

Statement of Community Involvement 2019

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1 Introduction

Lichfield District Council is committed to delivering excellent services to our local residents, businesses and service users. We see consultation as a vital part of this service.

We know that by engaging with our customers we can help deliver better quality development which meets their needs and those of future generations.

This document sets out our approach to consulting with you during the planning process and understanding your views.

What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains how we will engage our communities, businesses and other interested parties in the planning process when we prepare our planning policies and determine planning applications, including:

- Preparation, alteration and continuing review of the Local Plan, which is our development plan document;
- Preparation of other planning documents such as supplementary planning documents;
- Aspects of the neighbourhood planning process;
- Community Infrastructure Levy; and
- Development management decisions.

1.2 The Council is required to prepare and maintain a SCI by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This document also reflects the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, the Localism Act 2011 and the National Planning Policy Framework.

1.3 This SCI updates and supersedes the existing SCI which was adopted in 2016. We will review and update the SCI as necessary to reflect any future changes.

Why is community involvement in planning important?

1.4 Planning affects us all. The homes we live in, the places we work, the open spaces we enjoy and leisure facilities we use are all a result of planning policies and decisions. It is important to us that all sections of our community are given the opportunity to take part in the planning process at the earliest opportunity so that decisions can take into account the range of community views and reflects, as far as possible, the concerns and aspirations of the people affected by them.

1.5 This statement provides an overview of the District's profile to identify the key challenges that need to be overcome when consulting with our community and sets out our approach to community involvement in the plan making process and determining decisions on planning applications. The actions which are set out within this document represent a minimum requirement in relation to community involvement in the planning process. Depending on the scale and impact of what is being consulted upon the Council may undertake further consultation work which goes above and beyond the requirements of the SCI to ensure that comprehensive consultation has taken place.

If you need this in another format, such as large print, please call spatial policy and delivery on 01543 308192 or email developmentplans@lichfielddc.gov.uk

2 About our community

2.1 It is important to understand the dynamics of our community in order to recognise the needs of the District and the challenges that may arise during consultation. This chapter sets out some of the key challenges faced by our residents, businesses and interest groups when engaging in the planning process and then lists how we will seek to overcome them.

Key Challenge: Accessibility

2.2 Lichfield District has a population of 103,061 people according to the Office of National Statistics mid-year population estimates 2016, of which 77.2% are economically active which is higher than the regional average. Lichfield District is seen as an attractive commuter area for Birmingham and therefore almost half of residents commute outside of the District to work. Given the high levels of outer city commuting it may be difficult for some residents to access the Council offices during the working week.

2.3 Lichfield District is considered a relatively prosperous area when compared to the West Midlands region and in a national context. However within some of our communities there are pockets of deprivation. The cost associated with accessing these consultation documents could be a factor which restricts engagement.

To help overcome this challenge we will:

- Place all matters for consultation on our website so they are available when the Council's main office is closed and can be accessed via the internet at Staffordshire's libraries most of which are open on Saturdays.
- Provide a copy of the Local Plan to residents for free during its consultation stages upon request.

Key challenge: Digitalisation

2.4 Some people have difficulty in accessing the internet and struggle to navigate online to find the relevant consultation documents they want to respond to.

2.5 A number of planning documents can be technical and lengthy and slow internet access could restrict ease in utilising these documents.

To help overcome this challenge we will:

- Have officers available to provide assistance via the telephone to locate and understand the documents.
- Provide a copy of the Local Plan to residents who do not use the internet during consultation stages upon request.

Key challenge: Engaging the whole community

2.6 Whilst the demographics of different communities within the District vary considerably, the District is characterised by a larger than average proportion of over 65s. The overall population for the District is projected to increase by 4% between 2015 and 2025 with a significant growth in people aged over 65 and aged 85 and over.

2.7 It is important to try and engage with all ages, both old and young in the planning process to ensure the all age and interest groups are represented.

To help overcome this challenge we will:

- Seek to involve young people in decision making on planning issues through the use of more modern consultation tools, such as social media.
- Use accessible venues and facilities for exhibition events and have documents available in accessible formats on request.

