



2007-2008
*Neighbourhood and
Community Champions:
The Role of Elected Members*
2006-2007
*Improving Rural Services
Empowering Communities*
2005-2006
Getting Closer to Communities

South Somerset District Council



Statement of Community Involvement

July 2007



FOREWORD

I am pleased to present our Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), one of the key documents that make up the Local Development Framework for South Somerset.

Planning is an important consideration in many aspects of our lives from the protection of our historic landscape and features to the location of the homes we live in and the places we work.

In the past the Local Plan has been the main tool with which the Council has regulated planning. However, new government legislation now replaces Local Plans with Local Development Frameworks. These consist of a portfolio or folder of documents including the SCI.

South Somerset District Council has a history of successful engagement with its local communities and is committed to building on its reputation for successful community involvement. This document explains how the community can be involved in the production of the documents that go to make up the Local Development Framework and also how the community will be engaged in the planning application process.

I hope that you will take the opportunity to be involved in the new system.

Cllr Peter Seib
Portfolio Holder Economic Development, Planning & Transport

CONTENTS

1	The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	1
2	The Local Development Framework (LDF)	3
3	Local Development Framework (LDF) Documents	5
4	Preparation of Local Development Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents	9
5	Planning applications	17
6	Resources available for Community Involvement	27
7	The Statement of Community Involvement – Monitoring and Mechanisms for Review	29
Table 1	Development Plan Documents	10
Table 2	Supplementary Planning Documents	13
Table 3	Pre-application Community Involvement in Planning Applications	20
Appendix 1	Definition of terms	31
Appendix 2	Consultation Bodies	33
Appendix 3	Methods of Engagement for Development Plan Documents & Supplementary Planning Documents	39

***If you need this document in large print, Braille, audio or another language, please contact the Planning Policy Team at The Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil, BA20 2HT.
If you have hearing difficulties and have access to a Textphone call: (01935) 462440***

1. THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 1.1 In 2004 the Government introduced The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. This Act states that the system of Local Plans shall be replaced with the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 1.2 The new LDF process, in comparison to the Local Plan process, requires the Local Planning Authority (LPA) to prepare a number of different documents. One of the documents that the LPA is required to prepare is the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
- 1.3 This Draft SCI outlines the different documents that the Council is required to prepare under the LDF system. It also sets out how the Council will involve and engage with the community on these planning applications and on the documents. An important change regarding planning applications is the proposals for pre-application consultation which is explained in detail in part 8 of this document.
- 1.4 One of the key objectives of the SCI is to encourage continuous community involvement in the planning process and to provide opportunities for involvement and participation for those who wish to be involved in planning matters. It is hoped that through the methods and processes outlined in this document you will have a clear understanding of how you can be involved and be encouraged to take an active part in planning matters. The Council is keen to build on its reputation for actively engaging with the community and by setting out its approach in relation to planning. In this document it makes it clear to all the level of engagement that can be expected.
- 1.5 By engaging in the planning process you will be able to help shape your environment, make a positive contribution for the future and help to ensure that the Council is aware of local issues. By getting involved in the process at an early stage problems and aspirations can be highlighted and addressed.

2. THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 2.1 The Local Development Framework (LDF) comprises a number of different documents that will provide the Council's policies for meeting the community's social, environmental and economic aims for the future.
- 2.2 The LDF will be linked to the Community Strategy, as it will play a key part in the delivery of the spatial elements of the Strategy. The Local Strategic Partnership produces the Community Strategy and includes amongst others Avon & Somerset Constabulary, The Environment Agency, South Somerset Primary Care Trust, Yeovil College and South Somerset District Council collectively the Partnership is called South Somerset Together.
- 2.3 The current Community Strategy - "Improving the Quality of Life in South Somerset" Community Strategy 2003 – 2006 has eight themes including "Improving Prosperity", "Better Health and Social Care" and "Quality of the Environment". Under each theme there is a list of aims that the Partnership will work together to try to achieve. It is currently being reviewed and is due to be completed by the end of March 2007. Further information regarding the Community Strategy can be found in paragraph 3.5 of this document and at www.southsomersettogether.org.uk
- 2.4 The LDF should also be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). This sets the regional planning context for the Local Development Framework and all development plan documents should be in compliance with national and regional guidance. The RSS is produced by the South West Regional Assembly as Regional Planning Body, the draft version was submitted to the Government Office for the South West in June 2006. Further information can be found at www.southwest-ra.gov.uk
- 2.5 The Development Plan Documents (DPD) that make up the LDF together with the RSS and the Somerset & Exmoor National Park Structure Plan will form the Development Plan. This means that these will form the basis for decision making in terms of processing planning applications.
- 2.6 In comparison to the local plan system, the LDF process is a continuous process changing over time reflecting and determined by emerging priorities. The LDF timetable is detailed in the South Somerset Draft Local Development Scheme (LDS) 2007 – 2010. The LDS can be viewed on the South Somerset District Council web site (www.southsomerset.gov.uk) or at any of the following district council offices:
Brympton Way, Yeovil
Petters House, Petters Way, Yeovil

Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard
Old Kelways, Somerton Road, Langport
Churchfields, Wincanton

Important Note:
Progress of the LDS is reviewed as part of the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) and changes may result.

3. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK (LDF) DOCUMENTS

3.1 An LDF comprises the following Local Development Documents (LDDs):

- (a) **The Local Development Scheme (LDS):**
The LDS is a 3 year work programme that outlines the various documents the Council will produce and a timetable for the preparation of those documents.
- (b) **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):**
The SCI sets out the ways in which the local community will be consulted and involved both during the production of planning documents and also planning applications.
- (c) **The Adopted Local Plan:**
If the Local Planning Authority has an adopted local plan then that plan will form part of the LDF and be saved for a period of three years from the date of adoption (in the case of the South Somerset Local Plan 27th April 2006 to 26th April 2009). During that three year period LDDs will replace the saved policies.
- (d) **Development Plan Documents (DPDs):**

