
Statement of Community Involvement

November 2006



Punjabi

ਅਨੁਰੋਧ ਕਰਨ ਤੇ, ਇਹ ਡਾਕਯੂਮੈਂਟ (ਲਿਖਤ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼), ਅਤੇ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਯੋਜਨਾ (ਫਰੇਮਵਰਕ) ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਹੋਰ ਡਾਕਯੂਮੈਂਟਸ ਵੱਡੇ ਪਰਿੰਟ, ਆਡੀਓ ਕਸੇਟ ਤੇ ਰੀਕਾਰਡ ਕੀਤੇ ਹੋਏ, ਬਰੇਲ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ, ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗ੍ਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਾਂ ਮਿਲ ਸਕਣਗੇ। ਜੇਕਰ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਕੋਈ ਡਾਕਯੂਮੈਂਟ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਫਾਰਮੈਟ (ਬਣਤਰ) ਵਿੱਚ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ, ਤਾਂ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਪਤੇ ਤੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ: ਪਲੈਨਿੰਗ ਪਾਲਸੀ ਟੀਮ, ਡਾਇਰੈਕਟਰੇਟ ਆਫ਼ ਦਿ ਅਰਬਨ ਇਨਵਾਇਰਨਮੈਂਟ, ਡਡਲੀ ਮੈਟਰੋਪੌਲਿਟਨ ਬਰੌ ਕਾਊਂਸਲ, 3 ਸੇਂਟ ਜੇਮਸਿਸ ਰੋਡ ਡਡਲੀ Planning Policy Team, Directorate of the urban environment, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, 3 St, James's Road, Dudley DY1 1HZ - ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਨੰਬਰ: 01384-816967 - ਈ-ਮੇਲ ਪਤਾ: udp.plan@dudley.gov.uk

Urdu

یاد رکھیں ڈیوٹینٹ فریم ورک (مقامی بہتری سے متعلق اقدامات کا ڈھانچہ) سے متعلق دوسری دستاویزات بڑے حروف کی طباعت، آڈیو کیسٹ، بریل یا انگریزی زبان کے علاوہ زبانوں میں ترجمے کی صورت میں دستیاب ہیں یا درخواست پرفرائم کی جائے گی۔ اگر آپ کو دستاویز ان میں سے کسی بھی شکل میں درکار ہے تو براہ مہربانی پلاننگ پالیسی ٹیم، ڈائریکٹوریٹ آف اربن اینوائرنمنٹ، ڈڈلی میٹروپولیٹن بورو کونسل، 3 سینٹ جیمز روڈ، ڈڈلی ڈی وی 1 1 ایچ ایچ کے ساتھ رابطہ قائم کریں۔ ٹیلیفون نمبر: 01384 816967، ای میل: udp.plan@dudley.gov.uk

Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The planning system is currently undergoing a period of great change. These changes will bring many benefits to Dudley and its communities and will result in individuals having more input into the planning process than ever before.
- 1.2 The changes are as a result of new Government legislation which aims at making the planning system more flexible but, more importantly, encourages greater participation from individuals in formulating plans for the future of Dudley Borough. This legislation recently came into force under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
- 1.3 With your input, real and lasting improvements can be made in order to create a Dudley Borough that is shaped by and serves the needs of its residents. Planning the future of the Borough together will help to create vibrant places that people will want to live and work in as well as meeting the needs of its diverse population. That is why everyone's opinion and input is vital.
- 1.4 This Statement of Community Involvement is an important document as part of the new planning system. This is because it sets out clearly how the Council will involve communities under the new system in order to create a series of plans which make up what is known as the Local Development Framework. This Statement also identifies how community involvement will take place in respect of planning applications.

The Statement of Community Involvement

- 1.5 There have always been opportunities for community involvement in planning, but the new system means that much more of this involvement will take place at the front end of the process so that local communities have an active role in the formulation of plans and strategies for their area.
- 1.6 Successful community involvement is particularly dependent on involvement and participation taking place early enough for people to have a meaningful input into the planning process rather than being asked for views on proposals which are already well developed. This type of involvement is known as 'front loading' and ensures that views on planning in the Borough are taken into consideration at the outset.
- 1.7 This document aims to clearly set out how the Council will seek to involve communities and how the results of that involvement will feed into and influence planning decisions. When technical terms are used, explanations are either provided in the text itself or as part of the glossary. The glossary should be read alongside the main section of the document.

1.8 This Statement of Community Involvement will help to bring the following benefits to the process of producing planning documents and policies:

- Gain a better understanding of community needs
- Strengthen the evidence base (supporting information) for plans, strategies and planning decisions
- Community commitment to the future development of an area
- Promoting regeneration and investment
- Fostering ownership and strengthening delivery of plans

1.9 If the new system is going to be successful then individuals need to be fully engaged with the new process and have ownership of it and this document will be an important element in helping to achieve this aim. An effective relationship between Dudley Council and local communities will be required to achieve this objective.

Borough Profile

1.10 Dudley is a large Metropolitan Borough Council (38 square miles) located on the western part of the West Midlands conurbation, approximately 9 miles west of Birmingham and 6 miles south of Wolverhampton. To the west lies the urban fringe of South Staffordshire and the rural parts of Worcestershire. Despite its predominantly urban character, an estimated 25% of the Borough is open space, including just under 1700 hectares of Green Belt, which contribute to its environmental quality and attractiveness.

1.11 Dudley has a population of 304,800, the highest of the four Black Country Local Authorities, according to the 2003 mid-year estimates. In 2005, the average house price in Dudley was £136,363, which (despite being lower than that for the West Midlands as a whole and for England and Wales) is higher than for the adjacent authorities of Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton.

1.12 As with many other areas the local economic base has undergone dramatic restructuring during the past twenty years, which is a key challenge for economic regeneration in the Borough. In spite of this, a comparison of claimant unemployment rates in February 2005 revealed that the Dudley Borough has the lowest unemployment rate in the Black Country and the second lowest rate in the West Midlands Metropolitan area at 3.6%. The changes to the employment structure of the local economic base have created new challenges particularly in developing the skills of the local workforce to meet the needs of the employers.

1.13 In summary it can be seen that the Dudley Borough has some key strengths, however it also faces some major challenges over the next few years in terms of the restructuring of the employment base, matching the skills of employees with needs of employers and

providing an environment which will meet the life style needs of all its communities.

Contact Us

- 1.14 If you would like any further information about this Statement of Community Involvement or about any of our planning services, please contact us:

Planning Policy Team

Tel: 01384 816967

E-mail:
udp.plan@dudley.gov.uk

Development Control Team

Tel: 01384 814116 or 814120

E-mail:
development.control@dudley.gov.uk

Or write to the planning policy or development control teams at:

Directorate of the Urban Environment
Dudley MBC
3 St James's Road
Dudley
DY1 1HZ

You can also get further information from the Council's website at:

www.dudley.gov.uk

To access and submit planning and building control applications on-line please go to:

[http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--planning/planning/
online-planning-and-building-control](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--planning/planning/online-planning-and-building-control)

- 1.15 We thank you for taking the time to read this document and look forward to working with you in the future.

2.0 WHY HAVE A STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT?

Purpose and Benefits of Involvement

- 2.1 Community involvement is one of the cornerstones of the planning process. Without this engagement, planning would lose its legitimacy. Dudley Council needs the opinions of its residents, businesses, partners, landowners and the development industry in order to be able to plan for the future development of the Borough in a positive way which is of benefit to everyone. This is why Dudley Council is committed to ensuring that such involvement takes place in the best way possible.
- 2.2 Community involvement is important for planning purposes because:
- It strengthens local democracy
 - It strengthens the decision making process
 - It influences the policy making process
 - It strengthens the evidence base that planning policy is based on
- 2.3 It is important that communities have a sense of ownership over the policy making process and community involvement is a way of achieving this. However, for this to take place we must set out an agreed blueprint or guide as to how we will go about such involvement. The Statement of Community Involvement is therefore that blueprint.

Principles for Community Involvement

- 2.4 This Statement of Community Involvement deals with community involvement in relation to the planning system only but will feed into, and have regard to Dudley MBC's wider commitment to involving all sections of the community in making its decisions.
- 2.5 Dudley MBC is committed to engaging service users in the operation of all activities and services administered by the Council and has produced a corporate consultation guide and database to ensure that this takes place in the most appropriate way. More details of that consultation guide are given in Appendix C whilst some of the main principles that Dudley Council will adhere to in involving the community are given here:
- Equal access to information
- All participants should have equal access to available information. Dudley Council will therefore try to identify and overcome any barriers to this access. For example, through language barriers and support required for special needs. When required, help will be given by Dudley Council and/or by partner organisations in preparing for meetings and activities.

