

# Reading Borough Council

## Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

### Submission Draft

### Statement of Community Involvement, 2005

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Reading Borough Council  
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## Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act commenced in September 2004<sup>1</sup>. The Act brings substantial changes to the planning system, including an objective to achieve more effective involvement of the community. The reforms to the system are intended to make the planning system more responsive and to require community involvement throughout the process to enable the people who live, work, study, socialise and enjoy recreation in the area, to help to shape its future.<sup>2</sup>
- 1.2 Government guidance in the form of PPS 12<sup>3</sup> indicates that one of the key aims of the new planning system is front loading. Local planning authorities should take key decisions early in the preparation of local development documents. The aim is to seek consensus on essential issues early in the preparation of local development documents and so avoid late changes being made.
- 1.3 The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). This document sets out how the authority intends to achieve continuous community involvement in the preparation of local development documents in their area. The SCI also covers how people and the community will be engaged in decisions on planning applications for major development that affect the authority's area.
- 1.4 The statement will apply to all planning projects: Local Development Documents (LDD's); Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's) covering policy interpretation, development frameworks, development briefs; changes to the service and procedures of the Planning Section; major planning applications; monitoring/ information packs; etc.
- 1.5 The SCI has been subject to independent examination, as if it were a development plan document. Individuals and groups who have an interest in the planning of the area have been able to make representations on this Statement of Community Involvement, and these representations have been considered by the Planning Inspectorate the examination.

### 2.0 Producing the SCI

#### 2.1 The SCI should indicate: -

- Who will be involved and how those involved are representative of the wider community and stakeholders; and

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<sup>1</sup> Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

<sup>2</sup> Consultation Draft Local Development Frameworks, Guide to Procedures and Code of Practice, ODPM, October 2003

<sup>3</sup> Planning Policy Statement 12 - Local Development Frameworks

- How the approaches to consultation may vary in relation to different topics, different types of LDD's or at different stages in the LDD preparation process.
- 2.2 It is expected that LPA's will develop specific approaches for hard to reach community and business groups. A good SCI will also include long-term community capacity building exercises to improve representation and the balance of involvement.<sup>4</sup>
- 2.3 LPAs, in preparing local development documents, must comply with the general duty in the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 to promote race equality. LPA's should also comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which places a duty on all those responsible for providing a service to the public not to discriminate against disabled people by providing a lower standard of service.
- 2.4 A first draft SCI document was subject to initial consultation. A revised version was then subject to pre-submission participation. A report of that participation was produced and is available separately from the Council<sup>5</sup>. Following submission to the Secretary of State, this Submission SCI was subject to independent examination. Recommendations made by the Planning Inspector have now been incorporated in the SCI (in the form of minor amendments), to ensure that the SCI is sound, in accordance with the Tests of Soundness (Planning Policy Statement 12).
- 2.5 The SCI will also cover how people and the community will be engaged in decisions on planning applications for major development that affect the authority's area. Section 8 of this document deals with consultation on planning applications.

### **SCI Tests of Soundness**

- 2.6 PPS12 sets out criteria for testing the soundness of the SCI. The tests are set out in the left hand column in the table below and they ask whether the statement of community involvement meets a number of criteria. In the table below, the right hand column provides an indication of how the Reading Borough Council SCI meets each of the criteria.

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<sup>4</sup> Creating Local Development Frameworks, Consultation Draft on the process of preparing Local Development Frameworks, ODPM, November 2003

<sup>5</sup> Report of Participation, 2005

PPS12: Tests of Soundness of SCI as to whether:	How the RBC SCI complies with the Tests of Soundness
i. Local planning authority has complied with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in Regulations;	SCI sets out procedure to meet and usually exceed the minimum requirements set out in Regulations.
ii. Local planning authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the community strategy;	Links established with Community Strategy, Local Transport Plan and other partnership projects.
iii. Statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;	SCI identifies in general terms which community groups and other bodies will be consulted.
iv. Statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;	SCI indicates a range of methods that will be employed to involve community and other bodies in a timely and accessible manner.
v. Methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents;	Step 5 of the SCI discusses possible methods and techniques and refers to various best practices.
vi. Resources are available to manage community involvement effectively;	Planning Section has created a new LDF team to manage and progress the preparation of the LDF and community involvement. Additional resources will be brought in as required.
vii. Statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;	Step 6 of the SCI sets out process and commitments for analysing the results of consultation, reporting those results to Cabinet and feeding the results back to respondents.
viii. Authority has mechanisms for reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement;	Mechanisms for reviewing the statement of community involvement are to be set up in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) in which consultation exercises and issues arising will be reported. The 2006 AMR will include a review of LDF consultation that has taken place during the year, and make conclusions on the effectiveness of that community involvement, based on a number of factors.

PPS12: Tests of Soundness of SCI as to whether:	How the RBC SCI complies with the Tests of Soundness
	Findings about the effectiveness of community involvement may then trigger a review of the SCI. Relevant demographic changes, changes in consultation policy or substantial changes in best practice may also trigger an SCI review process. Otherwise, it is intended that the SCI be reviewed at least every five (5) years, and that this review be monitored through the Council's AMR.
ix. Statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.	SCI clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation/ involvement on planning applications.

### 3.0 Reading Borough, Needs and Characteristics in relation to Consultation

- 3.1 Reading Borough is an urban area with tight boundaries, forming the major part of the wider Reading Urban Area. As an urban authority, it does not have Parish Councils or any other form of formal geographical representation other than local Councillors. Councillors are therefore a very important component of local representation in the Borough. In recent years, with the creation of the Reading Local Strategic Partnership and the growing importance of the Community Strategy (now titled "Reading 2020 - Making it Happen"), it will be important to involve the LSP partners in the evolution of the LDF.
- 3.2 In the absence of any form of area representation, current practice is to consult through various forums, panels, and other groups. None of these groups are necessarily representative of the population in all or particular geographical areas of Reading. However, it is considered that the groups provide a reasonable spread of representation in geographical terms as well as covering a wide range of interests.
- 3.3 The Borough Council's Consultation Policy gives particular emphasis to reaching "Hard to Reach Groups". The Borough contains sizeable ethnic minority groups and other disadvantaged groups. Ethnic Minority groups are represented, for example through the Ethnic Minorities Forum. Other forums are also in place including the Access Forum, Pensioners Forum, Safer Communities Forums, etc.