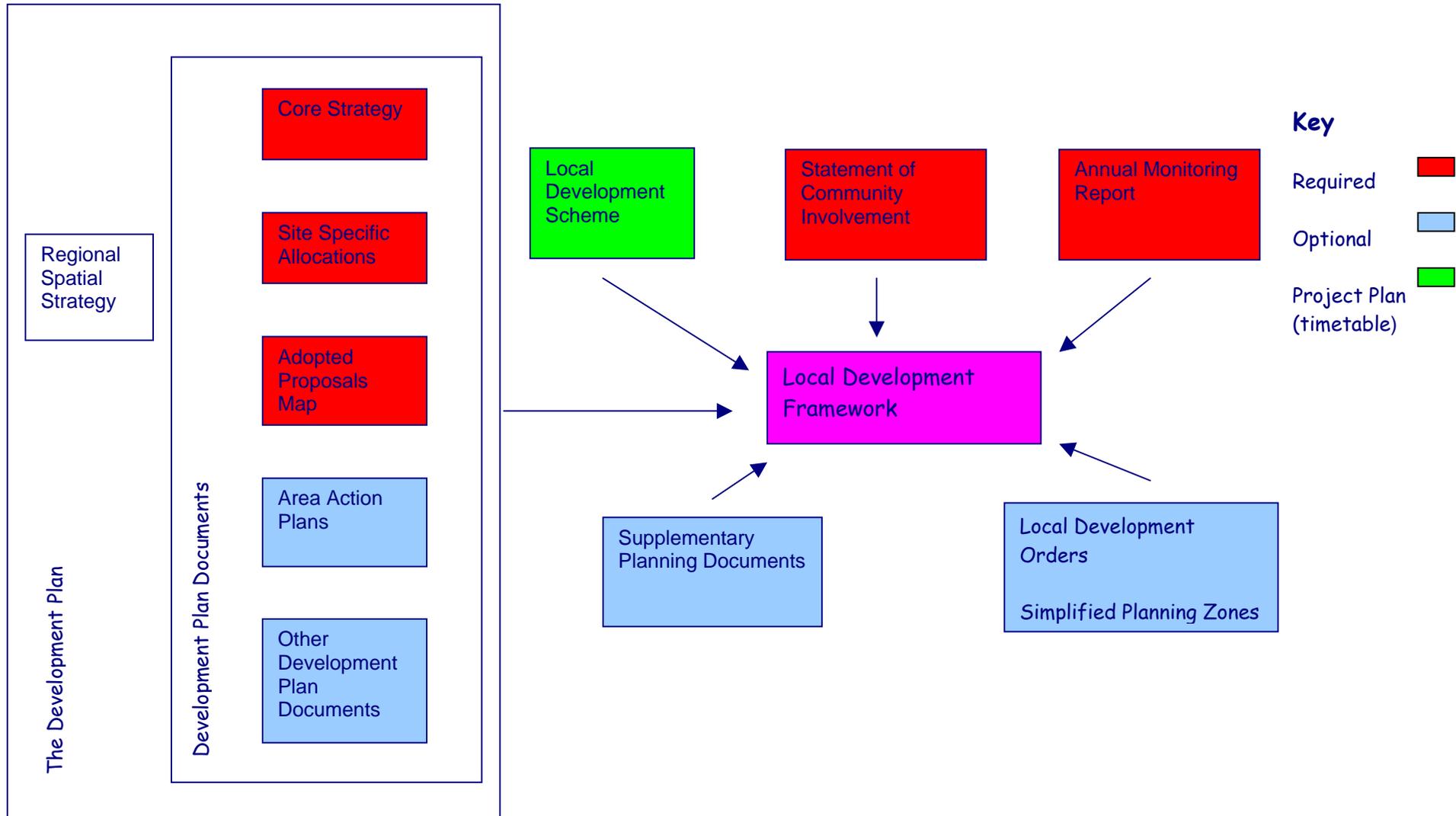
DPDs are those documents that are subject to independent examination and will have the

weight of development plan status. DPDs include:

- (i) **Core Strategy:**
This sets out the spatial vision and objectives and core policies for development within South Somerset up to 2021. It will indicate how many dwellings will be built to meet the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). It will also include strategic policies about employment growth, protection of countryside, the historic environment and transport infrastructure. It will also outline the need to ensure that development is accompanied by community infrastructure and facility provision.
- (ii) **Area Action Plans (AAPs):**
These documents will provide the planning framework for a particular identified area where redevelopment and/or enhancement schemes are proposed. They can range in scale dependent upon identified needs and priorities, for example, a town centre or a Conservation Area.

- (iii) **Adopted Proposals Map:**
This will provide a visual illustration of the policies contained in the Development Plan Documents. Amendments will be made to the proposals map to accord with changes to development plan documents.
 - (iv) **Site specific allocations of land:**
This document will show areas of land that have been allocated for particular land uses, for example, housing, employment or a mix of uses
 - (v) **Other development plan documents:**
These could include documents relating to a specific topic, for example, housing and employment. The LDS for South Somerset includes a **Generic Development Control Policies** DPD this document will provide the core framework for development control decisions (i.e. decisions on planning applications).
 - (e) **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**
Local authorities are required to produce an AMR. The AMR will assess the implementation of the LDS and the extent to which the policies in local development documents are being successfully implemented. It will also be used to review and revise policies.
 - (f) **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**
SPD replaces Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) and will expand upon policies and proposals set out in a development plan document or provide additional detail. It is not subject to independent examination and does not have Development Plan status. The current LDS does not include any SPD. However, SPD will be timetabled in the future if a particular need is identified.
 - (g) **Local Development Orders and Simplified Planning Zones**
Local Development Orders enable planning authorities to extend permitted development rights within their area and Simplified Planning Zones are areas where advance planning permission for specified types of development is given (usually used in cities where large and complicated developments are taking place). There are no Local Development Orders or Simplified Planning Zones planned for South Somerset.
- 3.2 The following diagram provides a visual guide to The Local Development Framework (LDF).

The Local Development Framework



3.3 Sustainability Appraisal

An ongoing part of the new Local Development Framework is Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This is a mechanism for checking the social, environmental and economic effects of a document and must be carried out for every DPD and SPD. The Sustainability Appraisal will be subject to public consultation as it develops. There are four bodies that it is a statutory requirement to consult: the Environment Agency, English Heritage, the Countryside Agency and English Nature (to be called Natural England from October 2006).

3.4 Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA/SEA)

In addition to Sustainability Appraisal, certain plans and programmes, which are likely to have significant effects on the environment, will require a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) in accordance with the SEA Regulations 2004. SEA applies to both planning applications and development plan documents/supplementary planning documents prepared under the new Local Development Framework system. For the purpose of Local Development Framework preparation, SA incorporates the requirements of SEA.

3.5 Links with the Community Strategy

The Local Development Framework will play a key role in bringing forward the spatial elements of the

Community Strategy. The Local Strategic Partnership own the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Planning Policy Team will be working closely with those involved in its production and will seek to ensure that any Local Development Documents (LDDs) reflect the priorities and aims of the strategy, particularly in relation to the Core Strategy as it is intended that it will be produced at the same time. This will enable a wide range of joint consultation to take place and will make maximum use of resources such as the trained community facilitators, and the local expertise of the Heads of Service - Area Development and their colleague Area Development Workers to ensure that the documents are fully integrated.

4. PREPARATION OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS AND SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

When will I have an opportunity to be involved?

- 4.1 Table 1 (page 10) shows the various stages involved in preparing and producing a development plan document. It also shows who will be consulted and the types of engagement methods to be used at each stage in its production. It was clear from the response to the explanatory leaflet on the SCI and questionnaire sent out towards the end of (November 2005) that a clear majority of people prefer traditional methods of consultation and participation ie direct letters and public meetings.
- 4.2 The Council therefore propose to continue to use these methods for informing and involving the public on the various planning documents it prepares. However, we will also be looking to use other methods identified in the tables in an effort to reach as many different groups as possible. As an ongoing process, we will be reviewing the methods we use to establish which are the most effective in engaging with the different groups that have been identified in Appendix 2 Consultation Bodies (page 31), some documents may require input from targeted local groups and stakeholders.
- 4.3 The most suitable and effective consultation methods for the stage in the production of each Development Plan Document (DPD) or Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) will be used. Each document will have a different role and may require different methods of consultation to be used; the most suitable methods to be used will be defined at the time in light of the prevailing circumstances.
- 4.4 The Draft Revised Local Development Scheme outlines the timetable for the preparation of the various development plan documents and supplementary planning documents and can be seen on the web site (www.southsomerset.gov.uk) or at main council offices. When formal consultation is being undertaken on any Local Development Document copies will be available for viewing on the Council's web site and hard copies will be able to be seen at the main council offices and libraries (where appropriate).
- 4.5 We will engage with 'hard to reach groups' such as those with sensory loss, BME communities, young people, the elderly, those from deprived neighbourhoods and Gypsies and Travellers. Here the expertise of the Community Liaison and the Equalities and Diversity Officers will be invaluable as they have direct day-to-day links working with and helping representatives of these parts of the community and will be able to advise on and assist with engagement. These groups will require tailored methods of engagement and this will be assessed on a document-by-document basis."

