

**Ribble Valley Borough
Council**



Statement of Community Involvement

**Adopted report
December 2010**



RibbleValley
Local Development Framework

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	1
1.2 Vision	2
1.3 Who Comprises the Community?	2
2. INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN MAKING PLANNING POLICY	2 - 15
2.1 The Local Development Framework	2
2.2 The Plan Preparation Process	5
2.3 Sustainability Appraisal	5
2.4 How the Community will be Involved	5
2.5 Hard to Reach Groups	6
2.6 Techniques for Involving the Community	8
2.7 Further Detail on Engagement Techniques	11
2.8 The Community's Comments	13
2.9 Incorporating On-going Feedback	14
2.10 Reviewing Documents	14
3. INTER – RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PROGRAMMES	14 - 15
3.1 Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership and the Sustainable Community Strategy	14
3.2 Ribble Valley Borough Council Consultation Strategy 2007	15
4. INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY IN PLANNING APPLICATIONS	15 - 18
4.1 Pre – application Process	16
4.2 How Should Developers Consult?	16
4.3 The Council's Consultation on Planning Applications	17
4.4 The Council's Involvement of the Community After a Decision is Made	18
5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS	18
APPENDIX 1 Consultees	19
APPENDIX 2 Forward Planning's Local Development Framework Database of Consultees	23
APPENDIX 3 Guidance for Developers on Consultation for Proposals	24
APPENDIX 4 Information on the Planning Process	25
APPENDIX 5 Glossary of Terms Used	26

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

This Statement sets out how the Borough Council will involve all elements of the community in the planning process, both in the preparation of planning policy and involvement in planning applications. It shows how we will consult on the development of the various documents that will eventually make up the Local Development Framework (or LDF) that will replace the current Ribble Valley Districtwide Local Plan.

It describes how and when the community will be consulted and about which documents and issues we need its views and ideas. Through this process we hope to give local people access to information to help them shape their future environment through informed and active participation.

The Borough Council has involved the community in the planning process for many years, but the new planning system¹ seeks a step-change in the level of this involvement. Tapping into the community's expertise and insight on local issues produces better planning. In turn meaningful community involvement helps create a wider sense of public ownership of planning policy and greater pride in a locality.

It is important that all involved in planning understand how the process will operate and at what time and in what manner contributions and comments can be made. It is also important that people have realistic expectations of the outcomes of contributions and consultations.

The original SCI was adopted in 2007 but, in the light of our consultation experience since then, and revised Government planning legislation, we have produced this amended version.

The main changes (caused by publication of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations of 2008 and 2009 are:

- Removal of the preferred options stage for Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and the introduction of a more flexible participation process
- The removal of the requirement of the SCI to be subject to independent examination; and
- The removal of the requirement for Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) to be subject to sustainability appraisals.

Section 2 below deals with the production of these documents in more detail.

¹ Introduced by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

1.2 Vision

The Borough Council's vision is to work jointly with the people and organisations that have an interest in the borough to plan better places together. This SCI will also relate closely to the objectives and technical guidance within the Ribble Valley Consultation Strategy 2007 and the Ribble Valley Sustainable Community Strategy. (see Section 3)

1.3 Who Comprises the Community?

The community includes everyone living in the Borough, both as individuals and members of locally based groups and organisations, and also others who work in the Borough together with businesses and other organisations with interests or future interests in the Borough. These can include residents, the business community, local and national interest groups, the development community including landowners and house builders, the voluntary, community and faith sectors, county, district and parish councils, statutory and other national bodies. The Government specifies certain bodies that have to be consulted on all planning policy documents. These are listed under specific consultation bodies in Appendix 1 together with other bodies who may be relevant consultees in certain circumstances, depending on the particular document concerned.

To help us engage effectively with the many different parts of the Ribble Valley community we maintain an LDF contact database comprising of local individuals and organisations who wish to be consulted and the statutory bodies designated by Government who have to be consulted. The database is divided into broad categories and is described in more detail in Appendix 2. The categories are a useful tool to check that we use the most appropriate and cost effective ways of reaching all in the community, recognising that different groups will respond best to different techniques and that some groups have overlapping interests and memberships.

2. Involving the Community in Making Planning Policy

2.1 The Local Development Framework

Planning policy is set out in Development Plan Documents that collectively form "The Development Plan". Those Development Plan Documents that are prepared locally by the Borough Council are shown in Table 1 below.

The statutory Development Plan consists of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and the Development Plan Documents (DPD's). Locally produced Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) must be prepared in conformity with this SCI. Details of the timing of producing these documents are contained in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The LDS can be viewed at -

www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=699

or at the Council Offices, Level D Reception. Also paper copies are available on request.

The different Local Development Documents (LDDs) require slightly different approaches. For example, Area Action Plans need more localised community involvement than the Borough-wide Core Strategy as they focus on specific small areas, while the Core Strategy will contain broader more strategic policies which will affect the whole of the local community. The SCI will help us set out a common sense approach to engaging those individuals and groups appropriate to each document. The use of the Council's web site will assist access to information.

Table 1 Local Development Framework Documents

A. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENTS

1. Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

These documents are tested through inspection by the Planning Inspectorate and, when adopted by the Council, have the full weight of development plan status in the consideration of planning applications.

Core Strategy – this sets out the key strategic objectives of the local planning system. It contains a spatial vision of how Ribble Valley will develop in the future together with spatial objectives, policies, an implementation plan and a monitoring structure. All other DPDs must be in conformity with it

Proposals Map – this makes clear which policies and programmes operate in which parts of the area, updated with each new DPD.

