, community groups and other local representatives to help you and your community take a more active role in planning
  - We will be readily approachable and will work effectively to build open and honest relationships with you
  - We will help you to understand more about planning and will use plain English in all the plans we prepare
15. We will take all views into account and (where relevant) feedback information throughout the planning process
16. The Council understands how important it is to involve the community. In this SCI the term 'community' is being used in its widest sense. A community is a group of people and organisations which have a common interest, in this case an interest in the future development of South Norfolk. Overall, greater community involvement in planning will help deliver sustainable development through decisions and outcomes, although clearly there will remain instances where some people will be disappointed by some planning decisions the Council will make – this is, however, unavoidable, as competing interests will sometimes exist which are irreconcilable. More information about sustainable development in the context of planning can be found in the [National Planning Policy Framework](#).
17. A number of groups within South Norfolk have been traditionally more difficult to engage with than others. Using the most appropriate techniques and consultation methods the Council will aim to get a response that is representative of the population of the District or of the particular area under

consideration. To do this the Council will work with those locally organised groups that can offer improved access to 'hard to reach' groups. These will include:

- Neighbouring authorities and Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils;
- Service and utilities providers;
- National and local amenity, campaign, interest and support groups (such as groups representing environment/conservation/heritage concerns, access/disability issues, and religious/ethnic/race groups);
- Young people, including School Councils and South Norfolk Youth Advisory Board;

### **The Council's commitment to equality**

18. The Equality Act 2010 introduced a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This Duty requires South Norfolk Council, and other public sector organisations, to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act;
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

19. This is particularly relevant to planning which has a role to play in promoting equality of opportunity and cohesion by considering the needs of the community. The Council recognises that equality of opportunity in practice includes ensuring that vulnerable or disadvantaged groups have their voices heard and their needs considered. The SCI supports that objective through providing guidance on how to get people involved in planning. Planning activities and decisions will be impact assessed in order to ensure that there are no unintended negative impacts on vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. The assessments will focus on the eight protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation but will also consider the wider implications of socio-economic inequalities on community cohesion. This is normally carried out through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) which takes place during the Local Plan production process.

20. As part of the community involvement exercises that form the preparation stage of Local Plan documents, the Council will seek to monitor the characteristics of those that take part (typically through the use of a monitoring form attached to consultation response forms or through recording details about those attending consultation events). If it is considered that certain parts of the community who share a protected characteristic, and who may be affected by the subject of the proposed plan are underrepresented then the Council will consider undertaking further involvement exercises, specifically targeted at these groups of people.

21. All printed material will be offered in Braille, large print, audio and translation options on request and the IN TRAN facility will be publicised in all printed material.

### **The role of Elected Councillors**

22. Elected councillors have an important role to play as:

- Community representatives – if you would like to, you can share your views about planning matters directly with your Ward Councillor;
- Information providers – Councillors can act as a link between planning officers and people in their ward and community;
- Decision makers – Elected councillors make decision on certain planning applications and also sign-off Local Plan documents for consultation. In order for a Local Plan to be submitted to the Secretary of State or adopted it must be agreed at a Full Council meeting.

23. Members of the public can make their views known to elected councillors in a number of ways; by letter, email, or face-to-face discussion. This is described as 'lobbying' and the councillor will (if your views are communicated in writing) be obliged to pass these on to the Planning Department, where they will be published publicly. It is important that the proper consultation process is used because this is how views are registered in the plan-making or planning application process. This ensures that while councillors hear what you have to say, you will not miss the opportunity to be heard at committees or at any subsequent appeal, inquiry, hearing or examination and that your views are properly publicly recorded and published.

### **RTPI Planning Aid England**

24. Planning Aid England (PAE) provides planning advice and support to help individuals and communities engage with the planning system and get involved in planning their local area. PAE is built on the principle that everyone should have access to the planning system, regardless of their ability to pay. The work of the organisation is delivered by dedicated volunteers who are supported by a small staff team. Planning Aid can help individuals and communities to:

- Understand how the planning system works
- Comment on planning proposals
- Get involved in the preparation of the Local Plan
- Participate in neighbourhood planning
- Apply for planning permission or appeal against the refusal of permission

25. The following services are offered by PAE:

- A free web resource for planning advice - [www.planningaid.co.uk](http://www.planningaid.co.uk)
- A free email advice service accessible via an online enquiry form



- Bespoke planning support for individuals and groups, usually in areas of more severe socio-economic disadvantage
- Community engagement, outreach and capacity building
- Workshops and training on the planning system

26. South Norfolk Council endorses PAE as a service that local communities may wish to use (in addition to any advice provided by the Council) to seek assistance on matters discussed within this SCI. Planning Aid England's contact details are listed below:

Tel: 020 7929 8338

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

Web: [www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice/about-planning-aid-england](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice/about-planning-aid-england)

## **2. Community Involvement in Plan Making**

### **What kinds of documents are consulted on?**

27. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out the community involvement requirements for local authorities to follow in preparing their local planning documents.
28. The local planning documents prepared by the Council are identified in a document called the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS includes a timetable of when we aim to produce the documents and the various stages they must go through to be adopted. The LDS is available on the Council's website at [www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/future-development](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/future-development) and is reviewed and updated regularly. The main types of documents produced are:

### **Local Plans**

29. Local Plans are the formal policy documents which constitute the statutory development plan for South Norfolk. Once adopted these have full legal weight in decision making. The Council's decisions to approve or refuse any development which needs planning permission must be made in accordance with the policies in the Local Plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations are issues that can be taken into account when making decisions on planning applications. These can include (but are not limited to) national planning policies (set out in the National Planning Policy Framework) emerging local planning policy, financial considerations (viability), overlooking/loss of privacy, parking, highway safety and traffic, noise, effect on heritage impacts – listed buildings and conservation areas, layout, density, design, disabled person's access, biodiversity impacts – nature conservation, protected trees, previous planning decisions. The weight attached to material considerations in reaching a decision is a matter of judgement. Issues such as loss of property value, loss of view and an applicant's personal circumstances are non-material planning considerations and cannot be taken into account in the planning process.
30. There are two main stages of consultation on Local Plans, these being:
- Regulation 18, which specifies that local planning authorities should seek community involvement in the preparation of each Local Plan and that authorities should take into account the comments received in the preparation of the plan. This is often referred to as consultation on the draft Local Plan, and might also be called the Issues and Options stage.
  - Regulation 19, deals with the publication of the Local Plan and occurs before the Council submits the document to the Secretary of State for examination. The Council must publish the document and invite formal representations over a minimum six-week period. This stage is known as the pre-submission publication stage.
31. There are further regulations which set out the requirement for the Council to notify previous consultees of various ensuing stages of the Local Plan, these being:

- Notification of submission of the document to the Secretary of State;
- Notification of the date, time and place of the public hearing (related to the examination of the document), as well as the name of the Inspector;
- Notification of the publication of the Inspector's Report; and
- Notification of the adoption of the Local Plan.

### Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

32. These help to support and explain in more detail how the Council will implement particular policies and proposals in the Local Plan. SPDs are supplementary to the policies in the Local Plan and must be consistent with them. SPD cannot create new policy. SPD can also take the form of masterplans, detailed design briefs or development briefs for sites identified for future development ('allocated') in the plan, as well as for other emerging sites. SPDs can be reviewed frequently and relatively straightforwardly to respond to change, whereas a review of the policies in a Local Plan document is a longer and more complex process.

33. The 2012 Regulations referred to above also specify requirements for community involvement in the production of SPDs, which differ from that for Local Plans.

- Regulation 12, details requirements for local planning authorities to produce a statement setting out a summary of the main issues raised in consultation on production of the SPD in question and how the resulting SPD has addressed those issues.
- Regulation 13 specifies that the local authority must invite representations on the draft document over a minimum four week period prior to adoption. This is known as the pre-adoption publication stage.
- Regulation 14, then requires the authority to notify anyone who so requested that the SPD has been adopted.

### Neighbourhood Plans

34. One of the main recent changes in the planning system encourages people to become more involved in the planning of their local area. They can do this by helping to prepare or by participating in the organised events and consultations of the Neighbourhood Plan process. South Norfolk Council wants to encourage people to become involved in making Neighbourhood Plans. The Place Shaping team is responsible for supporting the work of any Neighbourhood Plan group (this is a legal requirement) but these documents are essentially produced by parish and town councils and are subject to their own consultation arrangements. Further information on the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans can be found in the [Planning Practice Guidance](#). The [Locality website](#) gives advice on financial support and grants as well as general information about producing Neighbourhood Plans.

35. The main stages in Neighbourhood Plan production which require South Norfolk Council to undertake consultation or notify communities and other stakeholders

of certain developments in the process are summarised below. A list of statutory consultees for Neighbourhood Plans can be found at Appendix 2:

- Publicising and inviting representations over a minimum six week period on applications for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area (the area that the Parish/Town Council would like the Neighbourhood Plan to cover), where that area crosses a parish boundary;
- Publicising and inviting representations over a minimum six week period on a submitted Neighbourhood Plan and associated documents;
- Publication and notification of the examiner's report, as well as South Norfolk Council's decision in relation to that report;
- Publication and notification of the referendum information statement and specified documents, giving at least 28 working days' notice of the date and procedures relating to a Neighbourhood Plan referendum; and Publication and notification of the adopted Neighbourhood Plan.

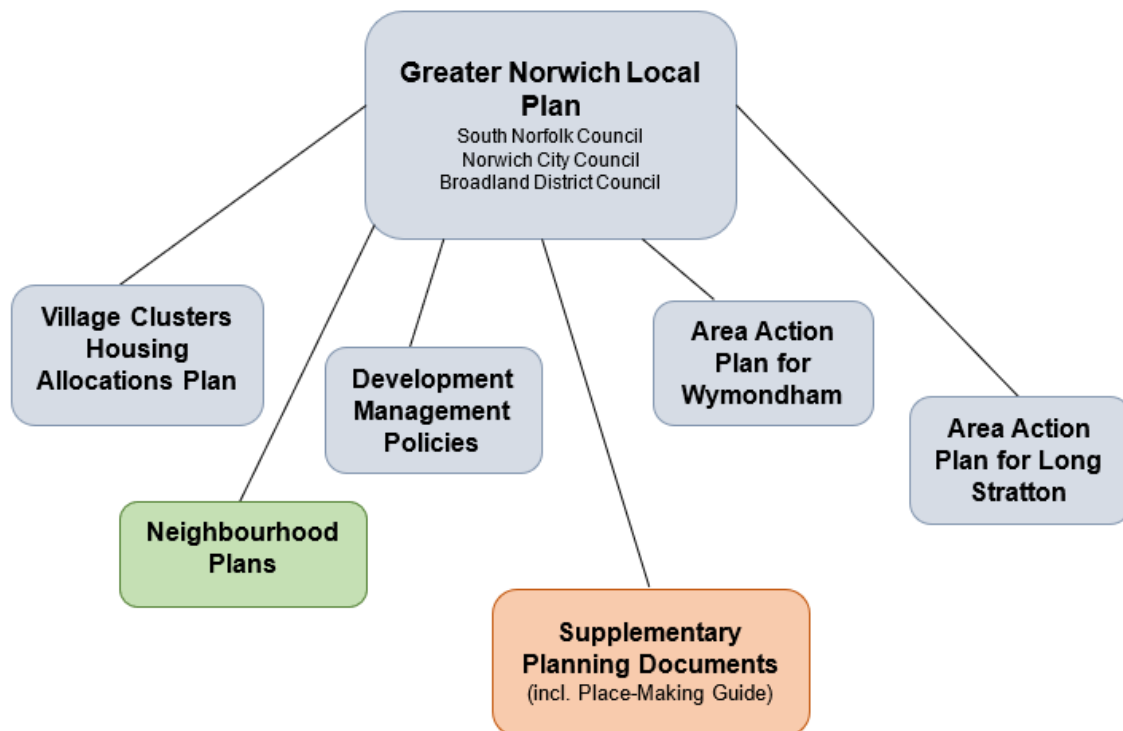
36. Appendix 4 sets out a comprehensive list of the main ways in which South Norfolk Council can support communities in the district that are developing Neighbourhood Plans, as required by the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

### **The current Local Plan**

37. The current Local Plan for South Norfolk comprises the following adopted documents:

- Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) (adopted March 2024);
- the South Norfolk Site Specific Allocations and Policies (adopted October 2015) (the GNLP supersedes those elements that relate to the Norwich urban fringe, market towns and other larger settlements);
- the South Norfolk Council Development Management Policies Document (adopted October 2015);
- the Wymondham Area Action Plan (adopted October 2015); and
- the Long Stratton Area Action Plan (adopted May 2016).

38. The Council also has adopted several Neighbourhood Plans (with several also in progress) as well as a number of Supplementary Planning Documents. Neighbourhood Plans are not technically part of the Local Plan but do form part of the wider Development Plan for the district.



*The emerging South Norfolk Local Plan*

### **The emerging Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan**

39. As stated earlier, South Norfolk Council is currently producing a Village Clusters Housing Allocations Plan (VCHAP). This will allocate housing sites within the smaller villages within South Norfolk (grouped into clusters), sufficient to meet the minimum requirements set out in the GNLP.