2.8 The Council recognises that not everyone will want to get involved in the planning process. We also recognise that some residents, businesses and groups may have greater capacity than others to get involved, so where appropriate, we will try and support and encourage those who find it difficult to get involved within planning issues to engage in the planning process.

2.9 The following sections set out how we will engage with our communities in the plan making process and the planning application process.

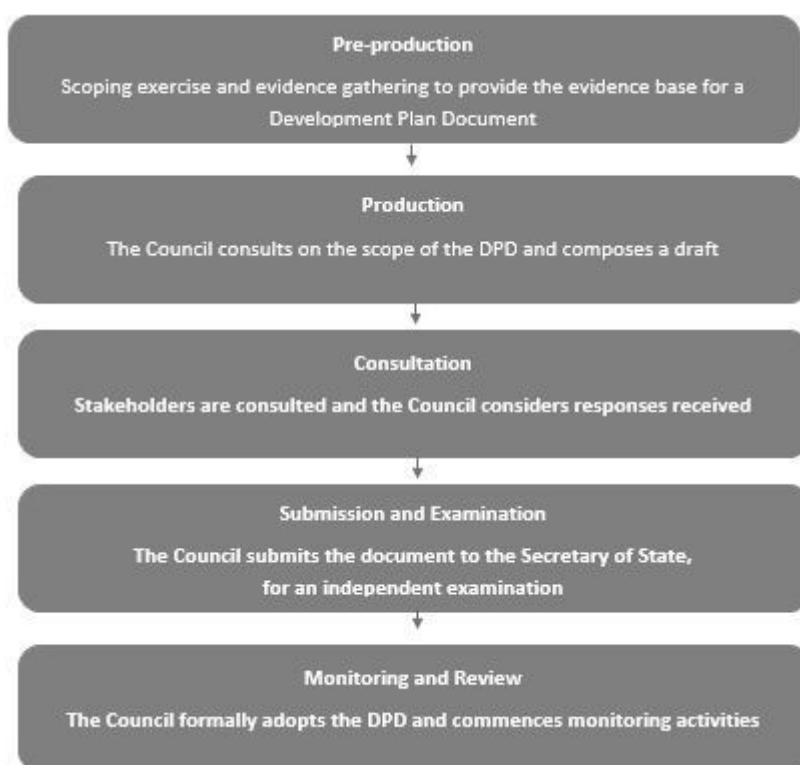
3 Community Involvement in Plan Making

Development Planning

3.1 Lichfield District Council is responsible for preparing development plan documents (DPDs) which are used to guide development proposals and determine planning applications. The development plan for Lichfield District comprises of the Local Plan Strategy and 'made' neighbourhood plans. The Local Plan Strategy was adopted in 2015 and provides the strategic vision and objectives that set out the Council's aspirations for the District's future, allocations and strategic sites for residential development and sets local planning policies to guide development. The Council is at an advanced stage with part two of its Local Plan - Local Plan Allocations Documents and is progressing a review of its Local Plan.

3.2 Figure 3.1 below outlines the key stages of plan preparation.

Figure 3.1 Indicative stages in the preparation of a DPD



3.3 The Council publishes the details of its DPDs in the [Local Development Scheme](#). The Local Development Scheme sets out the programme for plan preparation and provides a starting point for residents, stakeholders and interested parties to find out which documents are being prepared and the timetable for their publication. To ensure the Local Development Scheme is up to date it is reviewed every five years in line with statutory requirements and is reported every year within the [Authority Monitoring Report](#).

Sustainability Appraisal

3.4 A Sustainability Appraisal (SA) must be undertaken as part of the Local Plan process. The purpose of the SA is to assess the social, environmental and economic effects of the Local Plan. The first stage of the SA is the production of a scoping report to identify the key sustainability issues for the area. Following the scoping report, subsequent versions of the SA are produced to accompany each stage of the plan making process and published for consultation at the same time.

Supplementary Planning Documents

3.5 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are designed to support and add further guidance to policies in the Local Plan. These documents are prepared with the involvement of the local community and interested parties. The consultation period will be a minimum four and maximum of six weeks. Whilst they are not subject to independent examination they are adopted by the Council under the authorisation process.