Site Specific Allocations – these are allocations of land within DPDs for particular purposes, for instance housing, employment, shopping etc.

Area Action Plans – these are particular frameworks developed for specific parts of a wider area, for instance relating to housing regeneration, or the retail core of a town centre, or a conservation area.

2. Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

These expand on policies in the above Development Plan Documents. They are not independently tested and consequently do not have development plan status but are material considerations in the planning application process. They provide extra detail and amplify existing policies within DPDs. They can be topic based eg renewable energy or area based eg a town centre.

B PROCESS DOCUMENTS

Statement of Community Involvement (this document) this describes the Council's approach to engaging and consulting the community in developing planning policy and in the planning application process

Local Development Scheme this sets out the timetable of document production and is regularly reviewed. It is submitted to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for approval.

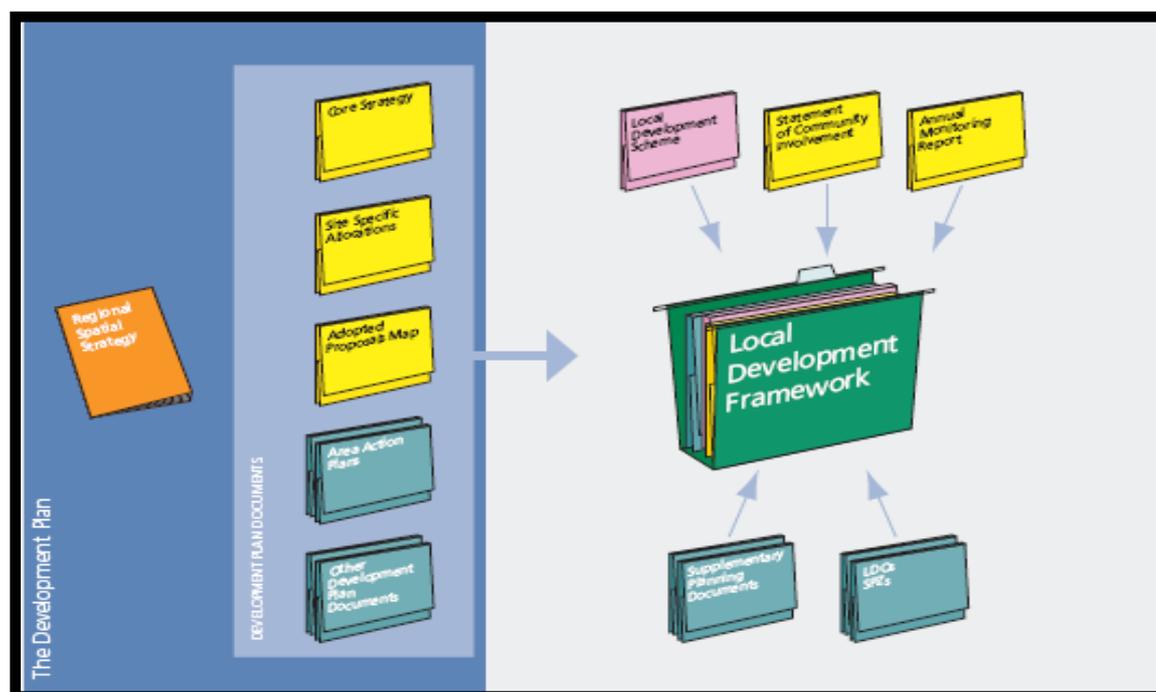
Sustainability Appraisal – this document tests the social, environmental and economic effects of Local Development Documents and assesses their effectiveness in promoting sustainable development. It is produced in parallel with the development of a DPD.

C. EVIDENCE BASE DOCUMENTS

This category includes a potentially wide variety of research material that is needed to underpin and justify policy documents. It includes such documents as:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment*
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment*
- Housing Need Studies*
- Strategic Flood Risk Assessment*
- Employment Land Studies*
- Transport Studies*
- Infrastructure Plans*
- Open Space studies*
- AONB information papers*
- Gypsy and Traveller needs*
- Greenbelt paper*
- Land supply statements*
- Settlement Audit*
- Pennine Lancs. Integrated Economic Strategy*
- Biodiversity baseline*
- Conservation Area Appraisals and management schemes*
- Town Centre Masterplan studies*
- RVBC Housing Strategy*

Diagram 1. The Suite of LDF Documents



The list of Development Plan documents is subject to review. Please refer to the Council's web site www.ribblevalley.gov.uk for current information or contact the Forward Planning Team for more information. Telephone 01200 425111.

2.2 The Plan Preparation Process

The Council is continually gathering evidence through a variety of methods including both formal and informal consultations about a wide range of planning related matters. This evidence helps us identify the important local issues that we then focus our LDF documents on.

Following recent legislation there are now two main formal stages of community involvement in the preparation of a Development Plan Document (or DPD). These are the Regulation 25 and Regulation 27 stages mentioned below. These consultation stages are described in more detail in Table 2 on Pages 8 to 9. In addition there may also be a further opportunity for representations at the Examination stage, at the inspector's discretion. The stages are:

1. Public participation in the preparation of a DPD (also called Regulation 25 within Government Planning legislation)
2. Publication of a DPD (also called Regulation 27 stage within Government Planning legislation)
3. Submission of a DPD (also called Regulation 30 within Government Planning legislation)
4. Independent examination of a DPD (also called regulation 34 within Government Planning legislation)
5. Publication of Inspectors recommendations (also called Regulation 35 within Government Planning legislation)
6. Adoption of a DPD (also called Regulation 36 within Government Planning legislation)

2.3 Sustainability Appraisal

In preparing the LDF the Council must also undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA). This is an assessment of the social, environmental and economic effects of policies and proposals of each DPD within the LDF. The aim is to ensure that decisions help contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The development of the SA takes place alongside the preparation of DPDs and there will be opportunities for consultation at key stages in the preparation of the Appraisal.