40. This plan will cover the period to 2038, in the same way as the GNLP, and will replace the remaining elements of the existing Site Specific Allocations and Policies Document for South Norfolk. The current work programme for the preparation of the VCHAP is set out in the latest revision of the South Norfolk Local Development Scheme, which is available to view on the Council's website, here: [www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/future-development/local-development-scheme-3](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/future-development/local-development-scheme-3). The programme is subject to review and the LDS will be updated to reflect any changes.

### **Procedural requirements**

41. Local Plan documents must be prepared in accordance with a nationally prescribed procedure set out in the Local Planning Regulations for England, which were last updated in 2012 (with subsequent amendments). This procedure is being followed in preparing the emerging VCHAP document.

42. At key stages of plan-making there are opportunities for the public to comment on emerging planning policies and proposals in the documents being prepared; indeed, this engagement is vital to ensure that the Council fully understands

public views (and information) on policies and proposals. At the end of the process Local Plan documents must be submitted to the Secretary of State and be independently examined by a government appointed inspector to assess their soundness and legal compliance before they can be adopted by the Council and come into force.

43. Certain other documents must be published alongside Local Plan documents, including:

- The independently prepared Sustainability Appraisal (SA) report of the Local Plan at each stage. (A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report is prepared and consulted on at the start of the process to set out what sustainability issues and objectives the SA should cover and what evidence it will use);
- An update to the Policies map, setting out the Local Plan's policies and proposals on a map base (if relevant);
- A statement of consultation summarising public representations made to the plan and how they have been addressed (called the 'Regulation 22(c)' statement);
- Copies of any representations made;
- Any other supporting documents considered by the Council to be relevant in preparing the plan; and
- An adoption statement and environmental statement (when the plan is adopted)

44. The Local Plan is supported by a range of research reports, studies and topic papers which make up a detailed evidence base which informs and justifies its policies.

## **The Duty to Co-operate**

45. For many years South Norfolk Council has worked in close co-operation with its neighbouring councils in Broadland and Norwich to plan for and deliver major growth envisaged for the Greater Norwich area. This work has been undertaken as part of the formal Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP). The Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk was produced by the GNDP, which includes Norfolk County Council working in partnership with the three districts.
46. The need for Councils and other agencies (see Appendix 1) to work together in developing effective planning strategies for their areas is a legal duty. Councils must show that they have met this statutory Duty to Co-operate in order for Local Plans to be accepted (found 'sound' and 'legally compliant') when those plans are independently examined by a Government-appointed inspector. The National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to prepare a Statement of Common Ground, demonstrating how they meet this duty. As explained earlier, the Norfolk Strategic Planning Framework (2017) constitutes the Norfolk local planning authorities' Statement of Common Ground. This involved South Norfolk Council working with all the local planning authorities in Norfolk, plus other agencies, across Norfolk, and also into Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire.
47. The Local Plan documents which have been prepared jointly by the Greater Norwich area authorities are set out in the respective LDS's for each Council. Public involvement in their preparation is guided by the standards set out in this SCI, which is very similar to the Broadland and Norwich SCIs.

## **Who will we consult with?**

48. The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out statutory requirements for the Council to follow in producing its Local Plan documents. The regulations define two specific groups of consultation bodies for the purpose of plan making. These are 'specific consultation bodies' and 'general consultation bodies'.
49. Specific consultation bodies are listed within the regulations and criteria are also suggested for determining general consultation bodies. Appendix 2 sets out South Norfolk Council's interpretation of 'specific' and 'general' consultation bodies for the purposes of involvement in plan making.
50. The Regulations require that for each Local Plan document being produced the Council must involve any of the specific and general consultation bodies that it feels may have an interest in the subject of the proposed document. This means that the Council will not necessarily consult the same consultation bodies on each Local Plan document it produces.
51. The regulations also require the Council to involve such residents or businesses in the area that it considers appropriate.
52. Comments submitted on consultation documents will be publicly available on the Council's website and cannot be made confidentially.

## **The basic content of each Local Plan consultation document**

53. Because the Local Plan is made up of a number of documents (including Supplementary Planning Documents) the Council will make clear the stage of the document which is the subject of each consultation. The Council will ensure that the language used is straightforward, minimising jargon and clearly explaining any technical terms.

54. Each consultation will make clear:

- The document being prepared;
- The stage in the process that the document has reached (e.g. Issues and Options or Pre-submission);
- The scope and purpose of each consultation;
- The issues/questions on which the Council wants to receive views or representations;
- What people are being invited to do (e.g. answer a questionnaire, attend a meeting etc.);
- The date and time that responses need to be received by the Council;
- How the responses received will be used;
- What the public responses can or cannot influence in the consultation documents;
- How and when results of the consultation will be made available;
- How decisions will be made using the results of the consultation and
- What are the future stages in the process.

55. It will also be made clear that

- i. Any personal details and information supplied will be treated in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018, General Data Protection Regulation (EU 2016/679) and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 which control how personal information is used by organisations, businesses or the government.
- ii. There may be a number of elements which consultation responses will not be able to change (such as the status of nationally designated wildlife sites and national planning policies) and therefore it will be made clear on which matters consultation responses are sought.

## **Consultation methods**

56. The Council has a well-established procedure for involving people in plan making and we will continue to refine our understanding of different consultation techniques. A variety of methods have and will be used during consultations, taking into consideration the issues being consulted on, the stage of consultation and the needs of the audience. These include, for example, the use of appropriate locations and/or the use of particular presentation media for



presentation to blind people, people with impaired hearing and people with mental health issues or learning difficulties.

57. The Council will use a range of methods of consultation appropriate to the needs of the exercise and the stage of the consultation reached. The Council will consider carefully:

- The ways in which we publicise documents and events - letters, advertising etc;
- The ways in which we consult - questionnaire, exhibition etc.;
- Methods for feeding back the results - direct to participant, published on the website etc.

58. Consultation is carried out increasingly by electronic means, but this is still rapidly evolving in the digital age. Whilst almost all documents are made available electronically, the challenge remains as to how information can be disseminated effectively to attract the widest audience. The Council is steadily expanding the use of digital technology to enable direct access to its services across a range of devices and allow local people to make payments, submit comments and report issues and problems electronically.

59. The 2022 Update of the Council's SCI was accompanied by a 'Temporary update in response to Covid-19 guidance'. This note highlighted those elements of the SCI that dealt with in-person engagement and the use of public facilities and provided guidance in respect of those matters, based on the latest Government regulations regarding social distancing. The note provided an emphasis on using virtual methods to engage with community and stakeholder bodies, including online exhibitions, virtual presentations and virtual meetings. The Council has successfully carried out a number of such virtual engagement events since this time as part of its Local Plan production.