The Borough also contains areas of deprivation and less well off areas often containing hard to reach groups. Gypsies and travellers are also recognised as a hard to reach group. There are lines of communication to groups in these areas through the Reading Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations, although further efforts need to be made to advertise and make documentation available in these areas. Further efforts will be taken to involve a range of target groups, with assistance being sought from the Planning Aid Service. Contacting the youth of the Borough is a particular challenge. In the past, consultation documentation has been sent to Youth Centres and Schools and officers have been available to provide additional information or to attend events. However, there has been relatively little involvement from this group on planning matters and continuing efforts will be required.

- 3.4 The Council will make every endeavour to meet the requirements of the Race Relations Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
- 3.5 Local Development Framework documents and any related literature are, or will be made available in a variety of formats e.g. large print, audio format, and languages other than English. If you require documents in another format, please contact Reading Borough Council, Planning Section, Civic Centre, Reading, RG1 7TD, freephone: 0118 939 0587 or 0118 955 3717, or email: [planning.info@reading.gov.uk](mailto:planning.info@reading.gov.uk).

#### 4.0 The Process of Community Involvement for Reading Borough

- 4.1 In addition to complying with government guidance, this statement has been devised to conform to the Council's Consultation and Participation Policy and accord with the advice in the RBC "Consultation Guidance Pack." Advice has been sought from the Council's Policy and Community Participation Units in its preparation. The document has also been presented to the Council's Consultation Board and to a Planning Focus Group for advice and feedback.

#### Vision

- 4.2 The overall aim or Vision of the Statement is to ensure that all parts of the community, particularly the Council's Target Groups, who may have an interest in a project, be consulted and enabled, where possible, to influence and take part in the development of, and decisions made in relation to, each project. Particular efforts will be made to ensure that groups who may be hard to reach through traditional consultation methods are fully informed and engaged in any involvement/ consultation exercises. This will mainly be achieved by ensuring that exercises in respect of planning documents (LDD's, SPD's and major planning applications) are properly planned and in accordance with both government guidance and council policy. The Borough Council Planning Section has a strong commitment to ensure that community involvement processes in relation to planning projects are as inclusive and effective as possible using current best practice.

## 5.0 Planning and Resources

- 5.1 Planning and preparation, carrying out consultation, recording and analysis of results and reporting results and giving feedback does take considerable time and effort, involving significant manpower and financial resources. Therefore, while being fully committed to ensuring that all sections of the community are fully involved in planning decision-making processes and that their views are taken into account, methodologies must be cost effective and capable of being contained within defined manpower and financial budgets. Exercises therefore need to be properly managed.

## 6.0 Principles

- 6.1 Within the context of the Council's Consultation and Participation Policy, the Planning Section will seek to ensure that community involvement exercises adopt the following principles: -

- Exercises should be properly planned, designed and managed in accordance with the Council's Consultation and Participation Policy, the advice in the Council's "Consultation Guidance Pack", and the procedures set out in the checklist contained in Appendix 1 of this document;
- Exercises should be clear on who is being consulted and the objectives of the consultation;
- Exercises should always consider ways of engaging the Council's Target Groups and hard to reach groups;
- Exercises should be co-ordinated through the Council's Transcultural Services and other contacts for Hard to Reach Groups (see checklist in Appendix 1);
- Exercises should adopt the most appropriate methodologies to meet the aims of the engagement/ consultation;
- Exercises should provide appropriate feedback to all who take part in the exercise; and
- Exercises should incorporate monitoring and review of the engagement/ consultation.

- 6.2 The above principles are translated into specific procedures in a Community Involvement Checklist, contained in Appendix 1.

## 7.0 Steps for Community Involvement in the Preparation of the LDF

- 7.1 Producing the SCI in accordance with government guidance and the Council's policy has involved a stepped approach to ensure proper planning, inclusivity and properly dealt with outcomes. Reading Borough Council will comply with the Step Approach set out below.

Step 1:        Establish a baseline structure in terms of the community and stakeholders

7.2 The Planning Section devised a Consultation Database for undertaking consultation on the "Issues Report and Draft Spatial Strategy", published during early 2003. Further work was carried out during 2005 to update the information on the database and identify additional relevant parties who should be contacted as part of LDF community involvement. An effort was made in devising the database to identifying all sections of the community, especially under-represented groups. A number of sources of potential participants were used in devising the database: -

- Statutory and other consultees. Appendix 2 to this document contains a List of Groups, Organisations and Individuals who will be consulted on LDF Products. This includes a list of Specific Consultation Bodies such as SEERA, responsible for Regional Planning, Network Rail and Thames Water, who must be consulted on all documents. The database also contains contact information on all the statutory consultees set out in the Regulations. In addition, the database contains information on a wide range of other non-statutory consultees who are consulted on planning applications or otherwise have an interest in development matters in Reading;
- The Council's Community Consultation Database. This contains over 1000 community groups and contacts including Voluntary Groups, Globe Groups (see definition in Glossary of Terms), Amenity Groups, Safer Community Groups, Tenants and Residents Associations (RFTRA), groups representing the various ethnic minorities in Reading, residents groups, local centre traders and the Chamber of Commerce, etc.;
- Our partners in the Reading Local Strategic Partnership;
- Listings of applicants and agents derived from the Council's Planning Applications System that records details of those making planning applications;
- Listings of community and residents groups who have requested to be consulted on relevant planning applications in their areas, cross-checked with the groups on the Council's Community Consultation Database; and
- Records of those requesting to be kept informed of the publication of planning documents.

7.3 Appendix 2 contains a more detailed list of the types of groups and representatives that are, or will be, included in the LDF database as a register of consultees and targeted in any community involvement and consultation.