- A right to be heard

Dudley Council recognises that all participants and individuals have a right to be heard. This includes groups and individuals that have not previously come forward and made their opinions and ideas known.

- Ownership of the process

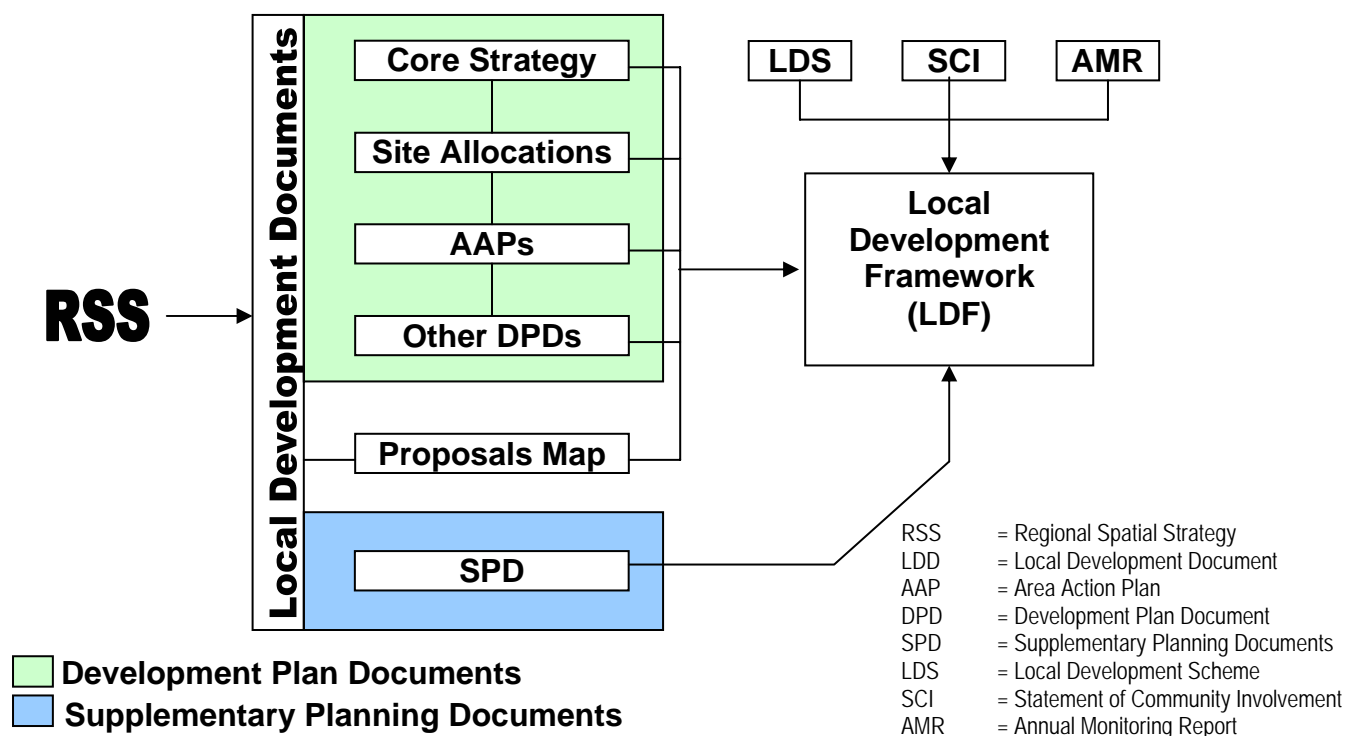
Dudley Council also recognises that community involvement will only work if all participants have ownership of the process i.e. that they will be actively involved in the development of the process, will have a fair say in what happens and will be continuously involved in monitoring and improving it.

- Transparency

Dudley MBC is committed to making its work easily understood by all individuals, groups and agencies. It is our aim that all participants should have equal access to the process by seeking to ensure that information (such as plans, policies, committee reports etc) is produced in plain English and is as jargon free as possible. We are also committed to providing a clear and accountable process by which the Council considers and acts upon the results of community involvement.

3.0 THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

- 3.1 The planning system in the UK is undergoing a significant period of change. These changes are aimed at making the planning system more flexible, transparent and accessible. This will involve the production of a series of planning documents which together will be known as the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 3.2 This Statement of Community Involvement is an integral part of the Local Development Framework as it provides a blueprint for how community involvement is to take place during the formulation of the documents within it.
- 3.3 In Dudley's case the Local Development Framework will replace the Unitary Development Plan. The advantage of the new system is that individual documents based on specific areas or themes can be updated individually, whereas in the past the whole Unitary Development Plan would need to be updated which was very time consuming. The new system therefore allows for a greater degree of flexibility.
- 3.4 The Local Development Framework will comprise a number of important documents as set out below:



- 3.5 Each local authority must set out which documents it will prepare as part of the new planning system in a separate document known as the **Local Development Scheme**. It sets out the timetable for producing these documents and highlights when communities and stakeholders will be involved.
- 3.6 Dudley has just produced its first Local Development Scheme which is available in the Council Offices at 3 St. James's Road, Dudley and Mary Stevens Park, Stourbridge and Libraries as well as on the Council's website www.dudley.gov.uk
- 3.7 Whilst the Local Development Scheme sets out each of the local development documents the Council will produce, there is one document that is not produced by Dudley MBC but which does form part of our Local Development Framework. That document is the Regional Spatial Strategy. This sets out a broad strategic planning framework for the whole of the West Midlands region and Dudley's local planning policies have to be in conformity with it.

Development Plan Documents

- 3.8 Development Plan Documents comprise the statutory development plan for the Borough with the same status as the Unitary Development Plan. They provide the basis for planning decisions within the Borough and are subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement and examination by an independent planning inspector to ensure that they are 'sound' (see Glossary in Appendix A).
- 3.9 Development plan documents include 4 different types of document:
- i. Core Strategy - sets out the vision, objectives and core policies for the development of Dudley Borough;
 - ii. Site specific allocations of land - sets out where land is allocated for specific uses (including mixed uses);
 - iv. Area Action Plans - these will be used to facilitate and deliver change in areas where it is needed, for example, regeneration areas or town centres.
 - v. Other Development Plan Documents - these can include documents based on a particular theme and applied Borough-wide e.g. Housing Land

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.10 These documents will supplement the Development Plan Documents with additional information and guidance or expand further on policy. They deal with specific planning issues such as affordable housing or

nature conservation and can include design guides and site development briefs.

- 3.11 Supplementary Planning Documents are a material consideration when determining planning applications but are not subject to independent examination. They are therefore accorded less weight than Development Plan Documents. However, because they are subject to rigorous community involvement they are still important documents when considering development proposals.

Other Documents

- 3.12 Accompanying the Development Plan Documents will be an Adopted Proposals Map which sets policies out in the geographical context. For example, it may show where strategic housing sites are situated.
- 3.13 Each year by the end of December the Council will also publish an Annual Monitoring Report. This Report will assess whether Dudley MBC is meeting its targets in the production of Local Development Documents against the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme. It will also assess whether the policies in these documents are being implemented successfully.

4.0 OUR APPROACH TO INVOLVEMENT ON THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

4.1 This chapter outlines Dudley's approach to community involvement on the different documents which make up the Local Development Framework under the new planning system, namely:

- Development Plan Documents
- Supplementary Planning Documents

4.2 Although different types of community involvement will take place at different stages, what must be remembered is that the process of community involvement will be a continuous one, with opportunities at all stages of plan production.

4.3 The legislation and guidance for the new planning system requires that each Development Plan Document is subject to two statutory periods of formal consultation of 6 weeks in length. However, these statutory consultation periods are seen as the end of a far longer process of community involvement and feedback right from the inception of plans and documents through to their formation. This will ensure that community involvement and consultation periods are consistent with the requirements of the Dudley Borough Local Compact. (See Appendix A – Glossary)

Development Plan Documents

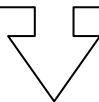
4.4 Community involvement on Development Plan Documents will take place at the following stages of the plan making process:

Stage 1 Evidence Gathering

At this stage we will be consulting with key partners and local communities and gathering evidence, data and information to inform the Development Plan Document. The objective of this stage is to begin discussing the vision and strategy for the Borough.

In terms of community involvement, this is perhaps the most important stage. This is because under the new planning system community involvement will be 'front loaded' i.e. informal community involvement will take place much earlier in the process to identify all the relevant issues and options (see Section 5.0 for how the Council will do this). This will be an opportunity for communities and stakeholders to present their plans and proposals in respect to development as well as through the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This will be a continuous process during this stage.