60. We will endeavour, in future planning consultations, to integrate these virtual engagement mechanisms (where possible) and extend the use of social media to help access 'hard to reach' groups, especially younger people. However, we will also continue to use more traditional methods of consultation to include those without access to the internet or social media. The Council encourages comments to be submitted electronically via the website or email where possible (which is much cheaper and easier to process) but will also continue to accept paper representations. Comments received will be published on our website and recorded with the name under which the comments were made.

61. We will use a range of consultation approaches. We will **always** publish information on the Council's website and have hard copies available for inspection at the Council's office. Other consultation/engagement methods will also be used, but these will depend on the document being consulted on, the stage of consultation reached and the appropriateness of different techniques. Some of these potential methods are described below, but this is not necessarily an exhaustive list (more detail about individual consultation methods is given in Appendix 3).

62. We will:

- Make consultation information and documents available on the Council's website and in our Council Office reception
- Send out letters/emails to statutory/general consultees (as appropriate)
- Involve Local Councillors and Town/Parish Councils (as appropriate)
- Lodge copies of consultation material at libraries in the district in paper and/or electronic form (as appropriate)
- Engage local print and broadcast media (as appropriate)
- Publish articles in the Council's Link magazine/ Parish Magazines (as appropriate)
- Produce posters/notices for Town/Parish Council noticeboards and other methods of advertising (as appropriate)
- Hold exhibitions/meetings – virtual and/or in-person (as appropriate)
- Facilitate focus groups/workshops – virtual and/or in-person (as appropriate)
- Consult with Neighbourhood Planning bodies and take account of Parish Plans (as appropriate)
- Make use of social media (as appropriate)

63. We acknowledge that it is important to make public consultation arrangements as extensive as possible to make sure the public can get their voice heard. However, it is not always possible or appropriate to undertake consultations using all the methods listed above at every stage of the plan making process. We will make sure that consultations are tailored appropriately to the nature of the plan, policy or proposal being consulted on and the stages it has reached. At any consultation stage the Council will comply with the minimum legal requirements for consultation.

64. The Council will aim to hold all in-person, public consultation events at venues that have good access for everybody. Venues should be ideally be within easy distance of local communities for walking and cycling and on a public transport route, as well as having enough car parking. The Council will also choose locations that reflect the geographic spread of the population. Given the rural nature of large parts of South Norfolk, it may not always be possible to use venues which allow easy access for all; where this is the case clear information about other methods of participation will be available. Events will be timed to allow as many people as possible in the target audience to attend, taking into account working hours, school/public holidays, other known events etc. When targeting specific groups venues will be chosen accordingly e.g. using colleges, student unions, or virtually, to target the 18-35 age group.

## **How long will consultations last?**

65. The following timescales will be adhered to for documents consulted on:

<b>Document type</b>	<b>Normal period for consultation</b>
Local Plan documents and accompanying sustainability appraisal reports	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>six weeks</b> (42 calendar days) on Local Plan documents
Neighbourhood plans (See pages 25-26 for the stages of the process which require the Council to undertake consultation)	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>six weeks</b> (42 calendar days) when proposals for neighbourhood plans prepared by designated neighbourhood planning bodies are published (Regulation 16 publication stage).
Supplementary planning documents (SPD) including planning briefs.	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>four weeks</b> (28 calendar days) on SPD and on planning briefs which have the status of SPD.
Non-statutory planning documents and informal guidance.	We will consult for a period appropriate to the coverage and content of the document concerned.
Future reviews of this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	We will consult for at least six weeks (42 calendar days) on any future reviews of this SCI

## **Circumstances in which the consultation period will be extended**

66. We will extend consultation periods to allow for extra days where a bank holiday falls within a consultation period (on a day-for-day basis).

67. Where a normal period of consultation would take in all or part of the Christmas/New Year holiday, the Easter holiday or the July/August summer holiday period in addition to bank holidays, extra days will be added to allow for this, up to a maximum of 14 calendar days over and above the statutory minimum.

68. At its discretion, and only in the early, informal stages of Local Plan/SPD production, the Council may allow additional time for representations to be made in circumstances where there is a justifiable reason for not responding within the deadline.

69. In accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, we will not normally run consultations on planning documents in the

six-week period immediately before local council elections (pre-election period).

**How will we consult people at different stages in the plan making process?**

70. Different types of policy documents need different levels of involvement, depending on factors such as how many people would be affected by the proposed policy and the type of impact it would have. Detailed guidance on who we will involve, how and what level at the various stages of the plan making process is given on the following pages:

## Potential involvement and publicity methods at different stages of Local Plan production

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Pre-production / evidence gathering	The information needed for the plan is prepared and potential issues identified. This stage may encompass a series of discrete exercises	<p>Parish/Town Council workshops (virtual and/or in-person)</p> <p>Stakeholder focus groups (virtual and/or in-person)</p> <p>Stakeholder meetings (virtual and/or in-person)</p> <p>Resident/stakeholder workshops (virtual and/or in-person)</p> <p>Survey documents (hard copy and online)</p> <p>Write to statutory environment bodies to initiate Sustainability Appraisal screening</p>	<p>Letter/email to stakeholders and database contacts</p> <p>Information on the Council's website</p> <p>Information via SNC social media</p> <p>Information in libraries and at Council offices</p> <p>Article in The Link Magazine (if publication timings allow)</p> <p>Article in the local press</p> <p>Letter/email to Town/Parish Councils and elected Members</p> <p>Posters on Parish Notice boards/libraries</p> <p>Article in Parish magazines</p>

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Consultation on draft Local Plan (Regulation 18)	<p>The information gathered at the first stage is taken into account in the drafting of detailed policies and allocations.</p> <p>The Council presents a draft of the Local Plan setting out detailed policies which meet the aims of the Plan and address identified issues.</p> <p>Depending on the level of complexity, the draft Local Plan stage may involve more than one period of consultation.</p> <p>Draft Local Plan documents will be published for consultation for a minimum of six weeks.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (principally online)</li> </ul> <p>Public exhibitions (virtual and/or in-person)</p> <p>Stakeholder meetings (virtual and/or in-person)</p>	<p>Letter/email to 'specific consultation bodies'</p> <p>Letter/email to 'general consultation bodies', other interested bodies and individuals on the consultation database</p> <p>Publish consultation documents on the Council's website</p> <p>Make copies of the consultation document available for inspection at the Council offices and libraries</p> <p>Issue press release to local newspapers</p> <p>Publicise consultation via SNC social media</p> <p>Arrange public meeting, exhibitions, focus groups as appropriate (virtual and/or in-person)</p> <p>Article in The Link Magazine (if publication timings allow)</p> <p>Articles in Parish Magazines/posters on Parish Notice boards (if relevant/appropriate)</p>