7.4 Early in 2005, the Council sent out letters and made information available on the draft Statement in libraries, etc. The information included documentation for community groups and individuals to register their interest in the LDF, for their details to be put on the consultation database and for them to receive notification of progress of local development documents. The consultation database has now been updated and refined to produce an up-to-date baseline LDF database for the consultation/ involvement that will take place during 2006 and following. It will continue to be updated and refined following each consultation. 7.5

For each exercise, information will be made available through press releases, posters and leaflets and disseminated through libraries, community centres, youth centres and other local meeting places, as well as the Council's Website. The local newspapers and radio stations are a particularly good mechanism for communicating information to the wider public in Reading. Considerable effort is currently going into a major upgrade of the Council's Website and the Planning Pages now provide a wide range of planning information. It will be developed further as a tool for community involvement, as the LDF is prepared. The Council's current local plan can also be viewed on the Planning Portal Website ([www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk))

- 7.6 In addition, the Planning Section will review the results of each consultation exercise, to ascertain the extent to which certain sections of the community, particularly the Council's Target Groups, were informed and felt able to take part.

**Step 2: Identify the key areas where the involvement of the community and stakeholders will be needed to prepare a sound plan.**

- 7.7 The preparation of documents forming part of the Reading Borough LDF over the next 3 years will involve a number of development plan documents (DPD's), including a Core Strategy, a Site Development Allocations Document, a Central Area Action Plan, and a number of area specific and subject Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD's). Each will cover different topics and some may be specific to different areas of the Borough.
- 7.8 The LDF will also include Minerals and Waste Documents that are to be prepared jointly by the 6 Berkshire Unitary Authorities. In respect of Development Plans Documents prepared jointly with the other Unitary Authorities in Berkshire, to ensure conformity of approach and meet the minimum statutory requirements, a joint consultation protocol has been prepared, taking into account each of the authorities' Statements of Community Involvement.
- 7.9 It is assumed that in Reading, community or stakeholder inputs will be important in all aspects of the LDF in terms of ensuring soundness. Reading Borough is an urban authority with very tight boundaries experiencing high pressure for development. These development pressures and their attendant impacts affect all parts of the Borough and its population. Similarly, factors such as the need for affordable housing, traffic congestion and trends such as higher density forms of development, affect all parts and all communities of the Borough.
- 7.10 There is a need to make documentation relevant to the concerns of particular groups and individuals, be they geographical or topic concerns. In developing the LDF documents, the Council will seek to identify key issues and incorporate the means for individuals to be able to focus on their area(s) of concern, be that by grouping proposals by Ward area, or through providing an index of subject matter, or providing separate documentation on identified key issues or key changes.

- 7.11 The consultation response database can also be developed to note the particular areas of interest of individual consultees, so that information on particular subjects or sites can be individually tailored to meet the specific requirements of groups, businesses or individuals, where appropriate.
- 7.12 The Council will front load its consultation on the LDF through key stakeholder consultation in evolving policies and proposals on particular areas of concern, be they contentious site proposals or particular policy areas. Preparing the evidence base and drafting of the local development documents is still at an early stage. At this point it is not possible to anticipate all the key areas for such stakeholder involvement. However, such areas will be identified as the plan evolves and appropriate community involvement exercises devised to address those key areas.
- 7.13 The Table in Appendix 3 sets out initial documents that will make up the Reading Borough LDF, indicating the main areas of community involvement in their preparation.

**Step 3: Discuss with the community and stakeholders how they wish to be involved in LDF production.**

- 7.14 The Planning Section holds periodic meetings with a Planning Focus Group, a group of approximately 15 representatives of community and voluntary groups, the business community, planning professionals, and other organisations such as Reading University. The focus group is used to discuss proposed changes and obtain outside views on the operation of the planning service. This mechanism will continue to be used to “test” aspects of the preparation of the LDF, including the approach to community consultation. The Council will consider inviting a wider level of attendance at the focus group where LDF matters are to be considered. The role of the Group will also be redefined to take account of the provisions in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
- 7.15 In addition, the Council has very close links with community groups. The Council is active in supporting the Reading Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations (RFTRA) as well as other groups such as Globe Groups that were formed as part of the Council’s approach to Agenda 21.

The Council hosts a number of well attended forums and panels, such as the Pensioners Forum, Safer Community Forums, The Black Communities Forum, The Access Forum, and The Woodlands, Waterways and Open Space Panel. These groups were all successfully used in the consultation on the “Issues Report and Draft Spatial Strategy” during early 2003, and on the 2005 community involvement exercise in terms of disseminating documentation and details about the various consultation events. It is intended that links with these groups be developed in terms of community involvement.

- 7.16 The Council, as part of its community involvement in the development of the Community Strategy has set up a "Community Panel". This panel has a membership made up of representatives from over 200 voluntary and community groups that operate in the town. Members of the Panel will be used to provide views and feedback on initiatives and processes. They could be used for feedback on various aspects arising in the preparation of LDF documents and community involvement.
- 7.17 One matter that will undoubtedly be of concern to many groups in the community is the restriction in the new regulations **that consultation periods should last no longer than 6 weeks**. Many groups find it very difficult to consider documentation, discuss proposals, meet and agree responses within such a tight timescale. The Council is therefore continually under pressure to extend consultation deadlines and to accept late submissions. While it will be incumbent on groups and individuals to manage their inputs in accordance with any legally defined timetable, the Council will attempt to give as much advance warning as possible and to make draft information available to those requesting such information in advance of the specified date of publication.

**Step 4: Assess resources available for managing community involvement.**

- 7.18 Resources for consultation exercises, both in terms of manpower and finance are limited. Planning and managing each exercise is vital to ensure the most effective use of resources. Part of this process involves managing expectations. The Issues Report Consultation provides a useful model in that staff resources were heavily stretched even with assistance from outside manpower, most notably from representatives of the Council's Corporate Policy Section. A greater level of internal or external resources needs to be made available for future exercises in areas of change. The limits on consultation periods indicated in the new regulations means that greater efforts will need to be made to ensure that consultation is properly planned and resourced if it is to be as inclusive as possible.
- 7.19 The Planning Section has recently been restructured to create a new LDF Team. This appreciates the importance of progressing the LDF in a properly managed fashion and the need for additional resources to progress documents, and to meet the increased obligations under the new system for matters such as community involvement. The Planning Section intends to retain its ethos of generic planning and integrating policy and development control. It is therefore intended that staff from within area teams will, as far as resources allow, continue to contribute to policy development and the progression of LDF documents and, where possible, to meet resource shortfalls that may arise in preparing LDF documents.