Community Infrastructure Levy

3.6 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local authorities to raise funds from developers undertaking new building projects in their area. The money can be used to fund a wide range of infrastructure that is needed for development. The Community Infrastructure Levy (Amendment) Regulations 2012 apply to the production of CIL. The Council adopted its CIL Charging Schedule in April 2016.

3.7 The first stage of consultation on CIL is the Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule which takes place over a six week period. The next consultation stage is the publication of the Draft Charging Schedule. It is consulted on for a six week period and any person can make representations and if requested to do so they will be heard before the Inspector at the CIL examination. If the Council make significant changes to the Draft Charging Schedule following the publication stage then we will produce a 'statement of modifications' which is advertised for a four week period. Prior to adoption, the Charging Schedule will be examined in public by an independent inspector.

Other Documents

3.8 Under the provisions of the Habitats Directive, the Council must carry out an assessment of whether a plan or project will significantly affect the integrity of any European Site, in terms of impacting the sites conservation objectives. The Habitats Regulations Assessment is prepared and consulted on as a statutory requirement of the Local Plan. Other evidence base documents will be prepared and whilst not subject to formal public consultation, if anyone wishes to comment on these documents they can email or write in and the Council will respond accordingly.

3.9 Neighbourhood Plans set out policies and guidance for development and land uses in a parish or neighbourhood area. Lichfield District has a number of Neighbourhood Plans at various stages and once 'made' they become part of the statutory development plan. The community involvement associated with the preparation of neighbourhood plans is explained later in this section.

Who will we consult?

3.10 The Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012 sets out the legal requirements for consultation and public engagement during the preparation of planning policy documents.

3.11 Government regulations identify 'specific consultation bodies' including organisations such as Natural England, Environment Agency and Historic England that we are required to consult. In addition we will consult 'general consultation bodies'. Whilst not an exhaustive list, Appendix A provides further details of the organisations and interested parties the Council consults.

Join our consultation database

The Council maintains a database of all its consultees which it reviews and updates. Any individual or organisation can contact the Spatial Policy & Delivery team and request to be added to the database and notified of future consultations.

When will we engage?

3.12 The regulations outline the various stages in the preparation process for each of the types of planning document and when we must formally consult on the document. Whilst we will meet these requirements we also consider that significant effort should be made to try and engage people during the initial plan making stages, when there is the greater opportunity to influence policies and strategies.

How will we engage?

3.13 In addition to meeting the statutory consultation requirements, we will utilise a range of consultation techniques where applicable to enable greater involvement in the plan preparation process. The following techniques will be applied where appropriate: press releases, send an email to interested parties, a 'wrap around' newspaper advert, placing paper copies of the documents in libraries, presenting to parish forums and exhibitions. We will consider utilising social media and mobile phone applications where appropriate, as advised by our communications team.

3.14 The following tables set out the key stages, statutory requirements and potential additional consultation methods that will be utilised in the preparation of development plan documents, supplementary planning documents and the community infrastructure levy respectively.

Table 3.1 Key stages and consultation methods in the preparation of Development Plan Documents

Development Plan Documents (DPD)		
Stage	Statutory Requirements	Additional actions
Plan preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal engagement with relevant consultation bodies to identify the key issues and scope of the document. Issue a press release. Additional consultation techniques such as present to Parish Forums where appropriate and resource will allow.
Publication of Draft (Regulation 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seek views on whether the Local Plan and its accompanying suite of documents are legally compliant and sound. Make the documents available for at least 6 weeks via the Council's website and at the District Council House. Make the documents available in alternative formats on request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a press release. Send out notifications to consultee bodies and those who have asked to be notified of consultations. Publish documents online and make them available in our libraries and principal office. Promote use of website and online response forms. Additional consultation techniques such as public exhibitions where appropriate and resources will allow.
Submission (Regulation 22)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a copy of the Local Plan, Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environment Assessment Report, Policies Map, Statement of representations, copy of the representations, supporting documents a statement of fact of where the above documents are available for inspection at and when, on the Council's website and at the District Council House. Send out notifications to each of the general consultation bodies and specific consultation bodies to notify them of the documents availability. Notify those who have requested to be notified that the Plan has been submitted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a press release.
Examination with oral hearings (if necessary) (Regulation 24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notify any person who has made a representation and not withdrawn it of the date, time and place at which the hearing is to be held and the name of the person appointed to carry out the independent examination 6 weeks prior to the opening of a hearing. Publish the notification on the Council's website and advertise it at the District Council House. Undertake any other notification that the Inspector and Programme Officer Request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake further notifications/consultation should it be considered appropriate. Publish documents relevant to the examination on the Council's website. Issue a press release.
Modifications (if necessary)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake further consultation as required by the Inspector and make the documents available on the Council's website and at the District Council House. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a press release.