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Pre-Submission Publication (Regulation 19)	<p>The Local Plan is finalised and published for a representations period before being submitted to the Secretary of State.</p> <p>Representations at this stage can only be made on the soundness and legal compliance of the plan</p> <p>The Pre-Submission publication version of the Local Plan will be published for consultation for a minimum of six weeks</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (hard copy &amp; online)</li> </ul>	<p>Publish a statement of the representation procedure</p> <p>Publish Sustainability Appraisal Report for consultation</p> <p>Publish consultation statement summarising all comments received from the previous stages and how the comments have been considered and taken into account</p> <p>Publish relevant supporting documents</p> <p>Send letters/emails to specific consultation bodies</p> <p>Send letters/emails to relevant general consultation bodies, other interested bodies and individuals on the consultation database</p> <p>Publish electronic copies of all the documents on the Council's website</p> <p>Make hard copies available for inspection at the Council's offices and libraries</p> <p>Issue public notice/press release in local newspapers</p> <p>Publicise consultation via SNC social media</p> <p>Article in The Link magazine (if publication timings allow)</p>

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Submission	The draft Local Plan and all supporting documents and representations received are submitted to the Secretary of State, who appoints an independent planning inspector to examine the Local Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<p>Letter/email to 'pre-submission publication' respondents who requested to be notified of submission</p> <p>Information on Council's website</p> <p>Information via SNC social media</p> <p>Information available at Council offices and libraries</p>
Public examination	The Local Plan and comments received are examined by the appointed planning inspector, including the public Hearing stage. If there are any proposed main modifications, they will be consulted on for at least six weeks. On receipt of the Inspector's report, it will be published on the Council's website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<p>Letter/email to 'those who made Pre-Submission representations about the date of the Hearing session(s), publication of Proposed Main Modifications and receipt of Inspector's report (as relevant)</p> <p>Information on Council's website</p> <p>Information via SNC social media</p> <p>Information available at Council offices and libraries</p>



Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Adoption	The Local Plan is adopted following the consideration of the recommendations in the Inspector's report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<p>Make the Inspector's report available for inspection on the Council's website and at the Council's offices</p> <p>Letter/email to 'pre submission publication' respondents who requested to be notified</p> <p>Following adoption:</p> <p>Publish the Local Plan and make available on Council's website and at Council offices/libraries</p> <p>Publish adoption statement in Local newspapers</p> <p>Send adoption statement to specific and general consultees and those who made representations at previous stages or those who have asked to be notified of the adoption</p> <p>Make the Sustainability Appraisal and other supporting documents available for inspection for six weeks after adoption</p> <p>Add adoption information on SNC social media</p>

## Potential involvement and publicity methods at different stages of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)/Planning Brief production

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Pre-production/ evidence gathering	Information is gathered on the topic and potential issues are identified and explored. This stage may encompass a series of discreet exercises  Preliminary consultation may be carried out prior to publication of draft SPD	Stakeholder focus groups (virtual and/or in-person)  Stakeholder meetings (virtual and/or in-person)  Preliminary survey/consultation documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to stakeholders</li> <li>• Notification of relevant database contacts</li> <li>• Survey/consultation documents available on Council's website, in libraries and at Council offices</li> <li>• Information published via SNC social media, local press, The Link magazine/parish magazines as appropriate</li> </ul>
Draft SPD/Planning Brief	A draft SPD/planning brief is prepared following the initial evidence gathering stage.  Consultation at this stage will involve publishing a draft of the SPD/planning brief for comment for a minimum of four weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (hard copy &amp; online)</li> </ul> Public exhibitions (virtual and/or in-person)  Stakeholder meetings (virtual and/or in-person)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make electronic copies of the SPD/planning brief and supporting documents available on the Council's website, in libraries and at Council offices</li> <li>• Send letters/emails to relevant specific and general consultees and those on the consultation database who may have an interest in the issues</li> <li>• Information published via SNC social media, local press, The Link magazine/parish magazines as appropriate</li> </ul> <p>Arrange exhibition or presentation to interest groups if appropriate (virtual and/or in-person)</p>

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Adoption	The Council will consider the representation received through the consultations and make any amendments necessary before adopting the SPD/planning brief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Publish the SPD/planning brief and make available on the Council's website and at libraries and Council offices</li> </ul> <p>Publish a consultation statement summarising all comments received from the previous stages and how the comments were considered and taken into account</p> <p>Send an adoption statement to those who have made representations during the previous consultations and those who have asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD/planning brief</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Information published via SNC social media, local press, The Link Magazine/ Parish magazines as appropriate</li> </ul>

## Potential involvement and publicity methods at different stages of the Neighbourhood Planning process

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Neighbourhood Plan Area application	Parish/Town Council applies to South Norfolk Council to designate the Neighbourhood Area. South Norfolk publicises the application and invites representations over a minimum six week period if the Plan area differs from the Parish boundaries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (hard copy &amp; online)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Letter/email to key stakeholders</li> <li>• Information on Council website</li> <li>• Consultation document at Council offices</li> <li>• Consultation document at local library</li> </ul>
Submission of Neighbourhood Plan	Parish/Town Council submits the Neighbourhood Plan to South Norfolk Council. South Norfolk invites representations on the submitted plan over a minimum six week period.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consultation document (hard copy &amp; online)</li> </ul>	<p>Letter/email to stakeholders and residents identified in Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information on Council website</li> <li>• Consultation document at Council offices</li> <li>• Consultation document at local library</li> </ul>
Publication of Examiner's report	South Norfolk Council publishes the report of the examination into the submitted Neighbourhood Plan and the decision of the Council as to whether or not it accepts the Examiner's recommendations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report and decision statement at Council offices</li> <li>• Information on Council website</li> <li>• Information at local library</li> </ul>

Stage	Description	Potential involvement methods	Potential publicity methods
Referendum Information Statement	South Norfolk Council publishes the Referendum Information Statement and specified documents, setting out the date and procedure for the Neighbourhood Plan referendum. A minimum of 28 working days notice will be given.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter to all residents in the Neighbourhood Plan Area (wider if Examiner wishes a wider area to be covered by the referendum)</li> <li>Information on the Council website</li> <li>Information at Council offices</li> </ul>
Adoption of Neighbourhood Plan	South Norfolk Council adopts the Neighbourhood Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>N/A</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter/email to those consultees who requested to be informed about the adoption of the Neighbourhood Plan</li> <li>Information on Council website</li> <li>Information at Council offices</li> <li>Information via SNC social media</li> <li>Information at local library</li> </ul>

## **Feedback**

71. It is important to feed back the results of consultation regularly. It allows people to see how their contributions have been taken into account and helps to maintain their confidence in the process. Feedback needs to be relevant, concise, and easily understood and we need to explain clearly why certain decisions have been made.
72. Opportunities for feedback include press releases, The Link, publications produced by other parties (e.g. parish council newsletters), the website (which includes a 'have your say/results of previous surveys' page), and direct letters/e-mails. These will explain how the results will be used in the decision-making process

### **3. Community Involvement in Planning Proposals and Applications**

#### **Introduction**

73. As well as setting out how communities and stakeholders can have their say in the production of Local Plan documents, this SCI also details how individuals and organisations can take part in the consideration of planning applications through the development management process. It is important that the views of the general public and interested parties are taken into account to inform decision making on planning applications.