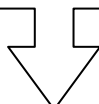
It will be the role of Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council to facilitate this community involvement: rather than lead the process, the Council will encourage communities to take the lead on this. The outcome of this stage should be consensus around preferred options which can then be developed and taken forward. This will involve reaching an agreement as to the preferred development options for the Borough although it is recognised that a general consensus will not always be possible to achieve.



Stage 2 Preferred Options

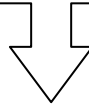
Following on from the identification of issues and alternative options for the Development Plan Document in the previous stage, the Council will prepare and publish a number of preferred options which will be subject to community engagement. A sustainability appraisal will be done on those options and published at the same time which identifies the likely social, economic and environmental impacts of the Plan. This will help community groups, individuals and other stakeholders to identify their preferred options and policies. These documents will be consulted on for a statutory period of 6 weeks using methods given in Section 5.0.

The community involvement period on the preferred options stage is an opportunity for communities and stakeholders to respond to the options proposed and bring forward alternative proposals, providing they meet the development plan documents' objectives and are compatible with its vision.



Stage 3 Submission Stage

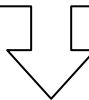
The Council will then consider all the responses received during the preferred options stage and produce a 'submission' plan. This Development Plan Document will then be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination together with a revised Sustainability Appraisal Report. It will also be published at the same time for another statutory 6 week community involvement period so that anyone who wishes to comment on the plan can do so. Only representations made at the submission stage will be taken into consideration at the public examination by the Inspector. An additional period of 6 weeks consultation is allowed after submission but before the examination in the event of site allocation representations being made.



Stage 4 Examination

This is where the soundness (see Glossary) or robustness of the plan is tested by a Planning Inspector at Independent Examination. Those people who made representations during the 6 week consultation period at Submission Stage (see above – stage 3) will have the opportunity to be involved in the examination.

Following the Independent Examination the Inspector will produce a Report setting out any changes that the Council must make to the Development Plan Document.



Stage 5 Adoption

At this stage the Council will formally adopt the Development Plan Documents as part of the Local Development Framework and the following information will be made available to the public:

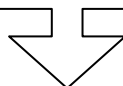
- An adoption statement;
- The adopted development plan document;
- A statement explaining how representations were dealt with;
- A statement summarising how sustainability issues have been integrated into the document and how the sustainability appraisal and consultation has been taken into account, and the reasons for choosing the document as adopted in light of other reasonable alternatives.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 4.5 The process for preparing a Supplementary Planning Document is similar to the process for Development Plan Documents but simplified. There is no requirement for the preparation of preferred options or for an Independent Examination, but there will be considerable opportunities for community involvement.
- 4.6 The stages of production will therefore be:

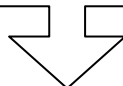
Stage 1 Evidence Gathering

This stage operates in the same way as with Development Plan Document preparation. We then move directly from evidence gathering to preparing a draft Supplementary Planning Document. As part of this preparation, we will involve local communities and stakeholders in the development of such documents.



Stage 2 Production

The draft Supplementary Planning Document will be published for formal community involvement for a statutory period of 6 weeks. This will be accompanied by a statement setting out how involvement was undertaken, a sustainability appraisal and an assessment of whether the Document is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy.



Stage 3 Adoption

We will consider all valid representations received on the Draft Supplementary Planning Document and prepare a report summarising the main issues raised and how they are addressed in the document. We will then make changes as appropriate and adopt the Supplementary Planning Document. The Supplementary Planning Document will then be made available to the public at appropriate Council offices and on the Council's website.

5.0 HOW WILL PEOPLE BE INVOLVED?

- 5.1 This Chapter will identify how people can be involved, the sort of people we'll be actively seeking to involve and the process of that involvement.

Methods of Community Involvement

- 5.2 The following table sets out the methods that we will use to pursue community involvement. As can be seen from the Table, there are different levels of Community Involvement. These range from the provision of information through to community consultation on proposals and policies, and finally, community involvement methods which are required to help formulate policies and proposals at the outset. The most appropriate of these methods will be used according to what stage the production of a particular plan or document has reached and what type of document is being produced.

Information Methods

Involvement Methods	Main considerations	Who we will involve	Resource implications	Which documents
Documents available for inspection at local planning authority offices and libraries during set consultation period	Allows access to wide range of information	Individuals	Low cost aside from costs of initial document production	All Local Development Documents as set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS)
Dudley MBC Website at www.dudley.gov.uk	Allows access to wide range of information	Individuals, organisations and groups	Relatively low cost after initial set up	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Advertisement in local newspapers and journals	Good for reaching a wide cross section of the Borough's population	Individuals Businesses Organisations	Relatively high cost	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Press releases to local newspapers and journals	Wide coverage but can't guarantee that the press will run the story	Individuals Businesses Organisations	Low cost	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Leaflets/brochures	Particularly suitable for documents involving the use of graphics	Individuals	Relatively high cost	Area Action Plans Proposals map

Involvement Methods	Main considerations	Who we will involve	Resource implications	Which documents
Public meetings – area, town, township	Good for presenting ideas to a wide audience	Individuals Businesses Organisations	Requires input of senior staff	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS

Consultation Methods

Involvement Methods	Main considerations	Who we will involve	Resource implications	Which documents
Letters to statutory bodies	Allows for very specific types of consultation	Statutory consultees, national/ international interest groups. Communities of identity, interest and geography. Regional agencies	Low cost in terms of staff time and resources	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Public exhibitions/ displays/ stalls/ roadshows	Allows wide range of information. Requires the input of senior staff	Individuals Businesses Organisations	Intensive use of resources	Area Action Plans Other Development Plan Documents Proposals Map
Formal written consultation/ referenda/ community surveys	Allows for the collection of a wide range of responses from a broad cross section of the population	Individuals and groups Businesses Organisations	Intensive use of resources	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Dudley MBC Website at www.dudley.gov.uk	Allows a broad range of information to be conveyed and views sought.	Individuals and groups	Low cost after initial set up	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
E based consultation	Allows for very specific queries to be answered	Individuals and groups	Low cost	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS

Involvement Methods	Main considerations	Who we will involve	Resource implications	Which documents
Face to face engagement	Allows for in depth discussion	Individuals Businesses Organisations	Intensive use of resources	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Citizens Panels (randomly selected participants)	Wide coverage of the Borough population, representative of key demographics such as ethnicity and age	2000 Panel members	Minimal resources required through using existing consultation mechanisms	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Hotline	Allows for very specific queries to be answered and proposals to be made	Individuals	Intensive use of resources. Will require officer training	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Public meetings – area, town, township	Good for presenting ideas. However, participants at meetings are self selecting	Individuals Businesses Organisations	Requires input of senior staff	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS

Involvement Methods

Involvement methods	Main considerations	Who we will involve	Resource implications	On which documents
One-to-one meetings with selected stakeholders	Good for drawing out in depth information.	Community leaders Businesses Interest group representatives	Intensive use of resources	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Public meetings Area, town and township meetings	Good for identifying local community needs, ideas, and proposals at initial stage	Individuals Businesses Organisations	Officer time Suitable venue	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Focus groups (selected groups of participants with particular characteristics)	Good for highlighting key issues	Particular sections of the population e.g. youth, older people	Intensive use of resources	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS

Involvement methods	Main considerations	Who we will involve	Resource implications	On which documents
Pre-existing panels, forums and design teams	Good for focussing on particular parts of documents	Selected groups e.g. small businesses	Low level of resources required	All Local Development Documents as set out in the LDS
Workshops (interactive) e.g. 'enquiry by design' and 'planning for real' exercises	Allows for equal participation	Individuals Businesses Organisations	Intensive use of resources	Area Action Plans Core strategy

- 5.3 Dudley MBC is required to undertake some of these methods as part of the Council's statutory responsibilities. At a minimum, in the production of Local Development Documents the Council must make the relevant documents available for inspection during normal office hours at 3 St. James's Road, publish them on the Council's website, publish an advertisement on at least one occasion in a local newspaper circulating around the whole of Dudley and write directly to any specific consultation bodies and any general consultation bodies deemed appropriate. The Council will usually go above and beyond those minimum requirements by using the methods identified in the table above.

Dudley MBC's View of Involvement

- 5.4 Dudley Council considers involvement to mean much more than consultation. Where as consultation implies asking for an individual or groups opinion, involvement implies involving individuals and groups in the actual decision making process. Involvement is therefore a much broader concept than consultation. Dudley MBC will use the methods outlined above to seek involvement.

Stages in the Community Involvement Process

- 5.5 Community involvement will consist of a series of overlapping stages. These will include the following:

- Identify the scope and extent of community involvement required for each document

Whilst everyone will have the opportunity to be involved in each planning document, the Council recognises that different documents will require different approaches to community involvement and the type of groups to be targeted.