The consultation stages in the preparation of a Sustainability Appraisal are outlined in 2.6 below (see page 12).

2.4 How the Community will be Involved

Many organisations and individuals are already actively involved in planning. This is welcomed, but there is a risk that the voice of the less well organised is not heard, including the ‘silent majority’ and other “hard to reach” groups. To ensure that every reasonable effort has been made to engage the whole community the Borough Council will use a variety of consultation tools and techniques to inform, consult and involve. These are explained in more detail in 2.6 below, together with an indication of when they will be used in the various stages of DPD production.

It is also important to recognise that some parts of the wider community are more difficult to engage than others and may need to be approached in different ways. These groups are collectively known as “hard to reach” groups and are described in more detail in 2.5 below.

The consultation standards set out in Table 2 apply to locally produced Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The groups consulted will reflect the geographical scope of the DPD or SPD concerned.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are not subject to an independent examination. Consultation on SPDs will be undertaken as set out in Table 3 below.

Help is available to qualifying individuals and community groups through the Planning Aid Service (PAS), which is an independent service that can provide help and advice on the planning system and how you can get involved in planning matters. More information about PAS is included in Appendix 4

2.5 “Hard to Reach” Groups

Many people do not engage with the planning system due to lack of time, interest or knowledge or for other reasons. For these “hard to reach” groups the Council seeks to make the planning system more accessible and more straightforward to understand. The Consultation summaries and Statements we will produce at each consultation stage should help those who lack knowledge and confidence to identify those groups who have a similar point of view and who may be able to represent their perspective.

Others are “hard to reach” due to some disadvantage, whether physical, mental, social or age-related. The Council will work to reduce barriers to their participation, for example through:

- large print versions of all documents available on request;
- documents available in braille on request;
- documents available in languages other than English, on request
- using media accessible by all households, including those with mobility difficulties (“Ribble Valley News” newspaper and the internet);
- meetings that avoid school pick-up and drop-off times;
- local meetings and local information displays that take account of the needs of those with limited mobility;

- considering any practical suggestions from groups and individuals on how to further reduce barriers.
- making every endeavour to meet the requirements of the Race Relations Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995

People who are least likely to give their views include:

- Young people (those under 18 years old)
- People with physical or mental disabilities, with special needs or people who may have difficulty in reading or writing
- People from ethnic groups or whose first language is not English
- Other disadvantaged groups

Consultation exercises will be monitored to help identify groups within the community that are under represented and highlight any barriers which may prevent responses.

The Forward Plans section maintains a database of persons and organisations who wish to be contacted when LDF documents are under preparation. Details of this database can be found in Appendix 2

2.6 Techniques for Involving the Community

Table 2 Key Consultation Stages in the Preparation of a Development Plan Document

Document Stage	Consultation Methods	Consultation Groups
Draft Options (Regulation 25 stage)	<p>Where appropriate we will widely circulate an explanatory leaflet and/or questionnaire discussing the issue(s) relating to the document. This could include inserting them into local newspapers and Council newsletters. Copies will also be available at the Council's Planning Department reception, on the Council's website and in local libraries.</p> <p>We will hold meetings with both District Council and Parish Council members appropriate to discuss the issue.</p> <p>We will consider the responses to the above and produce a document that presents a series of Options relating to the issue and consult widely on this for at least six weeks</p> <p>After this "Options Consultation" we will prepare a summary of the results which we will present to Council members and publicise on the Council website and make hard copies available at local libraries and in Council offices.</p> <p>Copies will also be made available on CD</p>	<p>All statutory and general Consultees listed in Appendix 1</p> <p>All people and organisations listed in the LDF database held by the Council</p> <p>All identified Hard to Reach Groups</p>
Publication (Regulation 27 stage)	<p>Using the results of the Options Consultation we will then prepare a more detailed paper outlining the most appropriate or "Preferred Option" which will be widely circulated for at least six weeks.</p> <p>We will place this document on the Council website and as hard copies in various public buildings</p> <p>We will send copies of the document to key stakeholders</p> <p>We will publicise this through the local press including press articles, adverts and/or inserted explanatory leaflets in local newspapers.</p> <p>We will also use mobile displays in</p>	<p>All statutory and general Consultees listed in Appendix 1</p> <p>All people and organisations listed in the LDF database held by the Council</p> <p>All identified Hard to Reach Groups</p>

	<p>accessible public places including local libraries, shopping centres, town halls, where appropriate</p> <p>We will inform everyone within the target groups by letter about the consultation and how to respond and will publish details and representation forms on the Council website.</p> <p>We will hold workshops for Council members and Parish Councillors as appropriate. We will also hold at least one open public meeting at an appropriate time for wider discussion.</p> <p>We will also circulate the consultation material to the local Citizens Panel for their consideration</p>	
<p>After this consultation we will consider the results and produce a summary of consultations document on the Regulation 27 stage consultations which we will circulate to Council members, make reference to on the Council website and make paper copies available through local libraries as appropriate.</p> <p>After this consultation stage all responses will be considered by the Planning and development Committee of the Council and a Summary Of Representations produced. Provided that these to not indicate any major changes to the document they can then be incorporated into a document that the Council will then submit to the Secretary of State for examination by the Planning Inspectorate. This document is known as the Submission Version.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Submission (Regulation 30 stage)</p>	<p>At the submission stage we will make the document available at the council offices and other appropriate public buildings like libraries during office hours, publish it on the website along with a statement of fact that it is available for inspection. We will also send a copy to specific consultation bodies who were invited to make representations at reg 25 stage. As part of the publicity we will put a notice in local paper detailing the title of the DPD, subject matter and statement of fact that it can be inspected</p>	<p>Will make all statutory and general consultees listed in Appendix 1 aware of the submission as well as all people and Organisations on the Council's LDF database, all those who made a representation at the previous Regulation 25 stage and all identified Hard to Reach Groups</p>
<p>The Planning Inspectorate will apply a series of "soundness" tests to the document through an Examination in Public and produce a binding report containing a series of recommendations, which may contain amendments. If the Council accepts and implements these then it can then be adopted as local planning policy.</p> <p>If the Inspector considers that the document is unsound then it will be necessary to revert to an earlier stage in the preparation of the document.</p>		