74. This section details South Norfolk Council's arrangements (and, where appropriate the Council's expectation of developers) in terms of community and stakeholder involvement during the following stages of the development management process:

- **The pre-application stage**  
when proposals are being formulated and before any planning application is submitted to the Council
- **The planning application stage**  
once an application is lodged with the Council
- **The post-application stage**  
the notification and (if followed) appeal process following a decision on a planning application

75. This section also contains information on the Council's Planning Enforcement process.

#### **The pre-application stage**

76. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (December 2024) in paragraph 40, recognises that early engagement between stakeholders and the community before a planning application is made (i.e. the pre- application stage) has ***'significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties'***.

77. The Council has a key role to play in encouraging developers to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage. There are two main aspects of pre-application. The first is encouraging applicants to engage directly with the local community before submitting their applications to the Council so that local people can have their say about the proposed development before a planning application is submitted and the second is encouraging developers to take up the confidential chargeable pre-application service offered by the Council with the aim of improving the quality of planning applications being prepared for submission. Details of this service and the fees involved can be found at [www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/pre-application-planning-advice-south-norfolk](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/pre-application-planning-advice-south-norfolk). Pre-application advice for relevant proposals may also be sought from, amongst other bodies, Anglian Water and the Environment Agency – see their websites for details.

### **The planning application stage**

78. It is important that the community has suitable opportunities to be involved in commenting on planning applications and that those comments are taken into account during the decision-making process. The Council has a well-established process of consultation on planning applications, although this varies depending on the type of application. All comments received are published on our website and are attributable to their author. No anonymous comments can be considered. Guidance on how to keep your details safe online can be found on the South Norfolk Council website at [www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/deal-planning-applications/5](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/deal-planning-applications/5).

79. Once an application is registered as valid, it may be publicised in a variety of ways:

Nature of development	Publicity required
Applications that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are accompanied by an environmental statement</li><li>• are departures from development plan</li><li>• Major development (see note below)</li><li>• affect the setting of a listed building</li><li>• are for Listed Building consent</li><li>• affect the character or appearance of a conservation area</li><li>• affect a public right of way or</li><li>• are made by the Council</li></ul>	Advertisement in newspaper, site notice and neighbour notification
Other developments	Neighbour notification
Permitted development requiring prior notification to local planning authority	Site notice posted by developer

80. For all planning applications, the Council will write to all immediate neighbouring properties to notify them of the application. Where there is open land immediately adjacent to the application site the Council will also display a site notice unless the application is for householder development. Where the Council is notified that the notice has been removed prior to the expiry of the 21-day consultation period, it will aim to display a replacement.

81. The Council will also notify local councillors, the parish or town council, and statutory consultees of the application.

82. Members of the public and other stakeholders can find out about applications in their area of interest by looking at the weekly lists or searching the planning system at <https://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/find-planning-application>.



83. Notices and letters make it clear when and where the application(s) can be viewed, the name of the case officer and the date by which responses need to be submitted for them to be accepted. Any individual or organisation may make representations regarding a planning application, whether or not they have been personally notified. Responses can be made in writing, via e-mail or directly via the Council's website and all responses received will be published on line.
84. If an application is amended during the process of its assessment the Council will re-consult on amended plans (for a reduced number of days), but only if there is a material change in the application that warrants the need to re-consult. If a re-consultation is considered necessary then those who the Council considers would be materially affected by the amendment will be notified. If necessary, the case officer for the application will agree a new determination deadline with the developer/agent as required.
85. The results of any consultations will form part of any officer report. Although some exceptions exist in relation to enforcement matters, responses will usually be a matter of public record and any submissions should be made on that basis.
86. For relatively simple applications a decision can be made once the statutory 21 day consultation has finished. These are authorised under the powers delegated to the Director of Place. However, a local member can request that an application be decided by Committee, if it is in the interest of local people to do so, and it is for valid planning reasons.
87. As part of the Committee process for those supporting or objecting to an application there is an opportunity to bring particular issues to the Committee's attention – this could include the results of consultation. In the event that an application is not determined by committee, the results of any consultation will form part of the case officer's assessment of the proposals and summary information will be included in a delegated report. All aspects of planning applications including supporting information are available via the Council's website, therefore increasing the availability of information and allowing a further opportunity to scrutinise consultation results. Details on how to speak at Committee are set out at [www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/deal-planning-applications/6](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/deal-planning-applications/6). Planning Committee meetings are also live-streamed and are available to view at <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZciRgwo84-iPyRImsTCIng>.

### **The post application stage**

88. Once an application has been determined the Council will inform the applicant (via a Decision Notice) and update the website with the Decision Notice. A weekly list of all planning decisions is also published and made available on the Council's website at [www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/find-planning-application](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning-applications/find-planning-application).
89. Once the Council has made a decision on a planning application the person who made the application has a right to appeal the decision if they disagree with it (an appeal can also be made if the Council has not made a decision

within the statutory or agreed time-frame). Most appeals must be made within 6 months of the date on the decision notice issued by the Council (or date that a decision should have been made by). There are different deadlines for appeals under the Householder Appeals Service, the Commercial Appeals Service and those linked to enforcement action, further details can be found in the Planning Inspectorate Procedural Guide at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/planning-appeals-procedural-guide>

Planning appeals are dealt with by the Planning Inspectorate and heard by an independent Planning Inspector.

90. Anyone can comment on a planning appeal and the deadline for comments is 5 weeks after the start date of the appeal. The Council has to inform anyone who commented on the original application that an appeal has been lodged to give them a chance to comment. All comments received are passed to the Planning Inspectorate to consider as part of the appeal process.