Table 1 – Development Plan Documents

Production Stages	Who will be involved?	Methods of Involvement	Sustainability Appraisal ¹
<p>Pre-production</p> <p>1. Evidence gathering</p> <p><i>This is the stage where the council's officers think about what information they need to produce the DPD. This will include amongst other things assessments carried out by consultants, Parish Plans and Village Design statements all of which will help to inform the document</i></p>	<p>Relevant SSDC Officers District Cllrs Government Office for the South West Somerset County Council Relevant Parish/Town Councils, Consultants, Developers, local employers and other Local groups as appropriate LSP</p>	<p>Email Letter Telephone Meetings</p>	
<p>Production</p> <p>2. Preparation of issues & alternative options – draft document (Reg 25).</p> <p><i>At this stage the Council will be considering what the issues and priorities are and consulting on them.</i></p>	<p>Specific Consultees, General Consultation Bodies and Other Consultees as appropriate to the DPD (see Appendix 2) Key public delivery stakeholders Relevant SSDC officers District Cllrs Somerset County Council Government Office for the South West Members of the public Relevant Parish/Town Councils Other Local groups/developers/ employers as appropriate Members of the public (hard to reach groups)</p>	<p>Meetings Email Letter Telephone Workshop SSDC web site Local Media Parish/Town Council newsletters Leaflet/questionnaire Public Exhibitions or Planning for Real exercise</p>	

¹ *Sustainability Appraisal of the DPD will be carried out at the same time as the production stages*

<p>Publication</p> <p>3. Publication of draft (Reg 26 – Statutory 6 week consultation)</p> <p><i>At this stage the draft document is published and comments sought.</i></p>	<p>Specific Consultees, General Consultation Bodies and Other Consultees consulted at stage 2 (Reg 25)</p> <p>District Cllrs Those who have requested involvement Relevant Parish/Town Councils Other Local groups/developers/ employers as appropriate Members of the public</p>	<p>Letter Local Media Public Notice Comments Form SSDC Web Site Letter Press release Parish/Town Council newsletters Leaflet</p>	<p>Sustainability Appraisal¹</p>
<p>Submission</p> <p>4. Submission to Secretary of State (Reg 28 – Statutory 6 week consultation)</p> <p>The following only applies to DPDs that include site allocations: Site allocation representations: <i>Where representations are made that include proposals for alternative site allocations or to change a boundary of a site identified in a submitted DPD the local authority must advertise these immediately after the period for making representations has expired (Reg 32 – Handling of representations: site allocation representations).</i> Representations on a site allocation representation: <i>Any person can make a representation on a site allocation representation where it has been advertised in accordance with Reg 32. Representations must be made within 6 weeks of the site been advertised (Reg 33)</i></p>	<p>Specific, General & Other Consultees consulted at stage 2 (Reg 25) and all respondents at stages 2 & 3</p> <p>Specific and General Consultation Bodies & Other Consultees consulted at stage 2 (Reg 25) and all respondents at stages 2, 3 & 4 Members of the public Anyone else who wishes to make a representation</p>	<p>Public Notice Comments Form SSDC Web Site Letter</p> <p>Public Notice SSDC web site Letter Email</p> <p>Letter Email</p>	

¹ Sustainability Appraisal of the DPD will be carried out at the same time as the production stages

<p>5. Examination</p> <p><i>Document considered by an Inspector who will test the "soundness" of the document. He/she can request the attendance of any person or organisation that is needed to help determine the soundness of the plan. The Inspector can consider representations by: written representations; round table discussions; informal hearing sessions or formal hearing sessions. When the examination is complete the Inspector will make a report to the Council on his/her findings. Any decisions in that report will be binding.</i></p>	<p>All respondents Members of the public</p>	<p>Letter Public Notice SSDC Web Site</p>	<p>Sustainability Appraisal²</p>
<p>6. Adoption</p> <p><i>The final document is published.</i></p>	<p>All respondents Any person who has asked to be notified of the adoption of the document</p>	<p>Public Notice Letter SSDC Web Site</p>	

Sustainability Appraisal of the DPD will be carried out at the same time as the production stages

4.6 The Council will use their best endeavours to meet the requirements of the Race Relations Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Therefore all LDF documentation will be made available, on request, in large print, Braille, audio or another language. To access this service please contact the Planning Policy Team at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil or call 01935 462440.

Preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

When will I have the opportunity to be involved?

4.7 Community engagement on a supplementary planning document will be very similar to that carried out for a development plan document. However, as SPDs are very topic specific it may not be appropriate to consult all the Specific and General Consultation Bodies (as listed in Appendix 2). Table 2 below shows the stages involved in the production of SPD. It also outlines who will be consulted and the types of engagement methods that will be used at each stage in its production. The key difference between the preparation of SPD and DPDs is that there is no examination stage for a SPD.

Table 2 – Supplementary Planning Documents

Production Stages	Who will be involved?	Methods of Involvement	Sustainability Appraisal ^⓪
<p>Pre-production</p> <p>1. Evidence gathering</p> <p><i>This is the stage where the council's officers think about what information they need to produce the SPD. This will include amongst other things assessments carried out by consultants, Parish Plans and Village Design Statements all of which will help to inform the document.</i></p>	<p>Relevant SSDC Officers Relevant District Cllrs Consultants Somerset County Council Relevant Parish/Town Councils Other Local groups/developers/ employers as appropriate LSP</p>	<p>Workshops Letters Email Telephone Meetings Visits to exemplar projects</p>	
<p>Production</p> <p>2. Preparation of draft SPD</p> <p><i>At this stage the Council will be considering what the issues and priorities are and consulting on them.</i></p>	<p>Relevant Specific, General and Other Consultation Bodies (see Appendix 2) Relevant SSDC officers District Cllrs Somerset County Council Government Office for the South West Relevant Parish/Town Councils Other Local groups/developers/ employers as appropriate Members of the public</p>	<p>Workshops Letters Email Telephone Meetings</p>	

^⓪ *Sustainability Appraisal of the SPD will be carried out at the same time as the production stages*

<p>Public participation on draft SPD</p> <p>3. Public Participation on draft SPD (Reg 17) Statutory consultation 4-6 weeks</p> <p><i>At this stage the draft document is published and comments sought.</i></p>	<p>Relevant Specific, General and Other Consultation Bodies (see Appendix 2) Relevant SSDC officers District Cllrs Somerset County Council GOSW Relevant Parish/Town Councils Other Local groups/developers/ employers as appropriate Members of the public</p>	<p>Public Notice SSDC web site Letters email Telephone Meetings Media</p>	<p>Sustainability Appraisal</p>
<p>4. Consideration of Representations and finalise SPD (Reg 18)</p> <p><i>Representations made at stage 3 are considered and the SPD is amended as necessary.</i></p>	<p>Relevant SSDC officers District Councillors Any other appropriate person or body whose advice is required in response to a representation</p>	<p>Committee Report Committee Meeting</p>	
<p>5. Adoption</p> <p><i>The final document is published.</i></p>	<p>All respondents Any person who has asked to be notified of the adoption of the document</p>	<p>Public Notice Letter SSDC Web Site</p>	

^① *Sustainability Appraisal of the SPD will be carried out at the same time as the production stages*

What will happen when I get involved in the Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document process?