Table 3. Consultation Stages in the Preparation of a Supplementary Planning Document

Document Stage	Consultation Method	Consultation Groups
<p style="text-align: center;">Initial Consultation Stage (optional)</p>	<p>We will advertise the consultation in the local press and the Council's website.</p> <p>We will use a variety of methods which will include leaflets, presentations, displays and questionnaires and meetings where appropriate</p> <p>We will endeavour to inform by letter or email all those parties who have expressed an interest in the issue or who we feel are relevant to it.</p>	<p>Those individuals, groups and organisations that the Council feels are relevant to the subject or area the SPD concerns</p>
<p>We will consider any representations made and then produce a draft document which takes the representations into account. This draft may take several different forms depending on the nature of the SPD.</p>		
<p style="text-align: center;">Draft Document Consultation (Govt. Regulation 17) stage</p>	<p>We will place this draft document together with an online representation form on the Council's website and advertise this in the local press</p> <p>We will make hard copies available at the Planning Department reception in the Council Offices and at appropriate locations, such as local libraries together with representation forms, where appropriate</p> <p>We will endeavour to send emails or letters to interested parties informing them of the consultation and where to access the document</p> <p>The consultation will last for a between 4 and 6 weeks.</p>	<p>If this document was subject to the optional consultation stage above then all those who made representations at that stage will be consulted.</p> <p>Also we will consult with those groups, organisations and individuals who we feel are relevant to the subject of the document.</p>
<p>Following this consultation we will incorporate the representations into a final document. We will also produce a statement describing the main issues that emerged from the consultation and how the final SPD document addresses them</p> <p>Following this we will move to adopt the SPD as Council policy.</p>		

Consultation on Sustainability Appraisal

- Consult statutory consultees on the scope of the SA
- Consult statutory consultees and the public on the initial sustainability report:
- Undertake public consultation on the sustainability appraisal report that will accompany the Regulation 27 stage of the relevant DPD and also on the final Sustainability Appraisal that accompanies the submission DPD at the regulation 30 stage (see Table 2).

2.7 Further Detail of Engagement Techniques

Publicly Available Documents eg Leaflets, Newsletters

Printed leaflets and newsletters, if well designed, are tried and tested methods of getting messages across to a wide cross section of the public. They can incorporate questionnaires and can be inserted into other familiar publications such as local newspapers. They can be very cost effective and parts can be retained for further information and can be used in conjunction with other media such as exhibitions and displays to provide back up messages.

Public Information Displays, including Mini Displays

Results from the Citizens Panel consultations suggest “displays and questionnaires” at public venues are useful techniques. The Panel survey suggested that the presence of a planning officer did not make a significant difference to interest at such displays. A straightforward questionnaire with tick box answers can also assist in obtaining the views of those not comfortable with other techniques.

Supermarkets and libraries will be used as a focus for public information displays on development documents, where this can be agreed with operators.

The involvement of schools is important in reaching the next generation, and therefore mini displays in the form of posters will be sent to all secondary schools where appropriate.

Committee Meetings

Documents will be presented to the Council’s Planning and Development Committee.

Focus Group / Workshops

Focus groups are typically an invited group who engage in interactive discussion in a structured session led by a facilitator. Workshops are generally more open for the public to “drop in” to, although specific invites can also contribute to workshop attendance to ensure particularly relevant parties have the opportunity to be represented. This technique can have particular relevance to those hard to reach groups who may not be engaged by other techniques.

Notification by Letter or Email

The forward planning team hold a database of contacts (see Appendix 2) who are notified at key stages in a development document’s progress. Any organisation or individual who wishes to be added to this contact database may do so by telephoning

the Forward Planning team on 01200 414503 or emailing planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk

To keep costs within reasonable limits, notification will be by email wherever possible but in an area where many still do not have access to the internet postal methods are likely to remain important.

Official Launches

Popular with developers and consultants, this technique works well with adequate preparatory press coverage. It permits an officer presentation of the document and an opportunity to put questions directly to planning officers.

Citizens Panel Survey (Electronic)

The Citizens' Panel is a representative cross section of the community with a membership in excess of 500, with new members asking to join all the time. The Council uses it as a valuable sounding board on many issues, including planning matters.

Coverage by "Ribble Valley News" & Local Press

"Ribble Valley News" is a free newspaper, which is delivered quarterly to all residents in the Borough. Due to its timescales, it may not always be possible to include a prompt of a 6 week formal period for representations, but the Council will nonetheless use it to draw attention to a forthcoming formal stage of consultation.

Press notices will be issued, but the Council has no control over what the Press choose to publish.