91. An appeal can be dealt with through written representations or through a hearing or inquiry and there are opportunities for local people to be involved. More guidance about taking part in a planning appeal can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taking-part-in-a-planning-listed-building-or-enforcement-appeal>

### **Planning Enforcement**

92. If our planning system is to work fairly for all, we must have a system that allows us, where necessary, to take action against those who break the planning rules but in doing so we need to act proportionately to the breach. A community or individual who may become concerned about problems relating to the planning of an area can report these and further information on how to do this can be found on the Council's Web site at

[www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/planning-enforcement](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/planning/planning-enforcement).

93. This guidance should be read alongside the Broadland District Council and South Norfolk Council Planning Enforcement Strategy (available at [www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/downloads/file/130/planning-enforcement-strategy](http://www.southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk/downloads/file/130/planning-enforcement-strategy)) which explains how the Council approaches enforcement investigations.

## **4. Resources, Management and Monitoring**

### **Resources and management**

94. This section discusses the management of the involvement process and the resources available to the Council.
95. The Local Plan is managed by the Council's Place Shaping team, supported by officers from other Council departments who will provide expertise, support and advice during the process. Resources are designed to ensure that the production of the Local Plan and other Council strategies are linked and that community involvement events are coordinated where appropriate.
96. The Council will aim to make the best use of limited staff time and financial resources to prepare the Local Plan and involve people throughout the plan-making process. The aim is to work closely with those involved to understand and agree policies and proposals at an early stage so that fewer resources are needed at the examination stage. From previous experience of consulting on planning policy documents the use of time and effort at earlier stages can reduce the length of examination time.
97. The Council may use specialised agencies or consultants for specific parts of the Local Plan such as master planning or background evidence studies. Where appropriate they will be expected to undertake participation and involvement on their proposals and results which will be consistent with this document.
98. The planning application process is overseen by the Council's Development Management Team supported by officers from other Council departments who provide expertise, support and advice to Case Officers in the determination of planning applications. The Council work to make the best use of resources and hold regular Development Team meetings to discuss major planning applications.

### **Monitoring**

99. The SCI remains an important local planning document and it will be monitored and reviewed to check that the methods and techniques being used are still the most appropriate. The success and effectiveness of the SCI will be reviewed through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and a formal review/update of the SCI will be undertaken when necessary.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Duty to Co-operate consultees**

As required under the 2012 Planning Regulations (as amended by the National Treatment Agency (Abolition) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Consequential, Transitional and Saving Provisions) Order 2013):

- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- Natural England
- The Civil Aviation Authority

Homes England

- Integrated Care Systems (replacing Clinical Commissioning Groups)
- The National Health Service Commissioning Board

The Office of Rail and Road

- Integrated Transport Authorities
- Highway Authority (Norfolk County Council)
- The Marine Management Organisation
- *Neighbouring local planning authorities?*

Note that consultee specific to London are not included in this list. Note also the *Planning in Health – An Engagement Protocol between Local Planning Authorities, Public Health and the Health Sector Organisation in Norfolk (2017)* document. This document sets out engagement arrangements between Norfolk LPAs and the health sector on plan making and planning applications.

## **Appendix 2**

### **Local Plan/Neighbourhood Plan consultees**

#### **Local Plan - Specific consultation bodies**

In the Planning Policy making process, the Council has to consult a number of organisations which are known as either 'specific' or 'general' consultees. Many of the consultees required under the Duty to Cooperate (see Appendix 1) are also included in the list of 'specific' consultees below. Please note, as the legislation and regulations are frequently updated, the lists of consultees below may change over time and must be checked against the requirements set out in any new regulations.

The recent planning regulations set out the specific consultation bodies. Along with relevant government departments, the list contains the following bodies:

- The Coal Authority
- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- Highways England
- Norfolk County Council
- Broads Authority
- Parish and Town Councils
- Adjacent local authorities and parish/town councils
- NHS England
- Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care System
- Norfolk Constabulary
- Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- Relevant electricity and gas companies
- Relevant water and sewerage undertakers (Anglian Water)
- The Homes and Communities agency
- Local Enterprise Partnership (New Anglia)
- Local Nature Partnership (Wild Anglia)

## Local Plan - General consultation bodies

Through this Statement of Community Involvement the Council is committed to involving a wide range of other groups, organisations and interested individuals in the planning process. This will ensure that as many people as possible who are interested are involved in the future development of South Norfolk.

The list below provides some examples of general consultation bodies contacted by South Norfolk Council:

- Community groups (area and topic based)
- Local Members of Parliament
- Housing Associations
- Housebuilders
- Business and Commerce Organisations
- Economic Development agencies
- Educational bodies and schools

### Community Safety bodies

### Environment, heritage and amenity organisations

- Equal opportunities bodies
- Ethnic minority groups
- Disabled people's organisations
- Older People's groups
- Faith groups
- Health and social care groups

### Norfolk & Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust

### Doctors surgeries, health centres and hospitals

- Youth organisations
- Agents and developers
- Landowners
- Tourism bodies
- Transport bodies
- Sports and recreation organisations
- Health and Safety Executive
- Royal Mail
- Emergency Services
- Gypsy and Traveller organisations

- Design Review Panel
- Norfolk Historic Environment Service
- Utility and Service Providers

### Neighbourhood Plan - Statutory consultation bodies:

As set out in Schedule 1 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).

- Where the local planning authority is a London Borough, the Mayor of London
- A local planning authority, county council or parish council any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority
- The Coal Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited

A strategic highways company, any part of whose area is in or adjoins the neighbourhood area

Where the Secretary of State is the highway authority for any road in the area of a local planning authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the neighbourhood area, the Secretary of State for Transport

- The Marine Management Organisation
- Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies or who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus in any part of the area of the local planning authority

Where it exercises functions in any part of the neighbourhood area – a clinical commissioning group established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006; the National Health Service Commissioning Board; a person to whom a licence has been granted under the Electricity Act (1989) or the Gas Act (1986); a sewerage undertaker; and a water undertaker

Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit all or any part of the neighbourhood area

Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the neighbourhood area

Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the neighbourhood area

Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the neighbourhood area and

Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the neighbourhood area.



## **Appendix 3**

### **Consultation methods**

#### **Make consultation information and documents available on the Council's website, in our Council Office reception**

Consultation information can take a variety of formats, both formal and informal. Language will be straightforward, avoiding jargon and clearly explaining any technical terms. Consultation material will be made available for public inspection on the Council's website, through the Council's offices (the Horizon Centre and, where relevant, Diss Octagon) and may be sent to consultees directly where the Council considers this appropriate (anyone wishing to visit the Council office is asked to book an appointment beforehand, to ensure there will be someone available to deal with any enquiries during their visit). The Council may produce summary leaflets to present the highlights of a consultation in a shortened, more easily digestible format. Responses to consultations are preferred electronically via the website or email but paper copies of responses will also be accepted.