- Identify key stakeholders

Key stakeholders may already be known to the Council through previous engagement and involvement. However, the Local Planning Authority will also need to demonstrate that it is reaching a broad cross section of the Borough's population including under represented groups appropriate to the type of document it is proposing to put together.

- Identify the needs, interests and skills of those stakeholders

These will vary according to the individuals and groups involved and the type of document being put together and will be done to enable Dudley MBC to identify the most appropriate methods of involvement for those people and to identify constraints on involvement.

- Identify constraints on community involvement

At this point any constraints affecting public participation can be identified and mitigated. Constraints can be categorised e.g. time, staff resources and financial constraints. We will then find ways to offset these constraints. The Council will make every endeavour to avoid consultation exercises during school holiday periods and on major religious or cultural dates except where deadlines are set by external agencies or government.

- Identify other involvement exercises that have implications for that specific area of interest/geographical area

If other consultation is being undertaken the Council will consider the possibilities for linking with that engagement process.

- Identify the most appropriate methods of community involvement

These will be determined on the basis of available skills and resources, target audience and the purpose and scope of involvement and the type of document being produced.

- Develop a framework for analysing the responses

It will be necessary to develop a framework for collecting together all the responses received and putting them into a format that aids their analysis.

- Commence the community involvement process

After the initial preparation work, the formal community involvement process can then begin in line with the processes and guidelines set out within this document

- Collect responses

This will be a continuous stage that takes place throughout the community involvement process. The methods used to collect responses will depend on the type of community involvement being used and the individuals and groups involved.

- Inform the local development document preparation process

Any feedback received as a result of the community involvement process will be used to inform the policy making process and the results will be fed back to the community.

Reporting Back

- 5.6 The primary aim of reporting back is to present to local communities the results of the involvement process. This can be done at various stages in the process from the inception and formulation of documents through to their adoption and beyond that, in the review of the effectiveness of each document.
- 5.7 Reporting back will therefore result in a continuous process whereby feedback will ensure the continuing improvement of both the process of involvement and the plans upon which involvement is taking place. This will happen through the Local Planning Authority taking appropriate comments on board and incorporating them into the future production of plans as and when permitted by resources, legislation and wider policies.
- 5.8 Section 3.0 of this document sets out where community involvement will take place in the production of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. To view this chronologically and to establish at which stage the Council will report back please refer to the Local Development Scheme Timetable (available on the Council's website at www.dudley.gov.uk or from the Planning Policy Team) which sets out the production stages for all Local Development Documents.
- 5.9 To report back the results of community involvement in the preparation of Local Development Documents the Council will use a variety of methods as appropriate. This may include sending letters and information to people who have previously written in, asking umbrella organisations to distribute news, publicity in local newspapers and workshops or public meetings.
- 5.10 All consultation responses will be entered into a schedule which will identify those issues raised and any suggested amendments put forward. This schedule will also set out the considerations of the local planning authority with regard to each of these issues.

- 5.11 The schedule will then be used in the creation of policy documents and will be appended to reports seeking ratification from the appropriate decision making authority, be it cabinet or full council. These reports will be put on display at appropriate locations within Dudley Borough as well as on the Council's website. The community can access these reports on the Council's website along with any decisions made.

6.0 WHO WILL BE INVOLVED?

- 6.1 Everyone will have the opportunity to be involved in the planning process. In particular, Dudley MBC recognises that there are different people with different experiences and knowledge that can contribute to planning in Dudley. These are set out in the table below. Targeting certain groups in this way during the involvement process enables a large and wide ranging section of the community to be reached in an expedient way.

Consultees	Experience and knowledge
Residents and tenants groups – community of geography	Insight into community issues. Local knowledge
Women's groups – community of identity	Community Issues. Understanding of issues affecting women
Sports groups – community of interest	Understanding of issues faced by a broad cross section of the population.
Environmental groups – community of interest	Understanding of environmental issues.
Neighbourhood groups – community of geography	Community issues. Local knowledge
Business representatives – community of interest	Business perspective. Retail issues. Local and Specialist Knowledge
Religious/faith based groups – community of identity	Insight into community issues. Understanding of issues faced by a broad cross section of the population and minority ethnic groups.
Black and Minority Ethnic groups – community of identity	Understanding of issues affecting black and minority ethnic communities. Local knowledge and community issues.
Youth groups – community of identity	Insight into issues affecting young people
Older people community of identity	Insight into issues affecting older people. Local knowledge and experience
People with disabilities community of identity	Insight into community issues and issues affecting people with disabilities
Landowners, Developers and organisations representing developers – community of interest	Specialist knowledge and expertise

- 6.2 It is Dudley's aim that the community involvement process should be broad and inclusive. The new planning system will bring about many new and exciting proposals and opportunities and it is our aim to involve as many individuals, businesses and groups as possible as and when appropriate.

- 6.3 In addition to this list are statutory consultees who we are required to contact at various stages in the planning process (see Appendix D). There are also other general consultees who the Council would seek to involve (see Appendix E). This list is not intended to be exhaustive, rather a starting point to be added to in the future.
- 6.4 One of the initial stages in the community involvement process will be a scoping exercise to identify the individuals and groups to be involved in each Development Plan Document or Supplementary Planning Document. This will be done each time a document is produced. The lists produced in Appendices D and E will be used as a starting checklist for involvement.
- 6.5 We will keep a database of groups, organisations, partners and individuals and liaise with them as and when appropriate. If any individual or group wishes to be on this list, please contact the planning policy team at the address given in Section 1.0 of this document.

Involving under represented groups

- 6.6 In order for future development plans to be meaningful it is important that all sections of the community are involved. This therefore needs to include so-called under represented groups and individuals who traditionally have not been involved in the development planning process.
- 6.7 Issues such as language barriers may need to be addressed, and so community and religious/faith based group leaders will have a key role here. The aim of the Council is to provide an effective translation and interpreting service whereby documents will be produced in alternative formats for people with particular needs or requirements. LDF documents and any related literature will be made available on request in Braille, large print, audio cassette and languages other than English. Documents in other formats can be obtained from: Planning Policy Team, Directorate of the Urban Environment, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, 3 St. James's Road, Dudley DY1 1HZ. Tel: 01384 816967 E-mail: udp.plan@dudley.gov.uk.
- 6.8 Other barriers such as physical barriers or perceived barriers to involvement will also need to be addressed. The Council will make every effort to meet the requirements of the Race Relations Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and other anti-discriminatory legislation.
- 6.9 Part of the community involvement process will involve identifying under represented groups. Dudley Community Partnership and umbrella organisations will have a role here in identifying these groups. As the community involvement process progresses, the methods to be used for working with under represented groups will develop.

The role of umbrella organisations

- 6.10 Umbrella organisations act as networks of community organisations. Basically, they are the methods for reaching these groups. Umbrella organisations will include, for example, the following:
- Dudley Council for Voluntary Service which represents the community and voluntary sector
 - Dudley Racial Equality Council which acts for Black Minority Ethnic communities
 - Action for Disabled People and Carers which acts as a group for disabled people and their carers
 - Dudley Federation of Tenants and Residents Association which represents tenants and residents
 - Dosti which acts as a network of community and voluntary organisations
 - Federation of Small Businesses which represents small businesses
 - Chamber of Commerce which represents business interests
 - Local Neighbourhood Partnerships which are community led strategic bodies concerned with issues that affect the local area
- 6.11 These umbrella groups will act as first points of contact for identifying relevant individuals and groups.
- 6.12 Umbrella organisations will have a role in facilitating involvement. In particular, they will have a role in providing information, hosting engagement and developing longer term involvement processes. Umbrella organisations have a wealth of experience to draw on in terms of working with communities, and it will be Dudley's aim to use this experience to strengthen the involvement process. Many of these groups will also be aware of the best methods for reaching certain individuals and groups.
- 6.13 Dudley Council recognises that the process of community involvement is constantly evolving, and that further revisions and changes may need to be made to the Statement of Community Involvement. If certain groups do not participate, Dudley MBC will actively seek involvement with them.