Development Plan Documents (DPD)		
Stage	Statutory Requirements	Additional actions
Publication of the Inspectors Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publish the Inspector's report for at least 6 weeks on the Council's website and at the District Council House. ● Make the report available in alternative formats on request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issue a press release.
Adoption and Publication (Regulation 26)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Publish the Local Plan, adoption statement and environmental report for 6 weeks and make the Local Plan available thereafter until it is withdrawn via the Council's website and at the District Council House. ● Make the report available in alternative formats on request. ● Notify any person or body that made a representation or asked to be notified of the adoption. ● Notify the Secretary of State. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Issue a press release.

Table 3.2 Key stages and consultation methods in the preparation of supplementary planning documents

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)		
Stage	Statutory Requirements	Additional options
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal engagement with relevant consultation bodies to identify the key issues and scope of the document. Issue a press release. Additional consultation techniques such as present to Parish Forums where appropriate and resource will allow.
Publication of Draft (Regulation 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make the document available for between 4 and 6 weeks via the Council's website and at the District Council House. Make the document available in alternative formats on request. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consultation with consultation bodies and community involvement where appropriate and resources will allow. Issue a press release. Consultation with neighbours if the SPD is site specific. Promote use of website and online response forms.
Adoption and Publication (Regulation 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider the representations received through the consultation and make amendments/modifications necessary before adopting. Once adopted, produce an adoption statement, a consultation statement and make the document available for 3 months and thereafter (until the document is withdrawn) via the Council's website and at the District Council House. Make the document available in alternative formats on request. Notify any person or body that made a representation or who asked to be notified of the adoption. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a press release.

3.15 The process for preparing SPDs is the same process that will be used to prepare and review the Statement of Community Involvement.

Table 3.3 Key stages and consultation methods in the preparation of community infrastructure levy

Community Infrastructure Levy		
Stage	Statutory Requirements	Additional options
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No specific requirements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informal engagement with relevant consultation bodies and stakeholders to identify the key issues and scope of the document.
Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule (Regulation 15)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Send out notifications to each of the consultation bodies inviting them to make representations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a press release. Make documents available on the Council's website and at the District Council House.
Publication of Draft Charging Schedule (Regulation 16)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish the draft charging schedule, relevant evidence and statement of representation for 6 weeks on the Council's website and at the District Council House. Send a copy of the draft charging schedule and statement of representations procedure to each of the consultation bodies. Place a local advertisement notice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote use of the website and online response forms.
Submission (Regulation 19)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a copy of the draft charging schedule, evidence and statement of representation of where the above documents are available inspection at and when, on the Council's website and at the District Council House. Send out notifications to each of the general consultation bodies and specific consultation bodies to notify them of the documents availability. Notify those who have requested to be notified on the submission of the draft charging schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a press release.
Examination (Regulation 21)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Publish details of examination and the inspector on the Council's website. Notify those whose have made representations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a press release.
Approval and publication (Regulation 25)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once adopted, produce an adoption statement, a consultation statement and make the document available for 3 months and thereafter (until the document is withdrawn) via the Council's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Issue a press release.

Community Infrastructure Levy		
Stage	Statutory Requirements	Additional options
	<p>website and at the District Council House.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make the document available in alternative formats on request. • Notify any person or body that made a representation or who asked to be notified of the adoption. 	

How can you respond to the consultations?

3.16 There are many ways in which you can respond to consultations on the Lichfield Local Plan and other development plan documents, supplementary planning documents or community infrastructure levy. Consultations will be publicised on line and in accordance with the methods set out in the tables above. You can respond in the following ways:

- By using our online consultation system;
- By emailing us at: developmentplans@lichfielddc.gov.uk;
- By writing to us at: Spatial Policy & Delivery, Lichfield District Council, Frog Lane, Lichfield, WS13 6YZ; or
- If you have any issues with any of the above you can also phone us on 01543 308000 and a member of the team will be able to assist you.