The Council is aware of the resource implications of the level of community involvement set out in the SCI. The Council is committed to wide-ranging community involvement, with a particular emphasis on involving hard-to-reach groups. To that end, the Council is committed to ensuring that sufficient resources are made available to cost effectively achieve the scale of consultation envisaged.

**Step 5: Consider which methods of community involvement to deploy and when.**

7.20 Methodologies for consultation must be closely related to the purpose and objectives of the project and exercise being undertaken. The Council's "Consultation Guidance Pack," following paragraph 9.2, contains a flowchart that outlines the type of methods that might be used depending on the level of consultation proposed for the particular exercise. Appendix 4 contains a copy of the Flowchart. The Pack indicates that methods will range from traditional methods using mailshots and publicity to provide information and make people aware of a particular project or proposal, through to independently run meetings (e.g. Planning for Real Exercises) and training of participants where the intention is to help a community to develop their own proposals for their local area. There are a number of resources and best practice now available on methodologies that will be referred to in planning consultation exercises.

**Step 6: Identify the process and commitments to reporting back.**

7.21 The LPA should set out minimum standards for acknowledging and (where appropriate) reporting back on formal representations.

7.22 In consultation exercises, all representations should be acknowledged by standard letter or email sent out within 5 working days of receipt. The acknowledgement should contain a reference number with which respondents can trace what is happening, or has happened, to their representation.

7.23 The information sent out as part of the consultation shall also include details of how to complain, should a person feel aggrieved by any part of the process or the failure of the local authority to properly involve them in the exercise. This should include details of how to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman.

7.24 In addition, the Council will monitor the performance of each exercise. The report of consultation/ community involvement will include a section on performance. This section could include: -

- An assessment of how successful the consultation process was and the lessons learned; and
- An assessment of how many were consulted and the response, including details of copies sent out or hits on the website, along with details of the response rate of different groups including priority groups and other hard to target groups.

- 7.25 Following analysis of the results of consultation and reporting back to the Cabinet or other relevant body of the Council, all those who have taken part and left a means of communication (address, email address, etc.) should be notified of the results of consultation, the Council's decisions in relation to comments/ objections and how the matter is being taken forward as part of the LDF. They should be informed of any further opportunities to make representations or get involved, and the name of an officer who can answer further queries on the matter.

### Monitoring and Review

The SCI will be formally reviewed at least every 5 years. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will report on any issues arising as a result of the SCI consultation exercises. Factors that could trigger a review of the SCI before the five (5) years include: demographic changes, changes in the Council's consultation policy or significant changes in best practice.

## 8.0 Community Involvement on Planning Applications

- 8.1 This section deals solely with policy and practice on community involvement in relation to planning proposals and applications. It is based on the steps and principles set out in the preceding sections.
- 8.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004<sup>6</sup> places increased importance on involving the community in planning decisions that affect the life of a community. Government advice is that while applications cannot be refused as a result of applicants not carrying out community involvement, it is a matter that will be taken into account by Inspectors in determining any appeal. New regulations are to be brought into force in respect of consultation on planning applications. This document reviews how consultation should be carried out in relation to planning proposals and applications in the future.
- 8.3 PPS1, "Creating Sustainable Communities" indicates that,
- "The outcomes from planning affect everyone, and everyone must therefore have the opportunity to play a role in delivering effective and inclusive planning. Community involvement is vitally important to planning and the achievement of sustainable development."*
- 8.4 It is clear that more effective community involvement in the development of planning proposals and what goes into planning applications is now expected. PPS1 goes on to state that: -
- "Community involvement in planning should not be a reactive, tick-box, process. It should enable the local community to say what sort of place they want to live in at a stage when this can make a difference. Effective community involvement requires an approach which: -*

<sup>6</sup> Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

- *Tells communities about emerging policies and proposals in good time;*
- *Enables communities to put forward ideas and suggestions and participate in developing proposals and options. It is not sufficient to invite them to simply comment once these have been worked-up;*
- *Consults on formal proposals;*
- *Ensures that consultation takes place in locations that are widely accessible;<sup>7</sup> and*
- *Provides and seeks feedback."*

8.5 In accordance with the Reading Borough Draft Statement of Community Involvement, the Council wishes to develop a more inclusive approach to the development of planning proposals, particularly the larger schemes that will result in significant impacts.

It has therefore reviewed its existing policies on consulting on planning applications and proposes a number of significant changes designed to meet the government's stated objectives for community involvement in the planning system, as well as meet the Council's own policies on community consultation. The ODPM publication, "Statements of Community Involvement and Planning Applications, (ODPM, 2004)<sup>8</sup> has been considered in the preparation of this report. The major changes are in relation to proposals that will result in significant planning applications.

### **Steps for Community Involvement in Respect of Significant Planning Applications**

8.6 It is clear that the recent government guidance expects developers involved in significant development proposals to involve local communities and to work with those communities in preparing their development proposals. The results of that pre-application consultation will form part of the material supporting the submission of the planning application. This section sets out the Council's expectations of community involvement by applicants during pre application stages in preparing a planning application for proposals that are sensitive or of a significant scale.

### **Definition of a Significant or Sensitive Proposal**

8.7 There are a variety of definitions of significant or major development proposals. For example, the GDPO defines major developments as developments of 10 dwellings or more. However this is a very low threshold at which to expect pre-application involvement by a prospective developer and would involve the outlay of considerable resources.

8.8 The Explanatory text to Policy DP1 (Spatial Strategy) of The Structure Plan for Berkshire 2001-2016, defines "major" proposals as development involving: -

<sup>7</sup> Planning Policy Statement 1 - "Creating Sustainable Communities" ODPM, 2005

<sup>8</sup> "Statements of Community Involvement and Planning Applications", ODPM, 2004

- Housing: a net increase of more than 100 units;
- Retail: a net increase in floorspace of 2,500m<sup>2</sup>;
- Office: a net increase of 2,500 m<sup>2</sup>;
- Other employment: development with similar levels of employment to 2,500m<sup>2</sup> office floorspace.