- 4.8 All relevant comments received on DPDs or SPDs will be:
- Acknowledged
 - Recorded on a database
 - Clarified where necessary either by letter, email or telephone
 - Reported to and given due consideration by district councillors
- 4.9 At each consultation stage in the production of a DPD or SPD, an outline of the consultation undertaken and the outcomes of that consultation will be reported to district councillors together with officer recommendations. Individuals or groups that were

involved in the consultation process will be notified of the dates and times of any meetings should they wish to attend. Committee reports are posted on the Council's web site and hard copies available at council offices.

- 4.10 The Council allows individuals and group representatives to attend its committee meetings either as observers or to address the members of the Committee. Those who wish to make a presentation to a Committee are usually given a maximum of 3 minutes. If you do wish to speak at a committee meeting you must first complete a request slip and give it to the Committee Clerk (request slips are available at the meeting and are completed on the day of the meeting).
- 4.11 Where appropriate, comments received suggesting amendments to or raising relevant new issues regarding a DPD or SPD will be taken into account and the document amended as necessary.



5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 5.1 One of the key roles of the Council's Development Control Service is to determine a wide range of planning applications. These range from small household extensions, new business units, listed building applications through to large housing developments. The County Council deal with applications relating to minerals, waste, the County Council's own development and major highway schemes.
- 5.2 As part of its planning function, the Council is required to consult with owners and occupiers of neighbouring properties along with statutory consultees on the planning applications it receives. Traditionally, consultation is carried out after the planning application has been received.
- 5.3 An important change introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 was the emphasis placed on applicants to engage at an early stage with the local community and the Council before submitting an application. The SCI therefore outlines the level of community involvement and pre-application discussion that the LPA will expect to be undertaken before an application is submitted. The level of pre-application consultation and particularly early public engagement

will be determined by the type and scale of the application.

Benefits of Pre-application discussions

- 5.4 Pre-application discussions and early public participation have a number of benefits including being a useful means of resolving issues that may result in public objections at a later stage and helping to ensure an inclusive and transparent process. A further benefit is to improve the overall quality of the application that is submitted. This can be achieved for example by the Council giving early advice to applicants on the type of supporting information that should accompany an application, advice on design and landscape issues and providing contact details for other relevant consultees, for example County Highways.
- 5.5 Evidence of and results of pre-application community consultation should be submitted as part of a formal planning application. However, it must be stressed that the Council cannot refuse to accept a valid application because an applicant has either not undertaken pre application consultation or has undertaken pre-application using a different method to that outlined in the SCI.

Validation Checklist

- 5.6 In order to improve the Council's service in terms of pre application advice and information, the Council's Development Control Service is currently preparing a validation checklist. This will provide guidance to applicants/ agents on the scope of material that should be supplied with a planning application. This will benefit the applicant in terms of providing greater certainty as to the nature and extent of information required in order to validate the application. It will also benefit the local authority by helping to achieve good standards of performance.
- 5.7 New regulations were introduced this year in terms of changes to supporting information to be submitted with outline planning applications. Details of the proposed use, amount of development, indicative layout, scale, upper & lower heights of development and access details are now required. Further information on these changes and on the validation checklist can be obtained from the Council's Development Control Service. The validation checklist is due to be published later this year and will also be available on the Council web site www.southsomerset.gov.uk .

Approaches to Early Community Involvement and Pre Application Consultation with the Council.

Tiered Approach

- 5.8 The Government advises that we should not be specific in terms of the type of community involvement required

for each application and suggests a "menu" or a "tiered" approach. The Council proposes a 2 tiered approach where the type of consultation carried out relates to the significance of the proposal. It should be stressed that not all methods of consultation are required in all cases. Pre-application consultation is optional although it is encouraged and will lead to quicker and more effective processing of planning applications.

- 5.9 The 2 tiers of application are explained below:

Tier 1: - Applications where there are considerable issues of scale and controversy, or where the application is contrary to or out of line with the Development Plan (a "departure" application). Also included are applications that are broadly in accordance with the Development Plan BUT raising controversial issues or detail and "other" departures not covered by Regulation 3 (a)-(c) in Annex A of Circular 07/99. For example:

- Development Plan departures – proposals contrary to the policies within the adopted Structure Plan, the adopted South Somerset Local Plan the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy and the Local Development Framework.
- Schedule 1 development – as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations i.e. development that raises strategic environmental concerns.

- Schedule 2 development – as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations.
- Development proposals that fall within the Town and Country Planning (Residential Development on Greenfield Land) (England) Direction 2000 (Circular 08/00) - to fall into this category, proposals must involve five hectares or more of greenfield land or 150 or more dwellings regardless of the size of site
- Proposals that fall within the Town and Country Planning (Shopping Development) (No.2) Direction 1993 – applications involving very large amounts of new retail floorspace.
- Development proposed on playing fields as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Playing Fields) Direction 1998.
- Development proposals that fall within the Town and Country Planning (Residential Density) (London, South East England, South West England, East of England and Northamptonshire) Direction 2005

Tier 2: Applications of a scale or development area for which the Local Planning Authority requires wider community involvement. Applications that fall within sites that are “sensitive” to development pressures and allocated sites that may not have generated significant objection through the local plan process for example:

- Applications of “local significance” that the Local Planning Authority considers to require wide community involvement e.g. where a proposal

involves the loss of a community facility such as a post office or local shop or where a proposal impacts on a local landmark, or a substantial brownfield redevelopment.

- Applications that fall within sites that are “sensitive” to development pressures e.g. proposals within a Conservation Area, AONB or SSSI.
- Allocated sites that were not objected to and would not therefore have been considered in depth by the independent scrutiny of a Public Local Inquiry.

5.10 The LPA will seek to encourage applicants to engage in pre-application discussions with the Development Control Teams and other relevant bodies (advice on this can be obtained from the Development Control Teams) and early community involvement particularly on those applications that fall within tier 1. Those in tier 2 are more subjective and will have to be judged on a case by case basis.

5.11 A proposed strategy for pre-application consultation for applications within Tiers 1 & 2 is set out in Table 3 below. Some approaches may not be necessary in every case and applicants/agents are advised to discuss with the Council’s Development Control Service what approaches are considered to be most appropriate.