What will we do with the comments?

3.17 All comments received as part of a planning policy consultation process will be collated, analysed and taken into consideration in the preparation of the next stages of the plan process. Comments will be reviewed and considered by planning officers and where appropriate changes will be proposed. There may be instances where the Council considers that it is not appropriate to amend the plan to accommodate the views of a respondent.

3.18 The results of consultations will be published on the Council's website and a Statement of Consultation will be prepared for each statutory consultation stage. The comments received to any consultation cannot be treated as confidential, however, personal information will not be made publically available in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

Neighbourhood Planning

3.19 The Localism Act 2011 introduced new rights and powers for communities to shape new development by preparing a Neighbourhood Plan and grant planning permission through Neighbourhood Development Orders and Community Right to Build Orders. Neighbourhood plans are prepared by the community, they can be simple or go into considerable detail. They set out local planning policies in relation to that area but they still have to be in line with national and local policy.

3.20 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 sets out the requirements for publicity and consultation in relation to the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders. Depending on how advanced the neighbourhood plan is, it is the responsibility of either the qualifying body such as the town or parish council or Lichfield District Council to publicise the consultation.

Interested in helping shape your local area

For more information on neighbourhood planning including information on how to start preparing a neighbourhood plan please visit the following websites:

- www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplans
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/localism-act-2011-overview

What will we do to help with neighbourhood plan process?

3.21 The Council will provide advice and assistance to any neighbourhood plan group seeking to prepare a neighbourhood plan. We will fulfill our statutory obligations such as to share our evidence base, publicise the designation of a neighbourhood area on our website and issue a press release. It should be noted that in developing a neighbourhood plan, most of the responsibility for consulting the community affected falls to the parish council.

3.22 Once a plan has been prepared and consulted on by the community, it will be submitted to the Council and we will provide advice to ensure it meets the relevant legislation and conforms with the Local Plan. The Council will consult on the plan and publicise the details of plan including where it can be inspected on the Council's website and also issue a press release. We will then organise an independent examination of the document in collaboration with the relevant parish council.

3.23 If the document is considered to meet the requirements by the independent examiner and the Council is also satisfied it does then it will be subject to a referendum by the community and businesses affected. This will be co-ordinated by the Council and we will make all of the documents available to view on the Council's website and at the Council House.

4 Community Involvement in Planning Applications

Development Management

4.1 Development Management consider the detailed proposals that are submitted to the District Council for consideration and any breaches of planning control.

4.2 The proposals are submitted to the District Council in a wide variety of applications and are considered against current legislation, national guidance, the Development Plan (currently the Lichfield Local Plan Strategy, made Neighbourhood Plans and the Staffordshire County Council Minerals and Waste Local Plans where appropriate) and relevant adopted SPDs. The involvement of our customers is important and enables them to be better informed which assists us in the delivery of sustainable development.

4.3 The Council deals with on average around 1200 planning applications per year. This includes applications for listed building consent, advertisement consent, applications for prior notification, certificates of lawfulness and amendments. In addition the Council receives on average 200 discharge of condition applications and 300 planning enforcement enquiries per year.

4.4 The Government has set out minimum standards for consultation on planning applications in the National Planning Practice Guidance and Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2015 (DMPO) as amended. There are three categories of application, which require differing levels of publicity:

1. All applications subject to an environmental assessment. All applications which are a departure from the Development Plan and all applications affecting public rights of way are required to be publicised by the display of a notice on the site for a minimum of 21 days excluding bank holidays, and by the placing of an advertisement in a local newspaper. This is in addition to any of the requirements pertinent to the scale of the development set out in the table below.
2. Applications defined as “major” applications by the DMPO are required to be publicised by the display of a site notice or letters written to adjoining owners/occupiers of land, and by placing an advertisement in a local newspaper.
3. If an application does not fall in the above categories, then it is required to be publicised by the display of a site notice or by letter to adjoining occupiers/owners.