Public Notices in the Local Press

A public notice will be put in the local press when a Development Document is presented at the Regulation 25 stage, the Regulation 27 stage and again when it is formally submitted to the Secretary of State.

The Internet

We will keep the Ribble Valley Council website updated with information about consultations, the documents themselves and online representation forms. Consultations will always form key news events shown prominently on the Council's website. While it is an increasingly user friendly technique we are mindful that some of our residents do not find the internet easy to use and that fast broadband is not as widely accessible in the more rural parts of the area. Therefore we will use the internet alongside other techniques. Documents will be available on CD.

The Council will make all development documents available at RVBC offices at Planning Reception, Level D, Council Offices, Church Walk, Clitheroe, Lancashire, BB7 2RA and;

Also when appropriate at all local libraries: Clitheroe, Longridge, Mellor, Whalley, Read and Chatburn

Also on the web, at <http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk>.

All comments forms will be clearly worded. Online response forms will also be provided.

2.8 The Community's Comments

How Consultation Responses can be Submitted

In general the Council will accept comments submitted by email and letter. It will also endeavour to record comments made through public workshops and meetings. In certain cases the Council will also produce e-mailable representation forms that can be submitted electronically. All representations, whether by hard copy or electronically, will be recorded by the Council in a Planning Consultation database so that they can be made available for public inspection. However the Council will first remove any personal information such as addresses, telephone numbers and email addresses.

What Happens to Consultation Comments

The Ribble Valley Borough Council Consultation Strategy 2007 (see 3.2) recognises that consultation is a two way process and the importance of reporting back the results of the consultation. It is very important that local people have the opportunity to express their views, and have those views considered, in advance of decisions being made. In doing this, the Council will not just record comments received, but will endeavour to incorporate the comments received in the emerging Development Plan Documents. It will do this through producing "Consultation Statements" as soon as possible after each consultation. They will set out:

- how the council has involved the community;
- who has been consulted;
- whether there is any relevant community participation from related programmes or strategies;
- a summary of responses received, and the number of representations;
- how the Borough Council have addressed the main points and issues raised by the consultation, in the Development Plan Document.
- Consultation reports will be made available at the locations listed on Page 7 of the Council's Consultation Strategy.

This approach has the benefit that in most cases stakeholders can see all the representations. This lends to an informed debate, with stakeholders recognising the multiplicity of viewpoints. Each Consultation Statement will be available as a public document at the council offices, as a reference document in the borough libraries and on the borough council website.

Following each stage in the preparation of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents planning staff will produce a summary of the points made during the consultations for the Council to consider. These will be made public through hard copies available at the Council Offices planning department and on the Council website

After the Development Plan Document is submitted to the Secretary of State, stakeholders who feel that the correct procedure has not been followed, or that the emerging Development Plan Document is unsound in other ways, may then make representations, which will be heard by an independent inspector.

2.9 Incorporating On-going Feedback

The value of the community's comments does not stop when the development document is adopted. On-going feedback on the operation of the development documents is highly useful and will contribute to the decision of when to start the process of preparing a replacement. On-going feedback includes:

- letters and emails received from the community;
- questionnaire results;
- appeal decisions;
- other statistical and qualitative information gathered by the council

An acknowledgement will be sent to persons who give feedback on the operation of the development documents. Some of the feedback obtained during the year (including feedback on the operation of the SCI) will be included in the Annual Monitoring Report.

2.10 Reviewing Documents

When the time comes to review development plan documents, including this SCI, the scale of the change will influence the degree of community involvement. Typesetting errors should be corrected as a matter of good practice, while at the other end of the scale significant changes, such as a review of a Development Plan Document or a change in national planning policy, will follow the full process set out in this SCI. We will also include the results of our ongoing experience of the effectiveness of various consultation techniques and emerging best practice. This could mean that certain consultation techniques that have not proved successful or efficient will be replaced by more effective methods.

The approach taken with minor alterations will depend on their scale. Wherever a change in planning policy will result, a community involvement exercise will be undertaken as set out in the sections above. The method of involvement chosen will be appropriate to the geographical spread of the policy and the range of stakeholders affected. This SCI will also be reviewed if the Annual Monitoring Report or external change indicates a need for a review.

3. Inter-relationships with Other Programmes

3.1 Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership and the Sustainable Community Strategy

The Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership, (RVSP) is the Local Strategic Partnership for the area. It has produced a Sustainable Community Strategy for 2007 – 2013 which was adopted in March 2008. This document is kept under review and

refreshed as necessary. The RVSP brings together representatives from the community, businesses, voluntary and faith sectors, elected members, service providers such as the Borough and County Councils, the Primary Care Trust and the Police with the collective aim of improving the way local services are planned and delivered.

All Councils are required by Government to publish a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) developed through extensive public involvement and consultation together with issues raised in discussion with neighbouring Councils, Government Office North West, the Northwest Regional Development Agency and other bodies.

This SCS, whilst not a formal planning document, covers issues such as affordable housing and impact on the environment and so will have close links to the Local Development Framework (LDF), though it does not have to be formally consulted on or examined in the same way as a DPD. Recent Government legislation states that the LDF is a key delivery component of the SCS, setting out its spatial elements.

As such there will need to be a constant process of cross checking the LDF with the SCS and ensuring that consultations on behalf of both are efficiently managed and avoid duplication. Where consultation on related strategies take place wherever possible they will be programmed concurrently to save resources and reduce participation fatigue. In such circumstances, a shared exercise can meet the requirements of this SCI only if it refers explicitly to an emerging local development document. Shared consultation would normally only be appropriate at the early stages of gathering evidence and identifying the issues and alternative options.