Other Uses or Mixed Uses: developments involving other uses or mixed uses will be assessed in terms of being “major” on their individual merits.

- 8.9 This is the definition that Reading Borough Council proposed to use in requesting pre-application consultation as part of the development of planning proposals. However, following Pre-Submission Public Participation, it has been decided to reduce the figure for residential development to **proposals involving a net increase of more than 50 dwellings**. Reading is a relatively dense urban area, dependent almost wholly on the development of brownfield land. Development of such land can often be sensitive with significant impacts and it is therefore considered that a figure lower than 100 dwellings is justified.
- 8.10 In addition, and in accordance with the ODPM Guide “SCI and Planning Applications,” a number of additional categories of proposals will be considered sensitive or to have significant impacts as follows: -<sup>9</sup>
- Development Plan Departures [ref: Circular 07/99, Town and Country Planning (Development Plans and Consultation) (Departures) Directions 1999];
  - Development proposed on playing fields as set out in the Town and Country planning (Playing Fields) (England) Direction 1998 (the Direction applies to any proposal for development of any playing field owned by a local authority or used by an educational institution, as specified in the Direction);
  - Development proposals which fall within the Town and Country Planning (Residential Development on Greenfield Land) (England) Direction 2000;
  - Town and Country Planning (Shopping Development) (England and Wales) Direction [as Annex D to PPG6 and substituted by Circular 15/93]. A revised edition of PPG6 was published in 1996, but it is the 1993 Shopping Development Direction which remains in force;
  - Schedule 1 and 2 developments - as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations;
  - Developments involving the loss of allotments; and

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<sup>9</sup> “Statements of Community Involvement and Planning Applications”, ODPM, 2004

- Any other proposals that are judged by the planning case officer to be particularly sensitive or of significant interest to the wider local community.

8.11 In such cases, prospective developers will be expected to undertake involvement and consultation with local groups, businesses and persons' / households who may be affected by their proposed development. Developers of schemes proposing lower amounts of development are also invited to carry out similar pre-application involvement and consultation in line with the provisions set out in this paper, as a matter of good practice.

### **Pre-Application Community Involvement**

8.12 Promoters of significant development schemes will need to have regard to the principles and steps set out in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. They should pay particular attention to the need to properly plan and resource community involvement exercises. They should comply with the Step Approach set out in the SCI.

**Step 1: Establish a baseline structure in terms of the community and stakeholders.**

8.13 Developers should prepare a full project plan for pre-application involvement and consultation to be discussed and agreed with the case officer. The case officer will provide assistance in identifying and providing contact information on local representatives, groups and individuals who should be invited by the applicant to become involved in the proposals. Such addresses will include local residential and other property, representatives of community groups, including local Councillors, relevant statutory and non-statutory consultees, statutory undertakers and any other bodies or individuals to which such information is deemed relevant by the local planning authority. Where proposals relate to the historic environment, the developer will be required to consult a number of organisations with interests in these matters (See appendix 2). The Joint Spatial Planning Unit will be consulted on major mineral and waste applications.

Developers/ applicants should also seek the involvement of hard to reach and other specific groups in the community, such as the young, elderly, disabled, black and ethnic minority groups, mum's with toddlers, etc., and tailor their programmes to involve these groups.

8.14 The list of those to be invited should be agreed in writing with the case officer.

**Step 2: Identify the key areas where the involvement of the community and stakeholders will be needed.**

- 8.15 Key areas in relation to planning proposals will include issues and constraints, access and transport including parking, type of development, design and appearance, etc. Developers should use community involvement to build up a picture of the issues, constraints, site features, local concerns and preferences prior to any community involvement on initial proposals. Initial proposals should take account of the results of matters raised.

**Step 3: Discuss with the community and stakeholders how they wish to be involved in LDF production.**

- 8.16 Initial approaches to the community and stakeholders should offer a range of involvement approaches and express willingness to meet groups or hold exhibitions/ meetings to explore proposals. They should invite suggestions from the community and stakeholders on how involvement should take place to best meet the needs of the community. Prospective applicants should discuss with the community matters such as possible venues for exhibitions, meetings and other events, and the timing of those events to meet the needs of all in the community. This will be particularly important in involving hard to reach and specific groups within the community.
- 8.17 The development of materials for involvement on a website should also be considered. The Council will see substantial development of its website during 2005-2006, and it will be possible to provide news updates and links to external websites on which information relating to development proposals has been made available.

**Step 4: Assess resources available for managing community involvement.**

- 8.18 The Developers project plan should include an outline of the manpower and other resources that will be made available for the intended community involvement. This should include details of the materials that will be made available to the community and stakeholders and the venues proposed for holding interactive events. Website development resources should also be highlighted.
- 8.19 The project plan should also discuss the need for local authority officer resources as part of the involvement process. Reading Borough Council already faces considerable pressure on planning staff resources with continuing issues over recruitment and retention of staff. The Council cannot therefore guarantee to make staff resources available to assist involvement exercises or to attend public events. As a minimum, as part of pre-application discussions and correspondence, case officers from the Planning Section will: -
- Provide information and advice on consultees and stakeholders relevant to involvement in a particular proposal;
  - Provide information and advice on potential venues for public interactive events;

- Appraise and provide comment and advice on a community involvement project plan prepared by the developer/ potential applicant; and
- Arrange for links or material to be loaded onto the Council's website.

8.20 Case officers will make efforts to attend events and take part in involvement exercises as observers, if time and resources allow.

8.21 Where officer attendance or assistance in pre-application involvement exercises is specifically requested by a developer/ potential applicant, and this is agreed on a "without prejudice" basis by the Planning Manager, any cost to the local authority will be charged to the developer/ potential applicant at the Council's standard rates for officer time and any materials.