Table 3
Pre-application Community Involvement in Planning Applications

APPROACH	TIER 1	TIER 2
<p>Public meetings: Generally held in the evening, usually involves an officer/councillor or developer fielding questions from an audience.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> Discuss with application case officer	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> Discuss with application case officer
<p>Public Exhibition: Plans/text/photographs displayed on exhibition boards in order to inform and prompt questions Usually staffed. Can be located in one place or can move around e.g. on exhibition bus. Usually located at village halls or other public places.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>
<p>Surgeries: Presents the opportunity for “one to one” meetings between residents/ groups/ officers/councillor</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> Discuss with application case officer	
<p>Concept Masterplan: Engagement between developer/officers/residents through public exhibitions/leaflets to produce a detailed “development vision” for a proposal.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	Probably - Discuss with application case officer
<p>Enquiry By design and/or Planning for Real®: The Enquiry by Design process brings together the key stakeholders in a proposed development – statutory agencies and authorities, landowners, the local community, voluntary groups and representatives of employers and retailers – to work together in presenting a vision for a site through an intensive workshop, facilitated by a team of professionals such as planners, landscape designers, architects etc. It is not just a way of informing the community about a development but actively engages them in the planning and design of their community. Planning for Real® is a little more wide ranging, the representatives of the community are brought together and issues particular to that neighbourhood are identified (on option cards). A three dimensional map is built of the local area and people can use the option cards to mark on the plan what they want and where they want it. All the options are then prioritised as either ‘now’, ‘soon’ or ‘later’ and this information can then be fed into an Action Plan.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> Discuss with application case officer	

<p>Consultation Panel/local interest groups/key stakeholders: Made up of local people and key community stakeholders to allow for focussed and integrated discussion of planning issues.</p>	✓ Discuss with application case officer	✓ Discuss with application case officer
<p>Towns/ Parish Councils: Meetings with local groups such as Town and Parish Councils enable issues to be discussed directly.</p>	✓	✓
<p>Media: Local publicity within the community adverts and or interviews on radio or television can draw attention to the issues that are the subject of consultation.</p>	✓	
<p>Website: Publication of proposals and or comments forms on a web site enables easy access to information in the comfort of your own home and associated email facilities allow for a quick and easy response.</p>	✓	Possibly

Draft Development Control Negotiation Strategy

5.12 Applicants and/or agents will be encouraged to contact the Council at the pre-application stage to discuss what the council will expect in terms of pre application consultation and early public involvement. The level of early community involvement will be dependent upon the nature and scale of the application. South Somerset District Council is working on a Development Control Negotiation Policy, which will outline details of how it will negotiate with its customers whether it is on pre-application issues, during the life of an application or post decision. You will be able to see the Negotiation Policy on the web site www.southsomerset.gov.uk when it has been completed. If in the meantime you have any queries please contact the Development Control Service.

All other applications

5.13 Householders and other applicants and/or agents are encouraged to consider matters such as loss of privacy and light and to discuss/show their plans to neighbours before submitting a planning application. If the application is within or adjoins a Conservation Area or relates to a listed building or it's setting then advice should be sought from the relevant Development Control Team and/or one of the Conservation Planners.

Dealing with applications

What happens following receipt of an application?

5.14 Upon receipt and validation of an application, the application is allocated to a case officer.

- All relevant neighbours, Parish/Town Council, and other relevant statutory and non statutory consultees are notified of the application.

- Advertisements, where required, are placed in the local press and on site.

Statutory and other consultees

- 5.15 All statutory and other consultees will receive notification of relevant planning applications;
- Statutory consultees include The Highway Authority, Environment Agency and English Nature (to be called Natural England from October 2006);
 - Parish/Town Councils are consulted on all applications within their area;
 - There is a statutory period of 21 days within which comments should be received by the Council. Comments received after this period but before the application is determined will be considered.

Weekly List

- 5.16 The council produces a weekly list of registered applications and it is available to view on the council's website.

Neighbour notification

- 5.17 The council will normally notify via letter all owners and/or occupiers of adjoining properties about the submission of a planning application.
- The notification letter provides the application number, name of case officer, details of where to view the application and how/where to forward any comments.

- Any person or consultee who wishes to view any particular application is able to do so via the Council's website (www.southsomerset.gov.uk) or by visiting the relevant Parish/Town Council or the District Council Offices at Brympton Way, Yeovil.
- Relevant comments may be forwarded to the Council via fax, email, website and letter.
- Anyone wishing to make representations to the Council has a period of 21 days from the date of the notification letter to submit their comments.
- Dependent upon the nature, scale and wider possible impact of a proposed development, wider neighbour notification may be appropriate.

Site Notices

- 5.18 For certain applications, it is a statutory requirement to display a site notice and advertise in the local newspaper(s). These applications include those that are; accompanied by an Environmental Statement as required by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999; departures from the Development Plan, applications for Listed Building and Conservation Area Consent and development that will affect the character or setting of a listed building or the character or appearance of a Conservation Area and 'major' applications.
- A site notice may also be erected for 'general interest', this is usually in rural areas where there are no immediate neighbours or where it is difficult to identify adjoining owners/occupiers. There may also be

occasions where an officer, using their professional judgement, may consider it appropriate to put up a site notice because they consider that the application may be of a wider public interest.

Submission of comments

- 5.19 Comments on any application can be forwarded to the Council via the website, email, fax and letter.
- Anyone who has an interest in an application can make representations even though they may not have received a notification letter.
 - Any relevant comments made will be treated as a “material consideration” within the context of national, regional and local policy.
 - The deadline for submitting comments is 21 days from the date stated on the letter and/or site notice and from the publication of the paper advertisement (where advertised). However, bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.
 - Comments will be scanned, placed onto the electronic document management system and are made available for public inspection.
 - An acknowledgment letter is sent to those who have made representations.
 - All relevant comments received are taken into account by the case officer when considering the application.
 - The Council will also inform those who have made representations:
 - If the application is due to be considered at an area committee

- If any amended plans are received
- Of the decision.

Scheme of delegation

- 5.20 The Council operates a scheme of delegation.
- In brief, it gives authority to the Development Control Manager to issue decisions on the majority of applications without the need to refer the application to the relevant Area Committee.
 - For further information on the scheme of delegation, please contact the Development Control Service on 01935 462462.

Area Committee Meetings

- 5.21 Any application that is referred to Committee will be considered by one of the relevant 4 Area Committees.
- Each Area Committee meets once a month on successive Wednesdays throughout the month.
 - Meetings are usually held either at the Council offices or at local village halls/public buildings within the relevant district area.
 - Committee reports are made publicly available 5 working days before the meeting and are available on the council's website (please see under agenda/minutes). Paper copies are available at the Council offices and distributed on the day of the meeting.

Regulation Committee

- 5.22 A small number of applications may need to be referred from one of the Area Committees to the Regulation Committee for example, a major application that is contrary to the adopted local plan or an application raising controversial issues.
- The Regulation Committee is held monthly in the Council Chamber at Brympton Way, Yeovil.
 - Those who have made comments on an application that is being referred to Regulation Committee will be informed of the fact.
 - The committee report will be made available 5 working days before the meeting and can be viewed on the Council's website. Paper copies are available at the Council offices.

Public Speaking at all Committee Meetings

- 5.23 The Council provides an opportunity for a member of the public and/or any other interested person to address the committee -a maximum of 3 minutes is given.
- For larger or more controversial applications where many people may wish to speak, the Chairman will normally ask that a spokesperson be appointed to address the committee.
 - Those wishing to speak are advised to fill in a slip and pass to the Committee clerk either at the beginning of the meeting or during the break, which is usually held before consideration of planning applications.

Post Decision

- 5.24 All members of the public and/or any other interested parties who have submitted representations to the council are sent a letter informing of the decision.
- A copy of the certificate can also be sent if requested free of charge to those who have submitted comments.
 - All planning decisions are available to view on the Council's website or in registers held at the following Council offices:
- Brympton Way, Yeovil
Holyrood Lace Mill, Chard
Churchfields, Wincanton
Kelways, Langport

Planning Appeals

- 5.25 An applicant has the right of appeal against a refusal of planning permission and against any conditions attached to a permission.
- Appeals are lodged with the Planning Inspectorate
 - Appeals are considered by an independent Planning Inspector.
 - The right of appeal currently only extends to the applicant and not to any third parties.
 - The Council will write to those who were originally consulted informing them of the appeal and outlining the appeal process.