4.5 Applications for listed building consent, applications affecting the setting of a listed building, or the character or appearance of a conservation area require publicity by way of a site notice and a newspaper advertisement. The requirements for publicity are set out in Regulation 5 and 5A of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Regulations 1990 (as amended).

4.6 The table below illustrates our approach to planning application publicity, it shows what we are required to do to meet the statutory requirements and what actions we will take over and above these statutory requirements.

Table 4.1 Approach to planning application publicity

	Type of development	What we are required to do	Additional actions
Major	<p>For dwellings: where 10 or more are to be constructed (or if no number given, the area is more than 0.5 hectare).</p> <p>For all other uses: where the floorspace will be 1000sq.m or more (or site is 1 hectare or more).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write to all adjoining owners or occupiers or post a site notice. Press Notice. Details published on the Council's website Full details available at the Council's principal office-District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield. Notify the appropriate Town or Parish Council of the application. Consult with statutory consultees online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise applicants to consider public meetings exhibitions as appropriate. Advise applicants of and encourage engagement with the pre- application advice service available including the Development Team approach. See Council's website Consult adjoining local authorities where appropriate. For larger housing schemes applicants will be encouraged to prepare and consult the community on a master plan for the development. Consult with non-statutory consultees.
Minor	<p>Minor development is development which does not meet the criteria for Major Development or the definitions of change of use or householder developments.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write to all adjoining owners or occupiers or post a site notice. If affecting the setting of a conservation area also do a press notice. Details published on the Council's website Full details available at the Council's principal office-District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield. Notify the appropriate Town or Parish Council of the application. Consult with statutory consultees online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise applicants of and encourage engagement with the pre-application advice service available including the Development Team approach. See Council's website Consult with non-statutory consultees.
Other	<p>This includes the following categories:</p> <p>Change of Use: Applications that do not concern major development or where no building or engineering work is involved.</p> <p>Householder Development: Defined as works within the curtilage of residential property which require an application for planning permission and are not a change of use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write to all adjoining owners or occupiers or post a site notice. Applications within a conservation area that affect its character or affect the setting of a Listed Building are subject to a site notice and press notice. Details published on the Council's website Full details available at the Council's principal office-District Council House, Frog Lane, Lichfield. Notify the appropriate Town or Parish Council of the application. Consult with statutory consultees online. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advise applicants of the pre-application advice which is available and encouraged with written advice provided. See Council's website Consult with non-statutory consultees.

4.7 All consultees and neighbours are given a minimum of 21 days to comment/respond, excluding bank holidays as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Authority Consultations) England Order 2018. Where necessary consultees will be given longer to reflect statutory timescales where specified by legislation. Anyone can respond to a consultation. In addition to individuals who might be directly affected, community groups and specific interest groups (national as well as local in some cases) may wish to provide representations.

4.8 If any significant amendments are received in relation to any of the above categories, we undertake to carry out a further round of consultation. The extent of this re-consultation is dependent upon the scale of the amendments – writing to those (directly) affected and the local Parish/Town Council, if necessary. It is at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority as to the need and length of re-consultation, however we normally allow a minimum 10 days from the date of the re-consultation letter to respond. Although, we may carry out a full 21 day re-consultation process as appropriate, or where it is an EIA application.

Other Consultations

4.9 In addition to the above applications, we also carry out consultation on the following categories:

- Erection or replacement of telecommunication masts - We will write to all occupiers within 100 metres of the site and the relevant Parish Council to seek specific comment.
- Wind Turbines - We will write to all occupiers within 500m of the site and the Parish Council to seek their specific comments
- Permission in Principle and Technical Details Consent - We will for 14 days, excluding bank holidays, display a site notice; have a notice on our website; notify the appropriate Parish or Town Council of the application; consult with statutory consultees online as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) (Amendment) Order 2017.

Other applications where consultation is not required

4.10 Certain types of application do not require or allow consultation with anyone under the legislation. This includes non-material amendment applications i.e where a more minor change is proposed to an approved scheme after the planning decision has been made. This process is only generally used where the change is small relative to the size of the overall development or where the change would have no impact to anyone. We are not required to consult on condition compliance applications - this is when details are submitted to the Council to confirm the details submitted for the purposes of any 'conditions' placed on a planning permission; for 'prior notifications' in relation to certain types of agricultural development; and, in relation to certificates of lawfulness for proposed development, where the application is seeking a determination of whether or not the development needs planning permission.