#### **Send out letters/emails to statutory/general consultees (as appropriate)**

The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 define two specific groups of consultation bodies for the purpose of plan making. These are specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies as set out in Appendix 2. The Regulations also require the Council to involve local businesses and businesses in the area as considered appropriate.

#### **Involve Local Councillors and Town/Parish Councils (as appropriate)**

The Council's elected Members and Town/Parish Councils will have an important role to play in distributing information to their communities and, in the case of elected Members through the Committee process, taking decisions about the content of Local Plan documents using the results of consultation. As with other decision taken through the democratic process the public will be able to make representations directly to their local member.

#### **Lodge copies of consultation material at libraries in the district in paper and/or electronic form (as appropriate)**

The Council recognises that not everyone has access to a computer at home on which to view consultation material so the Council will make consultation material available at libraries within South Norfolk in paper and/or electronic form. Details of library opening times and services are available from: [www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries-local-history-and-archives/libraries](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/libraries-local-history-and-archives/libraries).

#### **Engage local print and broadcast media (as appropriate)**

Press releases publicising the overall process(es), individual publications and events, important/controversial topics, feeding back results etc and formal press notices when required.

#### **Publish articles in the Council's Link magazine/ Parish Magazines (as appropriate)**

The Link magazine is the Council's twice-yearly newsletter delivered to every house, to include regular updates including timetables of events, progress on particular topics and feedback of results. The Council have also used Parish magazines to publish the Local Plan in the past but use of both of these sources depends upon being able to fit with publication deadlines.

### **Produce posters/notices for Town/Parish Council noticeboards and other methods of advertising (as appropriate)**

At appropriate stages in the consultation process the Council may produce posters/notices for Town and Parish Council to put on their noticeboards to advertise Local Plan consultations, exhibitions etc. Other forms of advertising could be used to target particular groups or areas. As well as local newspapers and parish magazines locations/methods could include radio advertising or adverts on beer mats (targeting the 18-35 age group), bus stops/tickets on particular route and hoardings close to particular sites/locations.

### **Hold exhibitions/meetings (as appropriate)**

These provide an opportunity for Council officers to present information about the Local Plan with opportunities for attendees to ask questions, provide verbal or written feedback on questionnaires, forms, discussion boards etc. These could be virtual or in-person events (or a mixture of both). For in-person events, the choice of times and venues will influence the types and number of people who attend and the Council will endeavour to hold exhibitions/meetings in venues with good accessibility for everybody and at times when people will be able to attend e.g. evenings and weekends. Specific meetings could be used to address particular groups and topics.

### **Facilitate Focus groups/workshops (as appropriate)**

These involve trained facilitators (external or from within the Council staff) gathering information, assisting discussion/debate and providing the opportunity to give feedback within a structured session; particularly useful in trying to engage hard to reach groups or for discussing specific topics. These could be virtual or in-person events (or a mixture of both).

### **Consult with Neighbourhood Planning bodies and take account of Parish Plans (as appropriate)**

Where these exist, they will provide a valuable source of information on the local community's views on a range of planning related issues.

### **Make use of social media (as appropriate)**

The way that the Council utilises the internet and social media is rapidly evolving. The Council is steadily expanding the use of web-based technology to enable direct access to its services across a range of devices and to allow people to interact directly with the Council online to make payments, submit comments, report problems etc. The Council will endeavour to extend the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter to publicise Local Plan consultations with the aim of engaging with 'hard to reach' groups such as young people.

## **Appendix 4**

### **Neighbourhood Planning Support**

Neighbourhood Planning was introduced into the planning system under the Localism Act 2011, and it enables parish/town councils (or neighbourhood forums, in areas without a parish council) to produce their own Neighbourhood Plan to guide the future development of their local area, setting out policies that shape the development and use of land. An adopted Neighbourhood Plan forms part of the statutory Development Plan for the district and, as a result is one of the primary considerations when determining planning applications affecting the parish/ Neighbourhood Plan area. Similarly, a Neighbourhood Development Order can be prepared by a community to allow certain types of development which meet the prescribed criteria. If adopted, it also forms part of the statutory Development Plan. Under the Localism Act, local planning authorities have a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to communities choosing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan.

Under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, the local planning authority is required to set out in its Statement of Community Involvement the advice and support that it can offer to communities that are involved in the preparation or modification of Neighbourhood Plans or Neighbourhood Development Orders in South Norfolk.

The range of support available from the Place Shaping team at South Norfolk Council is set out below.

Initial advice provided to town/parish councils (or Neighbourhood Plan groups) on the suitability, the process and the scope of neighbourhood planning, including an indication of the support available. This is usually best provided through a meeting with parish/town councillors.

Day-to-day advice and guidance via telephone/ email or by officer attendance at meetings (e.g., related to process, community engagement methods, evidence gathering, policy development etc).

Reviewing and commenting on draft documents that are produced by the Neighbourhood Plan steering group (e.g., timetable, consultation material, vision and objectives, draft plan etc).

Liaising with other relevant bodies and internal Council consultees (e.g., statutory consultees).

Funding advice and potential financial support for developing the Neighbourhood Plan

Support through the provision of various materials (e.g., hard copies and/or digitalised versions of maps, exhibition/ event display boards etc).

Deliver networking and training opportunities, including Neighbourhood Plan Network meetings and Community-led planning training sessions and other bespoke workshops/sessions relating to neighbourhood planning issues.

Development of a suite of guidance documents and templates to assist

Neighbourhood Plan steering groups in the district, including the 'Neighbourhood Planning Guidance' booklet, specimen terms-of-reference, a sustainability appraisal template, definitions of terms etc.

Producing a basic 'Parish Profile' document for newly-established Neighbourhood Plan steering groups, setting out key statistics, local plan policies and allocations, and statutory designations relevant to the Parish.

Overseeing of the production of the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA).

The Council will endeavour to accommodate the needs of the Neighbourhood steering groups, where appropriate and where resources are available. However, there are limits to the support that the Council is able to provide and there are some areas in which the Council will not be able to assist. General advice may be given but the Council will not be able to undertake matters such as:

Holding consultation exercises, distributing consultation questionnaires or collecting and analysing responses to consultations, other than for formal stages following submission of the Neighbourhood Plan to the District Council.

Providing project management or funding application services for the production of Neighbourhood Plans.

Preparation of tender documents for the employment of consultants to assist in the Neighbourhood Plan process.

Drafting the Neighbourhood Plan, or any part of the document.

The above lists are not exhaustive. For any further information regarding South Norfolk Council's Neighbourhood Plan support, please contact the Community Planning officers at: [neighbourhood.plans@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk](mailto:neighbourhood.plans@southnorfolkandbroadland.gov.uk).