There are 3 types of appeal:

- Written Representations
- Informal Hearing

- Public Inquiry
 - Most appeals are considered via written representations
 - The more complex and controversial applications are usually considered via a hearing or public Inquiry.
 - Irrespective of the type of appeal, members of the public and any other interested parties are given an opportunity to forward comments to the Planning Inspector.
 - A time limit of 6 weeks is allowed in which comments can be forwarded to the Planning Inspector.
 - Applicant/agents and third parties are given an opportunity to address the Inspector during an Informal Hearing and Public Inquiry.
 - For further information on any aspect of the appeal process please contact the Planning Inspectorate direct on 0117 372 6372 or via email: enquiries@planning-inspectorate.qsi.gov.uk

6. RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

6.1 The Council is committed to effective community engagement and intends to continue this commitment through the Statement of Community Involvement. The document is based on a realistic and robust assessment of the likely staff and financial resource availability over the next three years. To assist the Planning Policy Team, the Council has a number of trained community facilitators who can offer advice and guidance on a range of community related issues including methods of engaging with different groups within South Somerset. These could include:

- Use of the Community Resource Bus which can be taken out to local parishes or community groups or can be located in town centres where the public will be able to meet with officers and discuss issues in a face to face situation. The bus can also be used to reach young people by travelling to local schools.
- Planning for Real[®] exercises (explained in Table 3 on page 20).

They will be expected to play a key role in work on the Community and Core Strategies where some parallel work will be undertaken. The expertise of the Heads of Service - Area Development and their colleague Area Development Workers will also be a valuable resource especially when preparing area action plans. Additionally the following staff/teams/services will also provide valuable input in the production Local Development Framework: documents:

- Economic Development Team
- Research and Information Officer
- Housing Services
- Development Control
- Environmental Health
- Sport, Arts & Leisure Services

Hard to Reach Groups:

- Community Liaison Officer
- Equalities and Diversity Officer

The assistance of Planning Aid South West may be called upon as necessary or appropriate.

6.2 The proposed methods of engagement reflect past experience of what has worked well although the SCI provides the opportunity to review the methods of engagement, particularly in reaching and engaging with hard to reach groups. The Council, however, must be realistic in what it can undertake and achieve given the level of staff and economic resources available and the commitment to providing value for money for its residents.

6.3 Where planning applications are concerned the onus will be on the applicants and their agents to undertake pre-application consultation activities where appropriate although the Council's advisory role will have resource implications.

7. THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT- MONITORING AND MECHANISMS FOR REVIEW

7.1 The Statement of Community Involvement will be kept under review and revised where necessary following the same procedures. Revisions should only need to be made when significant changes occur in the types of groups the authority wishes to engage with or different techniques/methods of engagement are to be used. The SCI will be reviewed as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

7.2 A satisfaction questionnaire will be sent out to establish the success or otherwise of our consultation on the issues and options stage in the production of our local development documents. It is also intended to continue

the practise of asking those who are consulted if they wish to continue being consulted on a particular local development document to prevent involving those who no longer wish to be. Additionally the LDF database will be amended and updated as address details change or where an additional consultee asks to be added.

7.3 The Council will review the procedures for involving the community in the LDF and in planning applications to ascertain whether it has achieved a more representative level of public involvement which has been effective in shaping planning decisions. This

assessment will be part of the Annual Monitoring Report process.

Appendix 1

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Area Action Plan	Provides the planning framework for particular areas of change.	Development Plan	A Council's Development Plan consists of the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy and the Development Plan Documents contained within its Local Development Framework.
Community Strategy	The Council with others has to prepare one of these with the aim of improving the environmental, social and economic well being of their area. The authority is expected to co-ordinate the actions of local voluntary, public, community and private sectors through the Community Strategy. The responsibility for producing the Community Strategy for South Somerset lies with the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) (otherwise known as South Somerset Together). This is a group of organisations including the District Council and Yeovil College (more information can be found on www.southsomersttogether.gov.uk)	Development Plan Document (DPD)	A planning document that is part of the Local Development Framework and is subject to independent examination e.g. the Core Strategy, Area Action Plans and Site Specific Allocations.
Core Strategy	This sets out the main elements of the planning framework for the area. It should include the spatial vision for the area and the strategic policies to deliver the vision.	Generic Development Control Policies	This is a group of planning policies that will be one of the things against which planning applications will be assessed.
		Local Development Document (LDD)	The general term for a document produced by the Council that forms part of the Local Development Framework.
		Local Development Framework (LDF)	A group of documents that provide the Council's policies for meeting the community's social, environmental and economic aims for the future.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)	A three year work programme showing what documents will be produced and when.	policy/policies. It is not subject to independent examination and does not have Development Plan status. Replaces Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).
Proposals Map	Is a separate document in the LDF which shows on a map base all the policies and proposals set out in Development Plan Documents. The initial proposals map will be that in the adopted South Somerset Local Plan (2006). It will be revised to reflect new Development Plan Documents as they are adopted.	Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	A statement setting out the ways in which the community will be involved/consulted during the production of the Local Development Documents. The SCI is not a development plan document but is subject to independent examination.	Tool for appraising policies to make sure that they are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable (must be undertaken on all local development documents).
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	A Local Development Document that expands or provides supplementary information on a particular	Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)
		Produced by the Regional Assembly, this document sets out regional policies in respect of development and the use of land and forms part of the Development Plan.

Appendix 2

CONSULTATION BODIES

Appendix 2 lists the Specific Consultation Bodies (those we have to consult to meet the statutory requirements), General Consultation Bodies and other Consultees that we will consult, where applicable, on the preparation of our planning documents. Members of the public and agents and other groups that are on our existing database will also be consulted. **If you want to check that you are on our existing database please do not hesitate to contact the Planning Policy Team on 01935 462462. Please let us know if your group or organisation is not on the list and you wish to be included. Please also let us know if you no longer wish to be included on our database and do not wish to receive any further letters and/or consultation documents.**

1. SPECIFIC CONSULTATION BODIES (as prescribed in Annex E: Consultees, Planning Policy Statement 12)

- a) South West Regional Assembly as Regional Planning Body
- b) N/A
- c) Adjoining authorities:
 - Somerset:
 - Somerset County Council
 - South Somerset Parish Councils
 - Mendip District Council
 - Sedgemoor District Council
 - Taunton Deane Borough Council
 - Dorset:
 - Dorset County Council
 - North Dorset District Council
 - West Dorset District Council
 - Wiltshire:
 - Wiltshire County Council
 - Salisbury District Council
 - Devon:
 - Devon County Council

- East Devon District Council
- Adjoining Parish Councils that fall outside South Somerset District Council's administrative boundaries (see list on page 32)
- d) Natural England (formerly The Countryside Agency)
- e) The Environment Agency
- f) Highways Agency
- g) Historic Building and Monuments Commission for England
- h) Natural England (formerly Natural England)
- i) Network Rail
- j) South West Regional Development Agency
- k) British Telecom
- Mobile Operators Association, representing:
 - Hutchison 3G UK
 - 02 (UK) Ltd
 - T-Mobile (UK) Ltd
 - Orange Personal Communications Services Ltd.
 - Vodafone Ltd

- Cable & Wireless Communications Ltd
- l) Ministry of Defence
- m) i) Dorset and Somerset Strategic health Authority
- ii) Centrica plc (British Gas)
 - Npower
 - Scottish and Southern Energy
 - Scottish Power
 - SWEB Energy