Openness and transparency

4.11 We aim to make the planning application process as open and transparent as possible. All recent planning application documents are available online and only information exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is withheld from public view. We also publish advice intended to guide users of the service through the system – this is available on the Council's website <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk>

4.12 Applicants are encouraged to discuss proposals in advance and we have a pre-application (fee applicable) process and a Duty Officer system is in place during morning office hours to ensure that professional advice is available. By appointment, officers are prepared to visit individual occupiers to explain planning applications, if the need arises.

Pre-application Discussions

4.13 All potential applicants are encouraged to hold informal discussions with Council Officers prior to formally submitting an application. This allows for concerns and issues to be raised and where possible resolved at an early stage in the process. Where appropriate, the views of other professionals (e.g. highway officers) will be sought. As of 2014 the Council started charging for pre-application discussions. Full details of the fees and minimum level of information required are available on the Council's website <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/preapplicationadvice>

4.14 In the case of major applications prospective applicants are encouraged to present at a Development Team meeting. This includes relevant officers from the Council and statutory consultees. Local Councillors are also encouraged to be involved where necessary. Pre-application discussions are in confidence (subject to the relevant provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and Freedom of Information Act) although applicants are advised on how to involve Parish/ Town Councils, neighbours and/or the wider community (e.g. Civic Society) at an appropriate point.

4.15 The Council will encourage applicants/developers to undertake appropriate consultation with the local community prior to applications being submitted. Officers will provide further pre-application advice in writing. The Council's Protocol for Pre-application Discussions on Planning Applications sets out the detailed commitment/requirements to this procedure. This can be found on the Council's website <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/preapplicationadvice>

4.16 Developers will be encouraged on appropriate major housing development to prepare a master plan. The master plan should include the phasing of development and associated infrastructure, community and recreational facilities, safe routes for cyclists and pedestrians etc. Applicants will be encouraged to consult widely on the master plan with the community, neighbours and residents associations at public meetings and/or exhibitions and to indicate any changes to the plan resulting from the consultation. The Council will only undertake consultation on formal planning applications submitted.

How do we involve our customers during the processing of an application?

4.17 Any comments, also referred to as representations, which are received on an application are considered by a planning officer, who will weigh these with other related issues (such as the planning policies of the District Council and national planning guidance) in the assessment of the development proposal before reaching a recommendation.

4.18 By law, all comments received must be open to public inspection. We publish comments on the website, although personal data, such as signatures, email address and telephone numbers will be removed (redacted). However, the names and addresses of those people who commented on the application is published.

4.19 Any complaints will be dealt with in the same manner as a corporate complaint. Any representations received about a planning application are taken into consideration in the determination of planning applications, although we can only take into account material planning considerations. Advice on commenting on a planning application is available at www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/Council/Planning/Planning-guidance/Commenting-on-a-planning-application

4.20 Offensive, racist, discriminatory, threatening and other statements that are not relevant will not be published. These comments will not furthermore be taken into consideration in the determination of the application. Due to the legal requirement to make representations available for public inspection, we cannot accept anonymity or comments marked 'private or confidential'.

How do we involve our customers when the application goes to Committee?

4.21 All planning application decisions contain a report on the proposal and this report contains a summary of all representations received from local residents, the Parish Council and other relevant consultees etc. All comments are considered in reaching a decision on the application. All reports written by Planning Officers are available to view either on the Council's website or on request. The more significant or controversial applications are presented to the Council's Planning Committee for their consideration whilst others are delegated by the District Council to senior officers to determine as they fall within the Council's approved 'Scheme of Delegation'.

4.22 The Planning Committee currently meets monthly generally on a Monday evening at the District Council Offices Frog Lane, Lichfield either in the Council Chamber or the Committee Room and is open to members of the public. A report is prepared by the Planning Officer making certain recommendations to the Committee to either approve or refuse the proposal. It is for the Committee to decide to either accept or reject these recommendations, as long as they have good planning reasons to do so. As part of the deliberations of the Committee, members of the public, local interest groups, non-Committee ward members, applicants or agents can make verbal submissions directly to the Committee. Detailed advice on the operations of this process and copies of all reports to and minutes of the Council's Planning Committee are published on the Council's website <https://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk/planningcommittee>

How do we involve our customers after a decision is taken on a planning application?