**Step 5: Consider which methods of community involvement to deploy and when.**

8.22 As a minimum: -

- Developers should prepare circular information on the developer/ applicant's intentions to make a planning application and develop a particular site. Developers should agree the form and content of the information to be provided with the local planning authority. Such circular information shall be designed to include a means to feed back appropriate responses either by prompted questions or through other written and digital communication.
- Developers should widely distribute such information as may be agreed by the local planning authority by posting to household addresses and other addresses determined in conjunction with and agreed by the local planning authority under Step 1.
- Arrange and provide at least one, professionally facilitated, interactive involvement event designed to enable all consultees to attend, receive information, participate and feed back information on their area and its community and their views on possible development or other change in the area.
- Such an event might take the form of a place check, enquiry by design event, exhibition and workshop, a planning for real exercise, public meeting or similar, facilitated interactive event. Details of the time, location, illustrative materials, facilitation arrangements and event programme should be agreed in writing with the local planning authority as part of the project plan. The local planning authority must be invited to send representatives to observe and, if appropriate, to participate in any event.
- Provide a website of relevant information or provide digital images and information (or a suitable document such as a document in .pdf format) that can be put on the planning page of the Reading Borough Council Website.

- 8.23 Developers might also like to consider the preparation of a detailed development brief for the site, which can form the basis of initial consultation on issues, constraints and community preferences. Developers will need to discuss the approach to the preparation of such a brief with the local planning authority at an early stage, particularly if they intend that such a brief should be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) by the local planning authority.

**Step 6: Identify the process and commitments to reporting back.**

- 8.24 Developers/ prospective applicants will be expected to prepare a public report of community involvement for submission with any planning application, detailing the extent of the community involvement exercise carried out, reporting all views and responses and indicating the actions that have been carried out or that it is proposed are carried out in order to meet the views and concerns raised by the community involvement.
- 8.25 In order to meet these requirements, a prospective applicant will need to allow considerable time for carrying out pre-application involvement.
- Community Involvement on a significant or sensitive planning application**
- 8.26 On receipt of a significant or sensitive planning application, the local planning authority will: -
1. Assess the soundness of the pre-application community involvement undertaken by the developer/ applicants against best practice;
  2. Write to the applicant on any concerns over the soundness of the pre-application community involvement, requesting action to rectify deficiencies before the application is determined;
  3. Notify all interested parties and all local residents affected by the proposals by letter of the application, indicating that all representations will be taken into account regardless of consultation/ involvement carried out by the applicant. The letter should set out the procedures for making representations.
  4. 21 days will be given for consultation on the original planning application. 14 days will normally be allowed for consultation where it has been agreed that amended plans may be submitted and the target date for determination of the application (normally 13 weeks) can still be achieved.
  5. Request that the applicant puts up site notices, provided by the local planning authority, on prominent frontages of the site as soon as possible after the application is registered. The site notices will provide details of the application, arrangements for viewing the application and procedures for making representations on the application. Site notices will be sent out along with a letter explaining to the applicant what to do with them and the consequences of failing to put them up.

6. Place an advertisement in the local newspaper;
7. With the development of the Council website during 2005-2006, it is intended to be able to place details of each application on the Planning Page of the website with links to a form on which to make representations;
8. For "major" applications, all persons responding to the local authority consultation will be informed of the date of the committee at which the application will be considered and invited if they wish to speak at the meeting, subject to the normal rules governing public speaking at Committee; and
9. All persons responding to the local authority consultation will be informed of the decision of the authority in respect of the application. They will also be informed with regard to any subsequent planning appeal.

#### Steps for Community Involvement in respect of other types of Planning Applications

- 8.27 For development that is not defined as significant or sensitive above, applicants are invited, indeed are encouraged, to carry out pre-application community involvement in developing and explaining their proposals, certainly with local residents and community groups. Developers and residents have much to learn from each other from such dialogue. It is hoped that such dialogue in many cases can also achieve some level of consensus. However, such consultation and involvement will not be a requirement or an expectation in determining a planning application. Please also note that it will not usually be possible for a case officer to become involved in the detail of such pre-application involvement, other than assisting in providing postal address details of properties and any relevant groups who should be provided with details of the proposals.
- 8.28 For applications that are not significant or sensitive, the Council proposes to largely use its existing Procedures for Publicity for Planning Applications. These procedures are detailed below.
  1. Upon receipt of a planning application, the planning officer will carry out consultations with neighbours and other bodies, including statutory consultees. Neighbours will be identified from the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 plans and from any received information on postal changes. Neighbours constitute those living in properties that the officer feels near enough to the proposal to be affected by it. The officer will also decide if an advertisement should be placed in the newspaper (e.g. significant applications, listed buildings or where there is considerable doubt about neighbour addresses). It is not always necessary to notify every single adjoining landowner.

For example, an application for a front dormer window does not mean neighbours to the rear will be affected. In line with current practice, consultees are given 21 days to reply from the date of the letter and the date of the advertisement in the paper.

2. There will be a need to consult a range of bodies and specific organisations on applications affecting sensitive locations and properties such as, for example, proposals affecting the historic environment, rail infrastructure or areas with a high risk of flooding. The Joint Strategic Planning Unit will be consulted on major mineral and waste applications.
3. When deciding who to notify the planning officer will decide how many site notices (yellow notices) should be sent out to the applicant. A large site with several accesses and frontages would require more than one notice. Site notices will be sent out along with a letter explaining to the applicant what to do with them and the consequences of failing to put them up.
4. The applicant receives the site notice(s) and is requested to post on the site within seven days. The applicant then fills in the end date to allow a 21 day consultation period and returns a counterfoil to Reading Borough Council stating when the notice was posted and when the 21 day period expires (this will normally be later than the 21-day period referred to in the consultation letter).
5. The planning officer undertakes a site visit (usually 2-3 weeks after receipt of an application) and checks if the site notice(s) are displayed properly. This is noted on the file. If the notice is not displayed, the officer will note the addresses of all properties surrounding the site and upon return to the office will arrange for those who have not already been notified by letter (if any) to receive a letter and have three weeks to reply.
6. The continuing development of the Council website during 2005-2006 will enable details of planning applications to be placed on the Planning Page of the website, with links to a form on which to make representations.
7. Where the planning officer agrees that significant amendments can be made to the plans, and consideration of such amendments will still enable the Council to make a decision on the application within the target timescale, the application process continues, in accordance with the prescribed timeframes (normally, where possible, consultees will be given 14 days to comment. Note that not all changes merit re-consultation; they must be substantially different in impact to warrant the further delay in the planning process that re-consultation causes).