7.0 PLANNING APPLICATIONS & DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

Planning Applications and Development Control

- 7.1 Planning permission is required from the Council for many new buildings, alterations or extensions to existing buildings, and changes of use of land or buildings. To apply for planning permission a planning application must be submitted to the local planning authority.
- 7.2 The process by which the local planning authority considers planning applications is known as the development control system. All planning applications are determined in line with the Unitary Development Plan (which will now gradually be replaced by the Local Development Framework) unless it can be proved that there are very good reasons not to do so. In determining an application the planning officer will also take into account other 'material considerations' (see Glossary in Appendix A), for example, relating to design and site specific issues.
- 7.3 Development control is the aspect of the planning system most people will have previously encountered. For example, you may have received a letter inviting you to comment on a neighbour's proposed house extension or the proposed change of use of a nearby building. An explanation as to the process of applying for planning permission can be found on Dudley Council's website – www.dudley.gov.uk

Community Involvement for Planning Applications

- 7.4 This Statement of Community Involvement aims to set out Dudley Council's approach to community involvement on all planning applications. Where significant development is being proposed, government guidance encourages developers to seek discussions with the local planning authority in advance of submitting a planning application. Similarly, this guidance encourages developers proposing significant development schemes to engage in early-stage community involvement. There are also benefits in developers entering into pre-application discussions with Statutory Consultees for some significant development proposals as this can help to ensure that applications are complete and address all the relevant issues and site constraints. This pre-application discussion and community involvement will allow issues to be discussed and solutions to be found at the earliest possible time – helping to reduce conflict and possible delays once such an application has been formally submitted.
- 7.5 In addition, it is recommended that professional planning advice is obtained from the Council for small scale proposals, i.e. to alter or extend a property. An informal meeting with, or written comments, from planning officers can help settle many basic design problems or development issues affecting a development. This can in turn save applicants time and money later on.

7.6 Dudley Council's Development Control Team already takes part in pre-application discussions with and is actively promoting pre-application discussion. The Council will seek to build upon this approach and will actively encourage such developers to involve the community at the earliest practicable opportunity by using appropriate suggested methods from those given below. This community involvement should inform developer's proposals and final plans before submitting their planning application to the local authority. Furthermore, details of the community involvement undertaken should be submitted with that planning application.

- Documents available for inspection at local planning authority offices and electronically in libraries
- Internet
- Local Newspapers
- Public exhibitions/ displays/ stalls/ roadshows
- Public meetings/area, town and township meetings
- Workshops (interactive) e.g. 'enquiry by design' and 'planning for real'
- Pre-existing panels, forums and design teams
- Citizens panels (where appropriate)
- Focus Groups
- Ward Councillor involvement
- One to one meetings with selected stakeholders

This is not an exclusive list.

7.7 It should be accepted that there will inevitably be occasions where community involvement at the pre-application stage will not be appropriate due to reasons of commercial confidentiality. However, the Council anticipates there to be many instances where a planning application is likely to be submitted whereby the developer would firstly welcome the views of the community on development options for the site.

7.8 Where developers or potential applicants intend to engage in community involvement, Dudley Council would expect them to firstly seek pre-application advice from the Council's Development Control team. This would ensure that development proposals are realistic in terms of planning policy and guidance before they are consulted upon with local communities and stakeholders. This approach will help to avoid causing concern or raising community expectations unnecessarily.

Who We Will Involve

7.9 Community involvement in the development control process requires general engagement with the wider community and also more targeted

involvement where it is considered that an individual, or set of individuals neighbouring the application site, could be directly affected by a development proposal.

- 7.10 Community involvement on planning applications does not just involve individuals. The Council must also consult the appropriate statutory bodies. Statutory bodies are those bodies which have particular powers in the policy making process. In deciding which statutory body is consulted, the Council must take into account the nature and location of the proposal. These statutory bodies have 21 days in which to respond (a list of statutory consultees is attached as Appendix D).
- 7.11 There are also a significant number of non-statutory bodies including local interest groups which the Council will engage with in appropriate circumstances, such as those in Appendix E.
- 7.12 In publicising planning applications, it is necessary for the Council to strike a balance between consideration of cost, speed of decision making and providing a reasonable opportunity for public comment.

How We Will Involve the Community

- 7.13 The Government sets statutory publicity requirements for planning applications in the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995. Dudley MBC's Development Control team do as a minimum satisfy these requirements when considering planning applications. The following table identifies how the required publicity varies according to which category the planning application falls into:

Type of Planning Application	Required Publicity
Development where the application is accompanied by an Environmental Statement	Notice in a local newspaper, stating a 14 day period from the publication date during which representations to the proposal can be made; and a site notice to be displayed in at least one location at or near the application site stating a 21 day period from the date of the notice for representations. Please note that bodies such as English Nature will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.
Where the proposed development does not comply with Dudley's Unitary Development Plan or Local Development Framework	
Where the development affects a public right of way	
Where major development is being proposed (*).	Notice in a local newspaper and either a site notice or neighbour notification (the latter requiring 21 days notice from the date of the letter)

Type of Planning Application	Required Publicity
Other development	Site notice and / or neighbour notification
Development affecting the setting of a listed building, or affecting the character or appearance of a Conservation Area	Notice in a local newspaper, and a site notice
All planning applications	All applications will be added to the Council's Planning Register. This can be accessed through the Council's planning office at 3 St James's Road, Dudley. The applicant must give notice to the landowner or tenant of the land to which the application relates (unless said person is the applicant anyway)

(*) Major developments are defined as:

- Minerals or waste proposals;
- Residential proposals of 10 dwellings or more;
- Residential proposals where the number of dwellings is not known and the application site is 0.5 hectare or more in size;
- Where the building or buildings being proposed create 1000 square metres or more of floor-space;
- Development where the application site area is 1 hectare or above.

7.14 The local authority will usually go above and beyond these minimum requirements, particularly for significant developments.

7.15 Planning applications and weekly lists of new planning applications are also available to view on Dudley MBC's website. This service enables you to search for planning and building control applications, view the application documents and decision notice, comment on the planning application on-line and also submit a planning application on-line. This service is available at:

<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--planning/planning/online-planning-and-building-control>

7.16 Paper copies of individual planning applications and the decisions can also be viewed at the Council's Planning reception located at Council offices at 3 St James's Road, Dudley. Electronic copies are available on the Council's website in libraries and Dudley Council Plus. If for a valid reason individuals are unable to get access to the planning office and do not have access to the internet, details of the planning register may be given over the phone by contacting the Development Control Help Desk (01384) 814154. Furthermore, in instances where individuals are physically unable to come into the Council Offices but

wish to view a planning application, copies of new applications will be sent to them through the post free of charge.

Making Your Views Known

- 7.17 As outlined above, required publicity is undertaken on all planning applications to enable neighbours and others who may be interested to make their views known to the Council before the application is determined. The Council will take into account all relevant views expressed by interested parties whether they be supporting or objecting to the proposal. These must, however, relate to planning considerations.
- 7.18 To enable a full assessment of the proposed development to take place the planning officer who is responsible for the application will visit the site. This is essential to ensure that the proposals and surroundings can accurately be visualised in order to assess whether there would be any problems if the development were to take place.
- 7.19 The next stage is to consider the proposed development in the light of the Government's and the Council's planning policies and advice, in particular Dudley Council's Local Development Framework and guidance notes. It is at this stage that any representations made by interested parties will first be considered. This is done by the planning officer who co-ordinates all relevant information and prepares a report on the application and recommends how it should be determined. Any views received by the Council will be put on the case file making them publicly available. They will also be scanned and made available on the internet. Dudley MBC will also acknowledge and send a copy of the final decision notice to those who made representations on the planning application.
- 7.20 If a planning application not subject to objection or has minimal objections it may be determined under delegated powers. Delegated powers for determining planning applications means that the Director of the Urban Environment or the Chair of the Development Control Committee has been authorised by the Development Control Committee to make decisions on planning and other applications in accordance with clearly stated and published guidelines. The applications which are determined in this way are usually straightforward small scale applications in line with adopted policy which have attracted few or no material objections, and may include refusals of applications.
- 7.21 All other applications are presented to the Development Control Committee for determination. The Development Control Committee, which normally meets every 3 weeks, is comprised of 9 elected councillors. The Committee is responsible for the planning functions carried out by the Council. At their meetings (which are held in the Council House and are open to individuals) the reports of the Director

of the Urban Environment are considered and then the application is determined. Before a decision is made on an application the Committee is informed by way of a summary of the representations made regarding each application and will consider these before reaching a balanced decision. Opposition to a proposal is not in itself a ground for refusing planning permission and in reaching a decision the Committee will have due regard to all the planning merits of the application.

Public Speaking at Development Control Committee

- 7.22 As part of its commitment to openness and to public participation in local government, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council offers those affected by development proposals the opportunity to put their case personally and directly to the Council Committee which makes decisions on planning and other similar applications. Dudley MBC has a set procedure for public speaking at Development Control Committee. A leaflet on this procedure is available from the Council's planning reception at 3 St. James's Road, Dudley or on the Council's website at:

[http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--
planning/planning/development-control/development-control-
committee-](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--planning/planning/development-control/development-control-committee-)

- 7.23 Currently at Dudley one objector has the opportunity to speak for each development proposal being considered by the Development Control Committee. This objector may be representing him or her self, or may be representing a wider body of objectors. Applicants themselves will also be invited to speak in response to individuals who have indicated an intention to speak. The opportunity to speak is also available to the applicant for development proposals which are being recommended to Committee for refusal of planning permission, or to their supporters, but not to both i.e. only one person may speak in support of the proposal.