4.23 Once a planning application is determined, the decision is publicised on the Council's website <http://www.lichfielddc.gov.uk>

4.24 Often there are conditions attached to any grant of consent and if there are concerns from local residents or others that the development is not being carried out in accordance with those conditions, then by contacting the Council, investigations can be carried out to ensure that the development is implemented in the correct manner. Decision notices contain detailed reasons for refusal and reasons for all conditions imposed upon any permission. Where developer contributions are available the Council will be open and transparent about the intended use of those monies. Details on how applicants can appeal are contained within all decision notices issued by the Council. There is no third party right of appeal.

How do we involve our customers if an appeal is received on a planning application?

4.25 If a planning application is refused or conditions are imposed on a permission that an applicant is unhappy with, the applicant has the right of appeal against the Council's decision to the independent Planning Inspectorate. Applicants can choose whether to have their appeal decided through an exchange of correspondence (known as written representations), at an informal hearing or at a more formal Public Inquiry. All domestic householder appeals, advertisements and some small scale commercial appeals are exclusively dealt with through a fast track appeal system, in which no further comments at the appeal stage are accepted by the Planning Inspectorate and only comments received by the time the application is determined are taken into consideration by the Planning Inspector. Whichever option is chosen, those who originally commented, and any interested parties, on the planning application are invited to make further representations directly to the Planning Inspectorate. An independent Inspector is then appointed to review the case. If the matter is to be heard by an Inspector at either an informal hearing or a Public Inquiry then the interested parties including local residents and amenity groups will be invited to make verbal submissions directly to the Inspector. The applicant and District Council also appear at the hearing or Inquiry. Whilst the appeal process is an independent process operated by the Planning Inspectorate, some of the administration (notifying people of relevant dates etc.) is undertaken by the District Council.

How else do we involve our customers?

- We will visit individual's homes, upon request, if residents are disabled or housebound to explain development proposals;
- We provide planning advice and guidance on the Council [website](#);
- We display all planning application details on the Council [website](#);
- We accept comments on planning applications via the Councils [website](#), email or through letter;
- We have a Duty Planning Officer who can provide verbal advice between 08.45 and 12.15 Monday to Fridays;

- We have a dedicated name planning case officer for every application; and
- We have public speaking at Planning Committee (subject to certain criteria) - more advice is available on the Council's website regarding this.

5 Monitoring and Review

5.1 The Council will monitor the success of community involvement through its [Authority Monitoring Report](#) (AMR).

5.2 The AMR monitors the number of users of the District Council's on line consultation portal and the levels of engagement from members of the public and other stakeholders to public engagement opportunities, such as consultation at the various stages of the Local Plan production. The AMR also tracks the number of visits to our web pages.

5.3 The AMR is produced annually and a review of the SCI will be considered where there has been a particularly low level of community participation or issues have emerged in terms of its implementation and significant changes are required to meet new circumstances or legislation requirements.

5.4 The Council also has a [complaints and compliments procedure](#) to help us improve our services to our customers and this involves an annual report to the Standards Committee.

How can you get in touch if you have any queries about the Statement of Community Involvement?

For queries related to the Statement of Community Involvement please contact Spatial Policy & Delivery:

**Spatial Policy & Delivery
Lichfield District Council
Frog Lane
Lichfield
WS136YZ**

Email: developmentplans@lichfielddc.gov.uk
Phone: **01543 308000**

6 Appendix A - Consultees

6.1 As defined in the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2012) as amended and the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (as amended):

Specific consultation bodies

- The Coal Authority
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Local Bodies (a relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the local planning authority's area) including Town & Parish Councils
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- NHS
- Utilities Providers

General consultation bodies

6.2 In accordance with the regulations general consultation bodies must be consulted where the council considers it appropriate. These may include voluntary groups and those which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups; disabled persons; different religious groups and persons carrying on business in Lichfield District.

6.3 Further guidance on statutory and non-statutory consultees is set out in national guidance online: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/consultation-and-pre-decision-matters>