8. Once the consultation period is ended, a delegated decision is made or a committee report written. Care must be taken to ensure that the 21-day period has expired in the case of an application that has been advertised in the press.
9. The planning application file will contain evidence of the following: -
  - Details of the initial consultation list, including any local residents' groups;
  - Details of the number of site notices sent;
  - Proof from the applicant that notices were posted on site;
  - Proof from the planning officer that notices were posted on site; and
  - Details of any additional letters sent out.
10. In most cases, "smaller scale" applications are determined by officers under delegated powers and are not reported to Committee. However, procedures exist for applications to be called in by a local Councillor for determination by Committee. In such cases, all persons responding to the local authority consultation will be informed of the date of the committee at which the application will be considered and invited, if they wish, to speak/ be heard at the meeting, subject to the normal rules governing public speaking at Committee (see separate leaflet).
11. All persons responding to the local authority consultation will be informed of the decision of the authority in respect of the application. They will also be informed with regard to any subsequent planning appeal.

## Appendix 1

**Community Involvement Checklist for LDF Documents**  
(Not necessarily applicable in dealing with planning applications)

<u>Action</u>	<u>Complete</u>
1. Starting point is to refer to the Council's "Consultation Guidance Pack," particularly Section 9.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Define objectives of proposed consultation e.g. provide information; raise awareness; seek feedback; build understanding and awareness; build partnerships; meet legal requirements; involve community in planning their area; help community to develop their own proposals; enable respondents to influence policies and proposals.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Set out purpose of proposed consultation: information giving; information/ consultation/ market research; consultation/ influencing, engaging/ participation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Determine and plan methodologies: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Mailshots</li> <li>- Publicity</li> <li>- Meetings</li> <li>- Focus Groups</li> <li>- Market research (questionnaires, surveys, panels, etc.)</li> <li>- Interactive Planning for Real type exercises</li> <li>- Web/ internet</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Define Target groups: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Service Users (<i>from Planning Applications System</i>)</li> <li>- Area/ community groups</li> <li>- Interest Groups</li> <li>- RBC Target Groups</li> <li>- Business representatives</li> <li>- Youth</li> <li>- Individuals</li> <li>- Sample Survey Groups</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Ensure Hard to Reach groups are included in consultation as appropriate: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ethnic Minorities Forum</li> <li>- Commission for Racial Equality</li> <li>- Muslim Groups</li> <li>- TREGA/ Globe Groups/ community groups</li> <li>- Transcultural Services</li> <li>- Access Group</li> <li>- RFTRA/ Tenants Groups</li> <li>- Education-Schools and Reading/ College</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>

<u>Action</u>	<u>Complete</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Youth and Community</li> <li>- LSP partners</li> </ul>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Complete Corporate "Consultation Proforma" and send to Policy Section. Discuss and agree most appropriate methodologies. Present proposals to the Consultation and Research Quality Control Board.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Identify manpower resources needed and set up internal team to handle consultation exercise.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Set timetable - provide project plan. Give sufficient time for groups to meet and agree results. Allow for holiday periods. Ensure contingency for need to carry out additional consultation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Identify skills needed and any training e.g. for facilitated exercises.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Set and agree budget for expenditure.	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Plan to evaluate purpose and methodologies using external pilot, such as the Planning Focus Group or activists in Globe Groups. Adjust methodologies as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Ensure internal participants are fully consulted on final documentation and methodology e.g. Transport Strategy, Building Control, Housing, Environmental Health, Policy, etc. Ensure Planning Section staff have the opportunity to comment before consultation finalised. Ensure full details of what the respondent needs to do is provided. Include information on how a consultee/ participant can complain if aggrieved by the process	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. Identify contact points (Duty Officers, Call Centre staff, Planning Reception). Provide information pack for those handling queries. Determine phone number contact - Call Centre Freephone? Brief Call Centre, switchboard and Planning Reception fully on exercise and contacts. Brief Planning Section and relevant contacts in other sections (e.g. Transport Strategy, Housing) who may receive queries on project.	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. Finalise/ typeset documentation/ exhibition materials/ survey forms, etc., that are to form the basis for consultation. Ensure translation service straplines are provided as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<u>Action</u>	<u>Complete</u>
Ensure details of how to make a complaint about the consultation are provided.	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Submit all documentation to be published to M&PR for plain English assessment. Revise documents to meet recommendations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. Ensure all documentation for publication is proofread and signed off by 3 separate persons (including one person who is not a member of the LDF team) prior to sending off for printing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. Ensure Lead Councillors and Chair of Planning Applications Committee are fully briefed and involved. Information to be sent to other Councillors as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. Define the feedback that will be provided to participants. This should include a description of the form of feedback and timetable for giving feedback. Define monitoring and evaluation of engagement exercise and information sought.	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. Involve Marketing and PR at an early stage to define and co-ordinate press and radio involvement. Consult Libraries as a point for making documentation available to the public.	<input type="checkbox"/>
21. Prepare letters and press release information. Seek to engage potential participants. Inform why consulting and what response is sought. Set out intended process. Explain what happens to their response. Tell them how you intend to feedback on the results of consultation and by what date.	<input type="checkbox"/>
22. Consult and brief Transcultural Services on consultation and the need for any translation services.	<input type="checkbox"/>
23. Include details on how to complain should a person feel aggrieved by the process of involvement.	<input type="checkbox"/>
24. Consider the needs of visually and hearing impaired e.g. large type and braille translation.	<input type="checkbox"/>
25. Set up a database for recording responses and identifying those to whom feedback needs to be sent. Set up an email receipt, recording, acknowledgement and feedback system.	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
26. Identify areas of potential conflict or controversy and plan how to deal with those areas and how to respond to the expectations of the public.	<input type="checkbox"/>