Permitted Development

- 7.24 It is important to note that certain proposals are recognised as 'permitted development' by Government legislation. As such, Dudley Council cannot influence these proposals since they do not require a planning application and are thus not to be considered by the Council's Development Control department. There are many instances of permitted development, examples being certain extensions or alterations to a dwelling; the erection of a boundary fence, gate or wall within given height restrictions; or the painting of a building's exterior. For further guidance on permitted development rights please contact Dudley MBC on 01384 814116 or go on-line to:

[http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--
planning/planning/development-control](http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--planning/planning/development-control)

8.0 WEST MIDLANDS PLANNING AID SERVICE

- 8.1 West Midlands Planning Aid Service (WMPAS) provides free and independent advice on town planning issues to community groups and individuals who cannot afford professional fees. West Midlands Planning Aid Service is part of the Royal Town Planning Institute, and is a charitable organisation independent of central and local government. It has a number of contracted staff as well as a strong volunteer network.
- 8.2 Planning Aid can enable communities to become involved and prepare them for their involvement with local authorities and the development plan process. The more people know about and understand the planning system the easier it is for them to make a contribution to it. With additional funding from central government the focus for the new expanded Planning Aid service will be as an outreach service working with communities.
- 8.3 Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council will continue to engage with WMPAS involving the service at key stages in the preparation of its plans and strategies in order to maximise local community involvement. WMPAS can achieve this through, for example, providing advice and training on the new development plan process and assisting groups and individuals in preparation of their proofs of evidence.
- 8.4 West Midlands Planning Aid Service can be contacted by telephone on 0121 766 8044 or by email at wmcw@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk.

9.0 LINKS TO DUDLEY BOROUGH CHALLENGE THE COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 9.1 Dudley's Community Strategy is an overarching document relating to all other plans and strategies which the Council and its partners already have to produce. The purpose of the strategy is to have a shared view of what we want to work towards achieving in the Borough over the next 15 years to 2020.
- 9.2 The Community Strategy will not be able to cover every issue that is of local concern, but seeks to draw together a range of broad priorities, consider how these priorities link to regional and national priorities and other programmes, and set out ways to make these priorities happen. In Dudley we are calling our Community Strategy the 'Dudley Borough Challenge'.
- 9.3 The consultation draft Dudley Borough Challenge addresses five key themes which together contribute towards a 'Stronger Communities' overall vision:
- Making Dudley a safe and peaceful place to live
 - Promoting good health and wellbeing for all
 - Creating a prosperous and attractive Borough
 - A learning community
 - Safeguarding and improving our environment
- (Source: Borough Challenge "A vision for 2020" consultation document)
- 9.4 Dudley's Local Development Framework will be the key mechanism in delivering the land use and development elements of Dudley Borough Challenge. The Core Strategy of the Framework will include a range of strategic planning policies which will also reflect the aspirations of Dudley Borough Challenge and the people and communities of Dudley.
- 9.5 In preparing the Dudley Borough Challenge, a wide range of communities, individuals, groups, agencies and organisations in Dudley Borough have been involved and contributed their views at various participation and consultation events organised by the Dudley Community Partnership (DCP).
- 9.6 When preparing documents for the Local Development Framework or when considering planning applications, Dudley Council will give regard to such views and aspirations which have informed the Dudley Borough Challenge Strategy.
- 9.7 It can be seen that there are strong linkages to be made between the Council's Statement of Community Involvement and Dudley's Community Strategy. It should be noted that the SCI will also take into account agreements already made and activities already underway. Examples of these include local area agreements such as the Safer

and Stronger Communities Fund Agreement, and the Local Compact – the latter describing principles for communications and consultation between the voluntary and community sector. See also Appendix C at the rear of this document for further information on Dudley Council’s consultation approach.

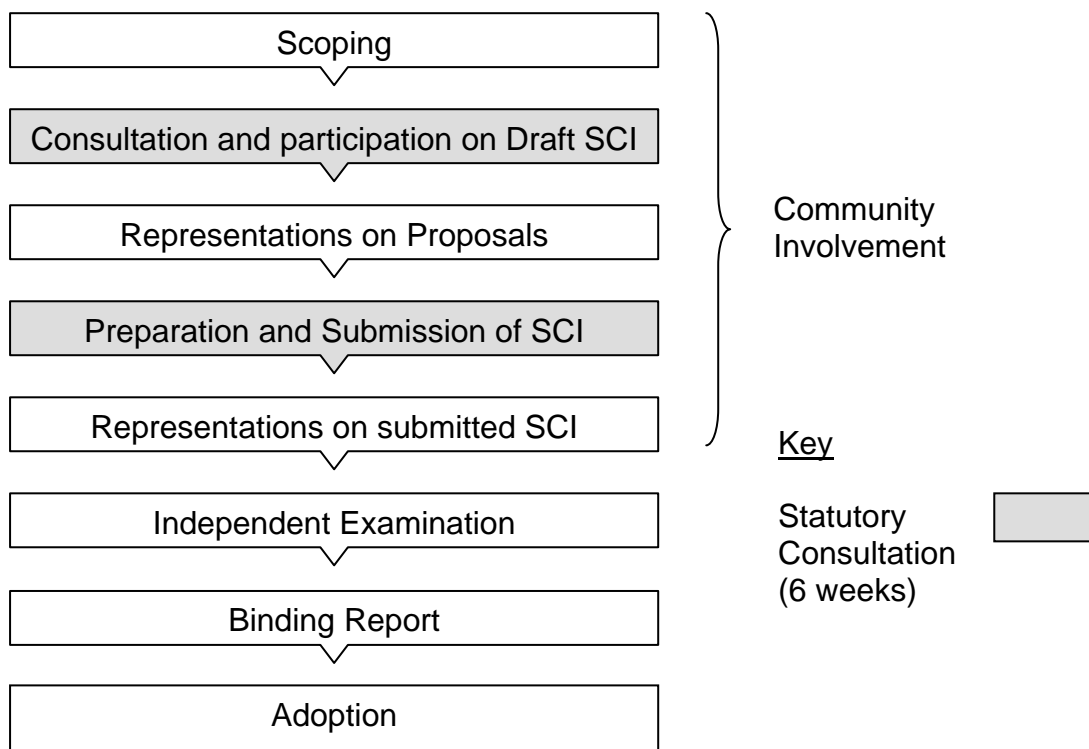
Links with Other Strategies

- 9.8 When preparing the Local Development Framework the Planning Policy team will engage the bodies responsible for producing strategies including; transport, education, health, social exclusion, waste, biodiversity, recycling, environmental protection, urban regeneration, community services, economic and housing strategies etc.
- 9.9 The Council are exploring the opportunity for joint engagement on corporate documents. Indeed the Corporate Policy Section of the Council has produced a toolkit and database to provide a better co-ordination for consultation over the Council. The Planning Policy Service is looking to incorporate this into our own methods of working.

10.0 MONITORING AND RESOURCES

Reviewing the procedures in the Statement of Community Involvement

- 10.1 Dudley Council will endeavour to review and improve the effectiveness of all of its documents on a regular basis in consultation with all communities and individuals as and where possible, including this Statement of Community Involvement. This will be done by monitoring the implementation of this document on an annual basis through a 'Statement of Community Involvement Focus Group' comprising interested individuals and Council officers responsible for implementing and reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement. This Focus Group will aim to meet at least annually in late summer/early autumn to discuss how well people feel the SCI is being implemented and whether any changes to it are necessary. The results from this discussion will then be fed into Dudley MBC's Annual Monitoring Report which will be published on Dudley Council's website every year by the end of December. If you would like to be involved in this Focus Group please contact us on 01384 816967.
- 10.2 The Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed when the Annual Monitoring Report identifies that a change in our methods is required. We will then publicise these changes widely and propose them as updates to this document. Changes may also arise from emerging best practice and government requirements, or from responding to changes in local expectations and circumstances.
- 10.3 The process for the preparation or revision of a Statement of Community Involvement is set out below:



- 10.4 It is not envisaged that the use of external facilitators will be necessary for the preparation of any Local Development Documents or revisions to the Statement of Community Involvement, although should it prove necessary and/or beneficial the Council will investigate the possibility of using external resources.