3.2 Ribble Valley Borough Council Consultation Strategy June 2007

As part of its duties under Government Comprehensive Performance Assessment all local authorities are required to take customers' views on their services into account. The Consultation Strategy provides a framework for all consultation the Council's various services carry out. The Council has also produced a companion on-line interactive Consultation Toolkit containing advice on consultation methods. This will help the planning related consultations through this SCI to be co-ordinated with any other consultations to avoid duplication and make the best use of the Council's resources. The toolkit identifies several opportunities for planning-related consultations through: Citizens' Juries, focus groups, Citizens' Panels, public meetings, surveys, electronic polling and other methods (see Table 2 above). It also outlines how the results of the consultations can be fed back to the community (see 2.8 and 2.9 above).

Work is currently underway to produce a Community Engagement Strategy which will eventually replace the Consultation Strategy.

4. Involving the Community in Planning Applications

The Ribble Valley Borough Council Development Control Protocol 'Working Together' aims to ensure that:

- the planning application process is open and consistent;
- members, officers, applicants, agents and all other stakeholders are clear about their respective roles in the process;

- the process accommodates community involvement in an open and accessible way;
- the optimum balance is reached between the quality of the design reached and the time taken to reach it.
- Further detail of the development Control protocol “Working Together” is available at:
http://www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/site/scripts/documents_info.php?documentID=696&pageNumber=1

4.1 Pre-Application Process

The Council believes that it is better for developers to talk to those who may be affected and refine their proposals while they are at a formative stage.

The benefits of early community involvement include:

- addressing problems *before* the planning application is submitted may reduce the chance of a refusal of permission;
- refinements to the proposals are made at an early stage, preventing abortive work;
- in the long run, reducing the time to reach a successful outcome.

4.2 How Should Developers Consult?

There are a number of easy techniques that even small and householder developments should employ:

- Provide neighbours with *draft* plans and invite comments.
- Request feedback within a specified timescale (e.g. 1-2 weeks), making it clear that this is the best time to take their comments on board, *before* the plans are finalised.
- Have pre-application discussions with development control officers using the designated forms and paying the requisite fee. For more detail please visit www.ribblevalley.gov.uk/planning and search downloadable forms.

Developers of major schemes are encouraged to do some or all of the following depending on the nature and scale of the proposed development:

- Make their detailed proposals available for public view at the site (e.g. drawings, photo montages & sketches mounted on the site boundary). 3-D representations should be included where possible.
- Circulate a leaflet outlining their proposals to local residents.
- Arrange a meeting with groups in the community (e.g. Parish council, residents associations, interested parties, neighbours), giving sufficient advance notice.

- Keep a record of all consultation carried out, including correspondence, public notices, a record of persons attending exhibitions & meetings, etc.

Developers are encouraged to submit a consultation statement with their planning application. This should include:

- techniques employed to gain stakeholder comments;
- summary of responses received;
- main points of objection;
- other matters raised;
- developer comments on the responses;
- amendments made to the proposals as a result

Further details are available in Appendix 3.

4.3 The Council's Consultation on Planning Applications

The Borough Council will consult on planning applications as follows:

- Neighbour notification by letter to adjoining properties or potentially affected premises allowing 21 days to respond.
- Statutory consultees relevant to the application, such as Lancashire County Council in its role as the Highways Authority, the Environment Agency, etc are consulted as a matter of course, with 21 days to respond. This is normally done electronically. Bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed in legislation.
- The weekly list of planning applications is available free of charge on the Borough Council website and e-mailed to Parish Councils that request it.
- Press notices as required are advertised in all the appropriate local papers.
- All statutory site notices as required will be displayed on or near the site. In some instances site notices will be displayed in other types of applications and these will be based on individual circumstances (e.g. hot food takeaways).
- One objector and one developer may speak publicly at planning committee and have 3 minutes to voice their opinions.
- Planning committee agendas and minutes are available to view on the council's website

The key to community involvement is considered to be disseminating information about the applications received. The community is generally forthcoming with comments on applications of interest, and responses received in writing are reported

in the planning officer's report. The results of any such consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, the Council.

4.4 The Council's Involvement of the Community After a Decision is Made

As part of the Borough Council's commitment to community involvement, the Council makes Decision Notices available on the Council's website allowing interested persons to view the conditions placed on a development.

5. Resource Implications

Ultimately it is local residents and businesses, through their council tax, who pay for the planning service. Achieving the community involvement outlined in this document will require resources in terms of staff time, internet maintenance, printing and other costs. This SCI seeks to achieve an acceptable balance between the importance of community involvement and keeping the costs within realistic limits. We are aware of the dangers of "consultation fatigue" and will endeavour, wherever possible, to co-ordinate consultation exercises with other parts of the authority. We will also maximise the use of other resources such as the Planning Portal, Planning Aid and the Council's website in adding to the effectiveness of our consultations.

The provision of resources that can be applied to carry out consultation includes the staff of the Forward Planning section of the Development Services Department, in particular the Policy Team (4 full time staff) supplemented by specialist Countryside, Regeneration and Conservation staff that can be drawn into the process as appropriate. It should be borne in mind however that other areas of work are also covered by staff within the section, consequently staff resources are under constant pressure. A specific budget of £2,000 per year is available from the Core Budget for planning policy work. In addition, planned expenditure from the Planning Delivery Grant currently allows for £60,000 to be drawn down to support the programme of policy preparation in the LDS and through the SCI. The Council's Service Planning Process gives the opportunity to review budget provision to ensure that any changes in planned expenditure or new initiatives can be monitored and planned for.