- National Grid Transco
- Western Power Distribution
- Southern Electric
- iii) South West Water
- iv) Wessex Water

(Please note that the above list may change in the future should a company or organisation name change)

Adjoining Parish Councils that fall outside South Somerset District Council's administrative boundaries:

Ashcott parish Council
 Baltonsborough Parish Council
 Batcombe Parish Council
 Bickenhall Parish Council
 Bourton Parish Council
 Bradford Abbas Parish Council
 Broadwindsor Parish Council
 Buckhorn Weston and Kington Magna Parish Council
 Burrowbridge Parish Council
 Butleigh Parish Council
 Chardstock Parish Council
 Chedington Parish Council
 Churchstanton Parish Council
 Clifton Maybank Parish Council
 Curland Parish Council
 Ditchheat Parish Council
 Fifehead Magdalen Parish Meeting
 Gillingham Town Council
 Goathill Parish Council
 Greinton Parish Council

Halstock Parish Council
 Hatch Beauchamp Parish Council
 Kilminster Parish Council
 Lamyatt Parish Meeting
 Lydford on Fosse Parish Council
 Maiden Bradley with Yarnfield Parish Council
 Marnhull Parish Council
 Melbury Osmund Parish Council
 Membury Parish Council
 Milton Clevedon Parish Meeting
 Mosterton Parish Council
 North Curry Parish Council
 Othery Parish Council
 Otterford Parish Council
 Purse Caundle Parish Council
 Queen Thorne Group (Over Compton, Trent & Sandford Orcas Parish Councils)
 Ryme Intrinseca Parish Council
 Seaborough Parish Council
 Silton Parish Meeting

Stalbridge Town Council
 Staple Fitzpaine Parish Council
 Stoke St Gregory Parish Council
 Stourton with Gasper Parish Council
 Street Parish Council
 Thornecombe Parish Council
 Upton Noble Parish Meeting

Walton Parish Council
 West Bradley Parish Meeting
 Witham Friary Parish Council
 Yarcombe Parish Council
 Yeo Head Group (Poyntington & Osborne) Parish Council
 Zeals Parish Council

2. GENERAL CONSULTATION BODIES

These include voluntary bodies, groups which represent the interests of different religious, racial, ethnic or national groups, local business groups and organisations that represent the interests of those with disabilities.

Able Advocacy
 Advisory Council for the Education of Romany and other Travellers (ACERT)
 Chambers of Commerce:
 Bruton Chamber of Commerce
 Castle Cary Chamber of Commerce
 Chard Chamber of Commerce
 Crewkerne Chamber of Commerce
 Somerset Chamber of Commerce
 Wincanton Chamber of Commerce
 Yeovil Chamber of Trade and Commerce
 Chard and Ilminster Pensioners Forum
 Chard Disability Action Group
 Chard Forum
 Crewkerne Disability Action Group
 Crewkerne Forum
 DIARY
 East Somerset NHS Trust

English Federation of Disability Sport (SW)
 Fairplay South West
 Fiveways Resource Centre/Special School
 Friends, Families and Travellers
 Homebridge
 Ilminster Chamber of Commerce
 Ilminster Forum
 Irish Travellers Movement in Britain
 Kingsdon Seniors Club
 Live at Home (Day Centre)
 Local Housing Associations
 Local Residents Associations/Partnerships
 Local Secondary Schools and Colleges
 Making Inclusion a Reality (MIAR Project)
 Martock Club for the Elderly
 MENCAP - Yeovil & South Somerset
 Morley House Young Peoples Centre
 National Association of Health Workers with Travellers

National Association of Teachers of Travellers
 National Travellers Action Group
 Phillipino Association
 Polish Community Link Worker
 Save the Vale Association
 Signpost Care Partnerships
 Somerset Black Development Association
 Somerset Care at Home
 Somerset Churches Together Yeovil Local
 Development Monitoring Group
 Somerset County Youth Service (County wide)
 Somerset County Sports Association for the Disabled
 Somerset Partnership for Mental Health
 Somerset Probation Service
 Somerset Race Equality Council (County wide)
 Somerton Access Project
 Somerton Day Centre -Group for Adults with Physical
 Disabilities
 Somerton Disability Action Group
 Somerton Over 60's Club
 South Somerset Mind
 South Somerset Youth Work Team

South West Regional Committee of Jehovah's
 Witnesses
 South West RSL Planning Consortium
 The Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Coalition
 The Gypsy Council
 The Gypsy Council for Health, Education and Welfare
 The Ivel Club Ilchester
 The Somerset Portuguese Association
 The South Somerset Muslim Cultural Association
 The Theatres Trust
 Traveller Law Reform Coalition
 U-in-Mind
 UK Romani Gypsy Council
 Wincanton Community Venture
 WTCS Ltd
 Yeovil Archaeological and History Society
 Yeovil Christian Support Trust
 Yeovil Connexions Centre
 Yeovil Gospel Hall Trust
 Yeovil Night Shelter
 Yeovil Trinity Foyer
 Young Peoples Centre – Chard

3. OTHER CONSULTEES

Those that have expressed a desire to be involved in the LDF, planning and other consultees, agents, developers and landowners (on the LDF database) plus the following:

Airport Operators:
 Westland PLC

Henstridge Airfield
 Bus Companies:

Cooks	Crown Estate Office
First	Commission for Racial Equality
Nippy	Crown Estate Office
Safeways	Department for Constitutional Affairs
South West	Department for Culture Media and Sport
Stagecoach Devon	Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs
Rail Companies:	Diocesan Board of Finance
First Great Western Trains	Disability Rights Commission
Freight Rail Group	Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
South West Trains	Dorset AONB Partnership
Virgin Trains	English Heritage
Wessex Trains	Involve
Others:	Equal Opportunities Commission
Age Concern	Forestry Commission
Arts Council England (South West)	Freight Transport Association
Blackdown Hills AONB	Friends of the Earth (FOE)
British Chemical Distributors and Trader Association	Groundwork South West
British Geological Survey	Hamstone Parish Group
CBI	Health and safety Executive
Centre for Ecology and Hydrology	Help the Aged
Church Commissioners	Housing Corporation
Civil Aviation Authority	Inland Waterways Association
Coach Operators Federation	Institute of Directors
Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment	Integrated Passenger Transport Unit (SCC)
Confederation of Passenger Transport (CPT)	Learning and Skills Council
CPRE	National Playing Fields Association
Cranborne Chase and West Wiltshire Downs AONB	Police Architectural Liaison Officer
Crewkerne and District Astronomical Society	Post office Property Holdings
Crewkerne Civic Society	Public Art South West
	Regen South West

Road Haulage Association
RSPB
Secondary Schools in South Somerset
Somerset County Public Arts Officer
Somerset Fire and Rescue Service
Somerset Wildlife Trust
Sport England South West
South West Housing Body
South West Rivers Association
Sustainability South West

South West Tourism
The Bruton Trust
The Housebuilders Federation
The National Grid Company
The Parrett Internal Drainage Board
The Somerset Trust for Sustainable
Development
The Woodland Trust
South Western Ambulance Service NHS Trust
Woman's National Commission

Please note that the lists in sections 2 & 3 of this Appendix are not exhaustive.