Resources and Process Management

- 10.5 The majority of the work involved in undertaking community involvement and carrying out the processes set out in this document will be carried out by the Development Services Section of Dudley Council's Directorate of the Urban Environment. The Planning Policy Team will take a lead role with regard to the Local Development Framework and the Development Control Team will take the lead on planning applications and development proposals.
- 10.6 To make best use of the resources available, the Development Services Section will work with other Council Departments and Members in order to dovetail with consultation and involvement opportunities on corporate Council policies. We will do this in liaison with the Corporate Policy and Research division to ensure consistency with corporate consultation guidelines and policies. The Council's Regeneration Division will also provide support in the formulation and development of planning documents and will take a lead role in their implementation following adoption.
- 10.7 There is also significant scope to work with and benefit from the knowledge and resources of partner organisations such as the Dudley Community Partnership, Dudley Borough Compact Steering Group which acts as a group of partners and the Dudley Council for Voluntary Service which is an umbrella group for voluntary organisations. 'Dosti' is also a partner and is a network of voluntary and community sector networks. It is also the mechanism for engaging the sector in the Dudley Community Partnership. Dosti also facilitates the networking and involvement of community based organisations.
- 10.8 Dosti is a Community Empowerment Network. Dosti will have a number of roles but in particular will have a role in facilitation. Dosti's work is organised around thematic based partnerships. These partnerships are: Jobs, Good Health, Environment, Community Safety, Lifelong Learning, Leisure and Culture and Children and Young People. Dosti is a partner in the Dudley Community Partnership and represents the voluntary and community sector.
- 10.9 The Local Compact is an agreement between the Council and the local voluntary and community sector in Dudley Borough. It aims to define and strengthen relationships between the Council and the sector by establishing some principles and actions to which all parties to the Compact will sign up to. Dosti is therefore linked to the Local Compact through its involvement in Dudley Community Partnership.

Appendix A GLOSSARY

Annual Monitoring Report

The annual monitoring report will assess the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which policies in Local Development Documents are being successfully implemented.

Area Action Plans

Development Plan Document providing a planning framework for areas of change or conservation. Area Action Plans may also be used to deliver regeneration objectives in a particular area.

Area Committees

In Dudley's case, these include North Dudley Area Committee, Central Dudley Area Committee, Brierley Hill Area Committee, Stourbridge Area Committee and Halesowen Area Committee.

Citizens Panel

Community Choice is Dudley Borough citizen's panel, which has been operating since 1998. It is a joint project run by Dudley MBC and Dudley Health Authority. It offers individuals a chance to say how they feel about life in the Borough and issues that affect them.

The Panel consists of randomly chosen households that reflect the demographical make up of the Borough. These panel members are sent a questionnaire every so often so that the Council can improve its understanding of what individuals want and more effectively plan for the future.

Core Strategy

Document setting out the overall strategic vision for the Borough. The Core Strategy sets the planning framework for all the other Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

Development Plan Documents

Documents that set out the strategic and overarching vision for the Borough. Development Plan Documents include the Core Strategy, Site Specific Allocations of Land and Area Action Plans.

Dosti

Dosti is a network of hundreds of community groups and voluntary organisations in Dudley Borough and is part of the community and voluntary sector of the Dudley Community Partnership. Part of its aim is to engage and build the capacity of community and voluntary networks to influence strategic decision making. Website: www.dosti.org.uk

Dudley Borough Local Compact

The Local Compact is a partnership agreement between the local public agencies in Dudley Borough, such as the Council, and the voluntary and community sector. The first Compact was published in June 2002 and has since been revised to take on board all members of the Dudley Community Partnership, the local strategic partnership for the Borough. The revised Local Compact was formally signed by representatives of the Partnership in May 2004.

The Local Compact recognises the invaluable contribution made by voluntary and community organisations to the Borough. It sets out a number of principles and undertakings on behalf of local agencies and the voluntary and community sector in order to improve relationships and to work more effectively together in improving the quality of life in the Borough.

Dudley Community Partnership

The Dudley Community Partnership (DCP) is a voluntary unincorporated organisation, which brings together the key public sector delivery agencies in the Borough of Dudley with representatives of the private and voluntary/community sectors. This includes Dudley Council, the Police, Primary Care Trusts, Dudley Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, the Dudley colleges, the Learning and Skills Council, and members of the voluntary and community sector through Dosti. The DCP is Dudley's Local Strategic Partnership.

Dudley Council for Voluntary Service (DCVS)

DCVS is an organisation which aims to assist and represent the voluntary and community sector and their organisations. It also provides a link between such organisations and Dudley Council and its partners. Website: www.dudleycvs.org.uk

Focus Groups

Groups of individuals who have been selected based on the sharing of particular characteristics. Focus groups are one of the methods of community engagement that Dudley may select.

Front loading

The process whereby community engagement takes place early on in the policy making process. This will result in a positive feedback loop whereby involvement has a direct influence on the policy making process.

Independent Examination

All Development Plan Documents and Statements of Community Involvement must go through a public scrutiny process called the Independent Examination. This is led by an Independent Government Inspector who will consider all representations to the Development Plan Document or Statement of Community Involvement made in writing or at a public inquiry. Following the examination, the Inspector will report his/her findings, which will be binding on the Council.

Local Development Scheme

Document setting out timescales and milestones for the production of Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents. The Local Development Scheme is the first document to be produced under the new planning system.

Local Development Framework

Term for the collection of documents to be produced under the new planning system.

Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

A community led strategic body that concerns itself with issues that affect the local area. The partnership is made up of representatives from:

- Local community groups such as tenants and residents associations, community associations, pensioners groups, neighbourhood watch, community centres and other groups with a local presence.
- Voluntary agencies
- Faith groups
- Statutory bodies – police, health trusts, schools (if possible),
- Local elected members

Local Strategic Partnership

Please see 'Dudley Community Partnership'.

Material Consideration

A material consideration is a planning matter relevant to an application. The range of consideration that can be considered material is very wide but can include planning policies, representations made by the public, comments

made by statutory and non-statutory consultees, draft plans, design issues and development impacts, for example.

Planning Aid

Organisation that provides free advice on planning related matters. Planning Aid is staffed by experienced town planners and will be a valuable source of support to many individuals and groups. Website: www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Preferred Options

Part of the production stage of the preparation of development plan documents. This stage involves a formal six week public consultation.

Proposals map

Graphical illustration of development plan policies. By looking at the proposals map it should be clear which policies apply in what particular area.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

A strategy for how a region should look in 15 to 20 years time and possibly longer. The Regional Spatial Strategy identifies the scale and distribution of new housing in the region, indicates areas for regeneration, expansion or sub-regional planning and specifies priorities for the environment, transport, infrastructure, economic development, agriculture, minerals and waste treatment and disposal. Most former Regional Planning Guidance is now considered RSS and forms part of the development plan. Regional Spatial Strategies are prepared by Regional Planning Bodies.

Site specific allocations

Document that sets out particular locations for development to occur such as housing or employment sites.

Soundness

A Development Plan Document is considered sound if it is based upon good evidence and has been prepared in accordance with all the necessary procedures including the measures set out in the authority's Statement of Community Involvement. There are 9 tests of soundness which the Development Plan Document must meet:

- i. It has been prepared in accordance with the Local Development Scheme;
- ii. It has been prepared in compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement, or with the minimum requirements set out in the Regulations where no Statement of Community Involvement exists;
- iii. The plan and its policies have been subjected to Sustainability Appraisal;

- iv. It is a spatial plan which is consistent with national planning policy and in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy and it has properly had regard to any other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or to adjoining areas;
- v. It has regard to the authority's Community Strategy;
- vi. The strategies/policies/allocations in the plan are coherent and consistent within and between Development Plan Documents prepared by the authority and by neighbouring authorities, where cross boundary issues are relevant;
- vii. The strategies/policies/allocations represent the most appropriate in all the circumstances, having considered the relevant alternatives, and they are founded on a robust and credible evidence base;
- viii. There are clear mechanisms for implementation and monitoring; and
- ix. The plan is reasonably flexible to enable it to deal with changing circumstances.

Stakeholders

Individuals or groups that have an interest in the future of the Borough. Such individuals or groups may include local businesses, councillors, community leaders and religious leaders. These stakeholders will be identified in the community engagement process.

Statement of Community Involvement

The term for the document that sets out the Council's vision for engaging the community. The Statement of Community Involvement is not a Development Plan Document although it will be subject to rigorous procedures of community involvement.

Statutory Consultees

Individuals or groups that the Council is required to consult. This list of Consultees is provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (see Appendix D for more details).

Supplementary Planning Documents

Documents intended to provide support to Development Plan Documents. Although they will not have development plan status they will be subject to procedures of community involvement and Sustainability Appraisal.