We will be able to receive representations in written or email form and there will be online consultation facilities where appropriate, however telephone representations cannot be taken into consideration.

Appendix 1

Advice on the relevant bodies that the Council should consult is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England) Regulations 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2008 and 2009.

The list below outlines those groups and organizations that are likely to be consulted. It is not exhaustive and is regularly reviewed. Where organizations are referred to in generic terms the relevant Ribble Valley organization will be contacted.

As mentioned earlier in this document statutory consultees will automatically be contacted. The Council will also consult with those non statutory bodies that it considers are likely to be affected by the subject of a particular document, in addition to those individuals and organizations that have requested to be consulted.

Statutory and Other Consultees

Government requires that the Council consults, in addition to local residents, with a wide variety of organisations over planning matters. Some bodies, known as statutory consultees, have to be consulted on every planning related document, others only in relation to some documents. The statutory consultees are those bodies listed below under specific and general consultation bodies.

Specific consultation bodies

The specific consultation bodies are listed in The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended) and relate to organisations responsible for services and utilities and infrastructure provision. Below is a list of specific bodies who must be consulted by the local authority when preparing development plan documents in which they have an interest.

The specific consultation bodies are:

- the regional planning body (in this area this is the North West Regional Development Agency and the Regional Leaders Board at the time of this consultation).
- the Mayor of London (if the local authority is a London borough)
- a relevant authority, any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local authority, such as:
 - a regional planning authority (at the time of this consultation)
 - a local planning authority
 - a county council
 - a parish council
 - a police authority (in this area Lancashire Constabulary)
- The Coal Authority
- The Environment Agency

- English Heritage
- Natural England

The Secretary of State for Transport in relation to functions concerning railways by virtue of section 1 of the Railways Act 2005 (in cases where the plan affects rail provision projects, national rail projects, such as High Speed 2 or Crossrail, and/or the local Network Rail office) and the Secretary of State's function as highway authority by virtue of section 1 of the Highways Act 1980 (the Highways Agency)

- a regional development agency whose area is in, or adjoins, the area of the local authority (in this area the North West Regional Development Agency)
- any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106 (3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003
- any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local authority
- any of the bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the local authority:
 - primary care trust
 - sewage undertaker (in this area United Utilities)
 - water undertaker. (in this area United Utilities)
 - person to whom a license has been granted under Section 7(2) of the 1986 Gas Act
- The Homes and Communities Agency transitional provisions, this will be a requirement from 6th April 2010.

General consultation bodies

The general consultation bodies are also listed in the regulations. The regulations identify five types of bodies as general consultation bodies that relate to voluntary organisations representing certain groups within the community. The general consultation bodies are:

- voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the council's area
- bodies which represent the interests of:
 - different ethnic or national groups in the local authority's area
 - different religious groups in the local authority's area
 - disabled people in the local authority's area
 - people carrying on business in the local authority's area.

The exact organisations that fall into these types will vary locally. When preparing the development plan document, the council must consult those general consultation bodies it considers appropriate.

Other consultation bodies

The key principle is that the local authority should carry out public participation that is appropriate for the development plan document being produced.

Depending on the plan being produced, it may be appropriate to consult with other agencies and organisations in addition to those identified as specific or general consultation bodies. The following list provides some suggestions, but it is **not** exhaustive.

- Age Concern
- Airport Operators
- British Geological Survey
- British Toilet Association
- British Waterways and other canal owners and navigation authorities
- Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- Chambers Of Commerce, the local CBI and local branches of the Institute of Directors
- Chemical Business Association
- Church Commissioners
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- Crown Estate Office
- Diocesan board of finance
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- Electricity, gas and telecommunications companies, and the National Grid Company
- Environmental groups at the national, regional and local level, such as the Campaign to Protect Rural England, Friends of the Earth, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds and wildlife trusts
- Equality and Human Rights Commission
- Fire and rescue services
- Forestry Commission

- Freight Transport Association
- Gypsy Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Help the Aged
- Higher and further education institutions
- Home Builders Federation
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Learning and Skills Council
- Local Agenda 21 organisations, including civic societies, community groups, local transport authorities and local equalities groups
- National Playing Fields Association
- Passenger transport authorities
- Passenger transport executives
- Port operators
- Post Office property holdings
- Regional housing boards
- Regional sports boards
- Road Haulage Association
- Sport England
- The Theatres Trust
- Train operating companies (passenger and freight)
- Transport for London
- Traveller Law Reform Project
- Water companies
- Womens' National Commission

Appendix 1 is drawn from Planning Advisory Service material available via the web link below:

<http://www.pas.gov.uk/pas/core/page.do?pagelD=116396>

Appendix 2

Forward Planning's Local Development Framework Database of Consultees

The list below reflects the generic types of consultee with whom we will consult.

Persons or organisations who wish to be contacted when LDF documents are under preparation may request to be placed on a database of consultees by contacting the Forward Planning team on 01200 414570 or emailing planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk

The database is made up of the following:

Interested members of the public

Individuals who have requested inclusion

Ribble Valley Borough Council Members

Ribble Valley Parish and Town Councils

Community organisations & interested members of the public

All schools in the borough

Churches & minority faith groups

Groups representing the interests of disabled persons

Youth groups, clubs, interest groups & societies

Statutory & development control consultees

Including national interest groups, government agencies, infrastructure providers

Neighbouring Local Authorities and Neighbouring Parish Councils

Housing Associations

Businesses, Consultants, Developers

Local & national businesses that have requested inclusion

Landowners, Developers (such as house builders) and their agents (planning consultants, surveyors, land agents, etc)