Appendix 3

Methods of Engagement for Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents

Method	What it is	Advantages	Disadvantages
Letter	Written form of communication sent directly to an individual, group or organisation.	<p>Sends information directly to a targeted individual.</p> <p>Can provide users with detailed, comprehensive information. Helps to fulfil the statutory requirement to inform.</p>	<p>Can be seen as impersonal and remote from the community.</p> <p>Letter can be misunderstood.</p> <p>Very large mail shots can be expensive.</p>
Email	Message sent from a computer either directly through the users own email provider or through the Council's web site.	<p>Opportunity for distributing information and material quickly and widely at a lower cost. At any time of the day or night.</p> <p>Can be useful for reaching certain groups (e.g. young people) or more remote rural areas.</p>	<p>Access to the internet is variable and can therefore exclude those without access.</p> <p>Technical problems may arise.</p>
Telephone	System that allows you to speak directly to an individual in another place.	<p>Allows for direct, easy dissemination or collection of information.</p> <p>Allows for two-way dialogue, which ensures a better understanding.</p>	<p>Impractical when seeking to contact large numbers of people in terms of time and cost.</p> <p>Difficult to convey large quantities of information.</p>

<p>Meetings</p>	<p>Officer meeting - where a selected group of officers are invited to discuss a particular issue.</p> <p>Public meeting - where the event is held in a public place is publicised and an open invitation to attend given. At the meeting an Officer/Officers from the Council and possibly local Councillors and or developers will be available to answer questions.</p> <p>Steering Group – where a selected group of Councillors, with officer support, are invited to discuss a particular issue to provide a political steer.</p>	<p>Enables Officers to gain the views of the invited group of people and where it is a steering group to gain an important political steer at an early stage.</p> <p>Allows the public to give their views to ensure a better understanding in an efficient way.</p> <p>Can be tailored to large or small audiences.</p>	<p>May attract only a limited number of people who may be unrepresentative of the local community.</p> <p>Can be dominated by activists or those most confident at speaking in public.</p> <p>Issues raised tend to be very local or personal.</p>
<p>Committee Reports and Meetings</p>	<p>Officers of the Council produce committee reports in order to inform Councillors of processes that have been gone through or of representations that have been received on a document. They make a recommendation in that report and Councillors make a decision based on the information and recommendation/s in front of them. Committee meetings are open to the public.</p>	<p>Offers the opportunity for attendees to take part in the formal decision making process by allowing them to speak to local Councillors when they are making decisions.</p>	<p>A formal setting such as this – requires the speaker to be confident making their point in a public meeting.</p> <p>Participant is limited to 3 minutes in which to make their point.</p>
<p>Public Notice</p>	<p>The Council is legally required to place Public Notices in local newspapers at</p>	<p>This is a statutory requirement.</p>	<p>Formal wording may discourage the</p>

	<p>certain stages of document production. The Notice is to let everyone know that a document has been published and that representations can be made on the contents of that document. It also tells you what the document is where you can see it, where and when by representations must be sent.</p>		<p>community from engaging with or taking part in the process.</p>
Workshops	<p>Where a selected group of people are invited to discuss a particular issue. Usually takes the form of a presentation followed by breaking out into discussion groups in order to try and answer particular questions or to present ideas and options.</p>	<p>Effective for dealing with more complex issues.</p> <p>Gives the selected attendees an opportunity to discuss different issues and options.</p> <p>Useful for including groups that may often feel excluded i.e. hard to reach groups.</p> <p>Gives Officers the opportunity to learn from those involved.</p>	<p>Can be resource intensive to run i.e. may require the booking of a hall or the provision of refreshments and multiple officer attendance.</p>
SSDC Web site	<p>A way of presenting information about the Council by means of electronic communication (i.e. the computer). Also offers the opportunity to fill in online forms and surveys. SSDC's web site address is: www.southsomerset.gov.uk</p>	<p>The Council is statutorily required to put DPD & SPD documents on their web site.</p> <p>Opportunity for distributing information and material quickly and widely at a lower cost. At any time of the day or night.</p> <p>Can be useful for reaching certain</p>	<p>Access to the internet is variable and can therefore exclude those without access.</p> <p>Technical problems may arise.</p>

		<p>groups (e.g. young people) or more remote rural areas.</p> <p>Enables information to be managed and update in an efficient way.</p>	
Local Media	Local radio, television or newspapers.	<p>Reaches large audiences.</p> <p>Good for getting a message across quickly in a clear and understandable way.</p>	<p>Could be expensive.</p> <p>Suited to larger scale or more contentious issues in the broader public interest.</p>
Press Release	An information bulletin that is sent to local newspapers, radio and television stations.	<p>Reaches large audiences.</p> <p>Good for getting a message across quickly in a clear and understandable way.</p>	Depends on the newspaper/TV station/radio station being interested picking up the story.
Parish/Town Council Newsletters	Many Parish and Town Councils have a newsletter that they distribute to their parishioners advising them of local issues.	<p>Excellent way of engaging Parish Councils and using their local knowledge.</p> <p>Good for addressing local issues.</p>	Dependent on the Parish Council producing a newsletter and having a particular interest in the subject / issue.
Leaflet/questionnaire	A short paper document containing information sent directly to consultees or interested parties – can also be left in Council Offices and other public places. May also sometimes include a tear off questionnaire.	<p>Sends information directly to an individual in an attractive way.</p> <p>Can provide users with a summary of the main points in an easy to understand way.</p> <p>Questionnaire element can provide an efficient way of making a</p>	<p>May not always generate a large response rate.</p> <p>Could be misunderstood or questions could be tailored towards a particular response.</p>

		response.	
Public Exhibitions	Plans/text/photographs are displayed on exhibition boards in order to inform and prompt questions Usually staffed. Can be located in one place or can move around e.g. on exhibition bus. Usually located at village halls or other public places and advertised in advance.	<p>Easy way to publicise issues and provide information.</p> <p>Gives the opportunity for direct feedback from attendees.</p> <p>Gives the public the flexibility of when to attend.</p>	<p>Not always representative due to lack of accessibility and the timing of an event.</p> <p>Can be poorly attended.</p> <p>Limited feedback.</p>
Planning for Real® exercise	This is where representatives of the community are brought together in a village hall or other public place and issues particular to that neighbourhood are identified (on option cards). A three dimensional map is built of the local area and people can use the option cards to mark on the plan what they want and where they want it. All the options are then prioritised as either 'now'; 'soon' or 'later' and this information can then be fed into the document.	<p>Can reach the parts of the community that do not usually attend meetings e.g. families.</p> <p>It is a participatory consultation method.</p> <p>Raises issues in a non-confrontational way.</p> <p>Does not require those who participate to be experienced or articulate speakers.</p> <p>It is mobile and flexible.</p>	<p>Limited scope in its application – normally used for a site or location specific issue.</p> <p>Can lead to heightened expectations.</p>
Comments Form	If you want to make a representation on a document you can use a comments form. These are produced at the formal stages of consultation and will ask for comments relating to the consultation matter and specific information that is required by the District Council and the Inspectorate to ensure that the	<p>Provides a structure for the respondent to put down his/her comments in a considered structured way.</p> <p>Provides the Council & Inspectorate with the information they need in a structured way.</p>	Forms may be filled in incorrectly or questions missed out or misunderstood.

	representation is properly considered and assessed.		
Visits to exemplar projects	Would involve inviting selected stakeholders to visit to a particularly successful project.	Will help to inform attendees on a particular issue e.g. a visit to a scheme where the use of renewable energy has been particularly successful.	Only feasible for small groups of people. Limited number of opportunities to be used.