Sustainability Appraisal

An assessment of the likely significant social, economic and environmental impacts of policies in a Local Development Document. This assessment is carried out from the outset of the preparation process. Sustainability Appraisal incorporates the guidance set out in European Strategic Environmental Assessment and is subject to public involvement.

Thematic Development Plan Documents

Documents relating to particular planning issues such as open space or housing. These documents will have development plan status.

Unitary Development Plan

The Development Plan sets out the future of land use within the borough over the next 10 years. It is Dudley's land use plan for the future. It comprises a written statement of policies and a proposals map.

Every planning application has to follow the rules set out in the UDP; including where buildings can or cannot be built, what type and use of buildings are allowed. These rules will be based on Government policy (which we cannot change) and the social, health, environmental and economic needs of the Borough.

The current UDP for Dudley was adopted in October 2005 and sets out the Planning policies in the Borough until 2011. However under the new planning system the UDP system will be phased out and gradually replaced with the the Local Development Framework.

Weight

Some planning policies and material considerations will carry more weight than others. For example, a planning policy in a Development Plan Document which has been subject to front loading, two statutory periods of public consultation and examination will carry more weight than a policy which has only undergone one period of public consultation i.e. it will be considered more important and robust.

Appendix B FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What does community involvement mean?

Community involvement is about ensuring that communities have some sense of ownership of the planning process. Planning is about people and places and as such all communities need to be involved.

Community involvement methods actively seek the views of individuals and businesses. These views are subsequently taken on board and have a direct influence on the planning process.

It is important that individuals and businesses are actively involved as the plans and documents produced will be the blueprint for all planning decisions in that area for a number of years to come until they are replaced.

Community involvement is also about recognising that all views held by members of the community are equally valid and have a right to be heard. The process is therefore about achieving equality in the planning process.

There are a number of methods of community involvement, and it is our aim to use the most appropriate methods of facilitating involvement to get the most effective feedback.

How can I get involved?

Whenever a new planning document is being proposed, Dudley Council will try to publicise the fact to as many communities as possible where the new document may have an impact. This will then be followed up by various opportunities for community involvement as and when appropriate. These opportunities may include workshops, meetings, Planning For Real Exercises, exhibitions and roadshows depending on the nature of the document proposed and the resources available.

You can also get involved by commenting on this document and making suggestions as to how it could be improved.

Why should I get involved?

If you care about your community and want to make a difference in decisions affecting that community then you will want to be involved.

Your involvement will ensure that the views of your community have been represented. This will ensure that any development that takes place in the future is in the interests of the wider community.

Will community engagement really make a difference?

Local authorities have always taken on board the views of communities but this will be more prevalent under the new planning system.

Your views will be used to shape planning policy and influence the outcome of planning applications.

Due to front loading (i.e. community involvement taking place much earlier in the process) your views will have a real impact on the decisions that we make. You have a chance to shape the future rather than commenting on decisions that have already been made. What this means is that you will be an active participant in the decision making process.

What do town planners do and how does it impact on me?

Town planners act as an interface between the planning system and the public. It is the role of town planners to ensure that any development that takes place is in the interest of the wider community.

It is also the role of planners to ensure that development meets the needs of communities as well as helping to deliver wider national objectives. This is done through the production of a series of Local Development Documents by each authority known as the Local Development Framework in line with appropriate consultation and community involvement, and through the grant and refusal of planning permission.

Appendix C DUDLEY COUNCIL'S CORPORATE GUIDE ON CONSULTATION OF SERVICE USERS AND EMPLOYEES IN SERVICE PLANNING, DELIVERY AND REVIEW

Introduction

- This document provides a framework for all service user and employee consultation.
- Use of the framework should make clear the role of service users in decision making in planning, service delivery and review.
- Consultation denotes a variety of activities including involvement and all forms of 'engagement'.

General Principles/Policy

1. The Council is committed to consulting service users in the operation of all activities and services administered by the Council.
2. Consultation with service users is not an optional role for teams and employees, but is an integral part of everyday practice.
3. When any form of user consultation is adopted, the Council and its Committees remain the ultimate decision making bodies, whose role is to balance the differing needs of the members of the community.

Guidance Notes

1. The language of consultation should be transparent and honest.
2. The consultation process should not be dominated by particular groups or individuals; no views should be excluded or beyond challenge.
3. Wherever possible service users should be involved in decision making through encouragement to contribute and acknowledgement that everyone's contribution is valued and can bring about change.
4. Meetings, agendas, information and feedback should be accessible to all in terms of language and consideration of special needs and support.
5. Help should be given in preparing for meetings and activities.
6. It should be clear why issues are on the agenda and who has put them there.
7. Feedback should be given and reasons for decisions explained in all cases.
8. The decision making process should offer real choice of policies and activities and the implications of each should be clear.
9. Training should be considered for both service provider and users to facilitate the consultation process.
10. There should be adequate recognition of the time and resources needed to achieve effective consultation and of the savings such consultation can lead to.

'How to Consult – Dudley MBC's Consultation Toolkit (April 2004)'

A series of detailed guidance and practice statements have been developed by the Council, by partner agencies and by the community representatives. As part of the commitment to ensuring that Dudley's consultation strategy becomes a reality, this information - on best practice, standards, approaches and other useful guidance - has been brought together to form a Consultation Toolkit that will assist anyone who is involved in planning and organising consultation activities.

The toolkit does not provide a prescriptive formula for consultation, but it does provide summaries of a number of different approaches that can be 'dipped into' and considered when developing consultation activities. Our intention in producing this toolkit is to bring to life the principles agreed by the Council and contained within the Compact (our partnership agreement with local voluntary and community organisations). See <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/council--democracy/consultations>

'Dudley's Consultation Database'

We recognise that over time, consultation results can add significantly to our stock of knowledge about our services, our citizens, what people want and don't want, like and don't like. We will be constantly learning from the evaluation of our consultation activities so that we become more skilled at identifying the best means of consulting appropriate to the subject and we become better equipped to draw upon the views of the broadest cross section of people to provide us with the information that we need. The consultation database can now be accessed on line, to provide details of the numerous consultation activities that are either forthcoming or have recently been undertaken within Dudley MBC. See <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/council--democracy/consultations>

Appendix D STATUTORY CONSULTEES

These consultees will be consulted in respect of Local Development Documents and/or appropriate planning applications:

- The Environment Agency
- The Countryside Agency
- Highways Agency
- English Nature
- English Heritage
- Strategic Rail Authority
- Relevant utility companies (Such as Severn Trent Water, British Gas, Midlands Electricity PLC, BT PLC, South Staffordshire Water PLC)
- Strategic Health Authority
- West Midlands Regional Assembly
- Government Office for the West Midlands
- Government Departments e.g. Home Office; Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Department of Health; Ministry of Defence; Department of Work and Pensions; Department of Constitutional Affairs; Department for Culture, Media and Sport; and Office of Government Commerce.
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Coal Authority
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- Advantage West Midlands
- Birmingham City Council
- Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council
- South Staffordshire District Council
- Wyre Forest District Council
- Bromsgrove District Council
- Wolverhampton City council
- Staffordshire County Council
- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- Hagley Parish Council
- Himley Parish Council
- Hunnington Parish Council
- Kinver Parish Council
- Swindon Parish Council
- Wombourne Parish Council
- Railtrack
- Inland Waterways Association
- Sport England (in respect of planning applications affecting playing fields)

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

Appendix E: OTHER CONSULTTEES

We will also consult, where applicable and appropriate:

- Voluntary bodies/organisations, some or all of whose activities benefit the whole or part of the borough including:
- Housing associations and residents' and tenants' groups
- Local media
- Existing contacts at Dudley Council
- Chamber of Commerce
- Community religious leaders and different religious/faith based groups
- Race Equality and Communications Service (Social Services)
- Black and minority ethnic groups
- Dudley Racial Equality Council
- Youth organisations
- Groups involved with older people e.g. Age Concern
- Relevant disability groups – DVCS, DREC, Action for Disabled People and Carers, Access in Dudley
- Area forums and committees
- Planning Aid
- Steering/advisory groups
- Chief Executive's Consultation database
- Dosti
- Dudley Council for Voluntary Service
- Local Neighbourhood Partnerships
- Persons carrying on business in the area
- Landowners, developers and their agents
- Environmental groups at national, regional and local levels
- Friends of Parks Groups
- NHS and Care Trusts
- Business representatives
- National Grid
- West Midlands Police
- Residents of adjoining authority areas who will be directly affected by proposals
- Registered Social Landlords
- Sport England
- Bus operators
- Train operators
- Passenger Transport Authorities
- Passenger Transport Executives
- Home Builders Federation

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