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

Appendix 3

GUIDANCE FOR DEVELOPERS ON CONSULTATION FOR PROPOSALS

<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Small and householder developments</u>	<u>Major developments</u>
Provide neighbours with draft plans and invite comments.	Recommended	Recommended
Request feedback within a specified timescale (e.g. 1-2 weeks), making it clear that this is the best time to take their comments on board, <i>before</i> the plans are finalised.	Recommended	Recommended
Have pre-application discussions with development control officers	Recommended	Strongly Recommended
Make their detailed proposals available for public view at the site (e.g. drawings, photo montages & sketches mounted on the site boundary). 3-D representations should be included where possible.	Depends on nature and potential impact	Recommended. Format depends on nature and potential impact of proposals. Advisable to discuss consultation with Council Officers
Circulate a leaflet outlining their proposals to local residents.	Depends on nature and potential impact	Recommended. Format depends on nature and potential impact of proposals. Advisable to discuss consultation with Council Officers
Arrange a meeting with groups in the community (e.g. Parish council, residents associations, interested parties, neighbours), giving sufficient advance notice.	Depends on nature and potential impact of proposal	Recommended
Keep a record of all consultation carried out, including correspondence, public notices, a record of persons attending exhibitions & meetings, etc	Recommended	Recommended

Appendix 4

Information on the Planning Process

Advice on the planning process is available from the Borough Council, Planning Aid and private planning agents.

Council Advice

Planning officers are available to advise on Council policies and answer queries about individual planning applications. Duty officers are available at the Planning Reception on Level D at our Clitheroe Offices.

Please contact Planning on: 01200 414499 or email planning@ribblevalley.gov.uk to arrange an appointment

Planning Aid

Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional help, advice and support on planning issues to people and communities who cannot afford to hire a planning consultant. Planning Aid complements the work of local authorities but is wholly independent of them. In most UK regions Planning Aid is run by the Royal Town Planning Institute (registered charity no. 262865). In this area the relevant contact is Planning Aid Northwest

Planning Aid offers two main services:

- Free and independent casework advice from a qualified planner;
- Community Planning activities (training, information and facilitation for groups about how planning may be affecting your community)

In each region there is a Caseworker (who is fully qualified to give independent advice and who will sometimes hand cases over to a volunteer) and a Community Planner who works alongside communities in helping to plan their neighbourhood.

Information can be viewed on the planning aid website at www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

You can use the tools on this site to find out about the services available; whether you qualify for Planning Aid assistance; and how to contact Planning Aid. The site also provides a range of information about the planning system and how you can get involved.

If you are in doubt as to whether Planning Aid Northwest can help you, or have any queries about Planning Aid services please:

call the Advice Line on 0870 850 9804 or

email to: nwco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Planning Consultants and Agents

A number of independent planning consultants and agents operate locally who charge a fee for advice. To retain impartiality Council officers are unable to make individual recommendations. The RTPI holds a list of accredited consultants which is available on: www.rtpi.org.uk. There are also other consultants who may be able to offer appropriate advice.

Appendix 5

Glossary of terms used

AMR	<u>Annual Monitoring Report</u> This report is prepared every year and helps assess if the plan making programme is on target and whether policies remain appropriate or if new issues have arisen.
AAP	<u>Area Action Plan</u> Covers a specific part of a district focusing on key areas of change or development opportunity or conservation
CS	<u>Core Strategy</u> The Core Strategy sets out the broad strategy for the area, and all other Development Plan Documents must conform to it.
DP	<u>Development Plan</u> The documents used to determine planning applications and having a specific meaning and relevance in planning law.
DPD	<u>Development Plan Document</u> Local Development Documents that establish planning policies and land use allocations. They form part of the DP performing a similar function to Local Plans.
LDD	<u>Local Development Documents</u> the separate planning documents that together make up the Local Development Framework. They can be either DPDs or SPDs.
LDF	<u>Local Development Framework</u> A portfolio of plans that sets out the Council's planning policy framework.
LDS	<u>Local Development Scheme</u> A three-year programme for the preparation of the LDF 'rolled forward' each year.
PM	<u>Proposals Map</u> A separate map which shows all the policies and proposals contained within the various DPDs and also any "saved" policies from previous plans. It must be revised each time a DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State

RVSP	<u>Ribble Valley Strategic Partnership</u> A single non-statutory, multi-agency body, which matches local authority boundaries, and aims to bring together at a local level the different parts of the public, private, community and voluntary sectors.
PPS	<u>Planning Policy Statement</u> Replaces Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and outlines national planning policy.
RSS	<u>Regional Spatial Strategy</u> Replaces Regional Planning Guidance (RPG).
	<u>Statement of Consultation</u> Issued by the Local Authority explaining how they have complied with their SCI during consultation on a DPD.
SA	<u>Sustainability Appraisal</u> All emerging policies are screened for their social, environmental and economic implications through this process. Can incorporate Strategic Environmental Assessment (see SEA below)
SEA	<u>Strategic Environmental Assessment</u> Assesses the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and is required by European legislation. This can be combined with Sustainability Appraisal (see SA above)
SCI	<u>Statement of Community Involvement</u> A statement of how the Council will consult the community and other stakeholders when preparing LDDs and dealing with planning applications.
SCS	<u>Sustainable Community Strategy</u> A framework for delivering sustainable communities over the next 15 to 20 years.
SPD	<u>Supplementary Planning Documents</u> LDDs that give additional guidance on matters covered by DPDs, similar to the former SPGs. They do not form part of the DP.
SPG	<u>Supplementary Planning Guidance</u> Replaced under the new system by SPDs, SPGs were a less formal means of expanding development plan policy.