<u>Action</u>	<u>Complete</u>
27. Carry out planned community engagement exercise, including recording and analysis of results.	<input type="checkbox"/>
28. Carry out monitoring and evaluation of consultation exercise, including lessons for the future.	<input type="checkbox"/>
29. Produce clear feedback on Council/ Cabinet/ Committee response to matters raised in consultation. Send copies to all respondents, press, internal consultees, email participants etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>

## Appendix 2

### List of Groups, Organisations and Individuals who will be Consulted on LDF Products

#### Council

Councillors and Relevant Scrutiny Panels  
Relevant Sections of the Council

#### Specific Consultation Bodies

**Adjoining Local Authorities** - Wokingham District Council, South Oxfordshire District Council, West Berkshire Council, Oxfordshire County Council

**Other Local Authorities within Berkshire** - Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Slough Borough Council, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

**Adjoining Parish and Town Councils** - Shinfield Parish Council, Purley-on-Thames Parish Council, Holybrook Parish Council, Tilehurst Parish Council, Eye and Dunsden Parish Council, Kidmore End Parish Council, Mapledurham Parish Council, Burghfield Parish Council, Earley Town Council

Joint Strategic Planning Unit for Berkshire

SEERA

SEEDA

Highways Agency

Countryside Agency

Environment Agency

Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England

English Nature

Network Rail (particularly if rail infrastructure will be affected)

Electronic communications code operators (Communications Act 2003)

Strategic Health Authority

Electricity Act (Scottish and Southern Electricity)

Gas Act 1986 (Transco)

Sewerage undertaker (Thames Water)

Water undertaker (Thames Water)

#### General Consultation Bodies

##### LSP

Members of the LSP Board

Chairs of the LSP Topic Groups

British Waterways

Sport England South East

**Voluntary Bodies and other Forums including: -**

Safer Community Forums  
 GLOBE Groups  
 Reading Federation of Tenants and Residents Associations and constituent associations.

Access Forum  
 Green City Forum  
 Arts Forum  
 Black Communities Forum  
 Crime & Disorder Partnership  
 Healthier Reading Forum  
 Pensioners Working Group  
 Safer Reading Campaign  
 Sports Development Forum  
 Transport Users' Forum  
 Third Thames Crossing Councils' Group  
 Woodlands & Waterways Forum  
 Young Persons' Forum

**Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area: -**

Ethnic Minorities Forum and constituent Members  
 Reading Council for Racial Equality

**Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area: -**

Note: Some Religious Groups are represented on the Black Community Forum.

**Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area:**

-

The Reading Access Forum represents the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area. The forum meets regularly and has the services of a paid officer through whom consultation material can be widely circulated amongst Members of the Forum and other interested parties.

**Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the authority's area; -**

Reading Chamber of Commerce (Property Group)  
 HBF  
 Reading Town Centre Management Board  
 Planning consultants, other agents, landowners and developers on the Planning Section LDF Database, or who have been involved in making applications for major development proposals, or have requested to be kept informed.

**Bodies interested in the historic environment, as advised by English Heritage in their letter dated 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2005: -**

CABE

Ancient Monuments Society

Council for British Archaeology

Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings

The Georgian Group

The Victorian Society

The Twentieth Century Society

Garden History Society

The National Trust

Local Civic/Amenity Society

Local Building Preservation Trust

Local Archaeological and Antiquarian Societies, and local history societies

Also refer to "Planning and Development in the Historic Environment - A Charter for English Heritage Advisory Services," English Heritage, 2005.

**Other hard to reach groups: -**

Gypsies, travellers and locally relevant showpeople

## Community Involvement at Key Stages of Plan Preparation

Document/Activity	Statutory Requirements	Additional RBC Community Involvement to meet local characteristics and preferences
<b>Local Development Scheme</b>		
Local Development Scheme	Submit to the Secretary of State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss with Planning Focus Group</li> <li>• Notify LSP Partners</li> <li>• Send copies to LSP Groups and a sample of Community Groups</li> <li>• Press Release</li> <li>• Publish on the Council website.</li> </ul>
<b>Statement of Community Involvement</b>		
Statement of Community Involvement - pre submission consultation	<p>Minimum requirements under Regulation 25 are to consult: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The regional planning body;</li> <li>(ii) Each relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority; and</li> <li>(iii) The Highways Agency; and</li> <li>(iv) General consultation bodies<sup>10</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>Publish documents and details on the Council website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Focus Group</li> <li>• RBC Consultation Board</li> <li>• Discuss LDD preparation with LSP Board representatives and a sample of community groups.</li> </ul>

<sup>10</sup> "General consultation bodies" are defined in Regulation 2 of the Regulations - See Glossary

Document/Activity	Statutory Requirements	Additional RBC Community Involvement to meet local characteristics and preferences
Statement of Community Involvement - Submission Document	Minimum requirements under Regulation 26 are to: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make copies available for inspection</li> <li>• Publish copies on website</li> <li>• Send to the DPD bodies<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Give notice by local advertisement.</li> </ul>	Notify all resident and amenity groups and all participants of earlier community involvement exercises who indicated that they wished to be included on the Council's LDF database. Provide press and PR information. Arrange meetings/ exhibitions/ drop-in/ workshop events to explain and discuss Submission Documents and/ or contentious issues, as appropriate.
Public Examination	At least 6 weeks before the examination starts: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Publish details on web site</li> <li>• Notify people who made representations of date examination starts and name of person appointed to hold examination. (Regulation 34)</li> </ul>	
Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted document &amp; adoption statement made available for inspection (includes web site)</li> <li>• Notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Notify anyone who requested to be notified of adoption</li> <li>• Send adoption statement etc. to Secretary of State (Regulation 36)</li> </ul>	

<sup>11</sup> DPD bodies are defined in Regulation 24 of the Regulations - See Glossary

Document/Activity	Statutory Requirements	Additional RBC Community Involvement to meet local characteristics and preferences
<b>Core Strategy, Vision and Spatial Strategy Document</b>		
Evidence Gathering/ Options Consultation	Minimum requirements under Regulation 25 are to consult: - (v) The regional planning body; (vi) Each relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority; and (vii) The Highways Agency; and (viii) General consultation bodies <sup>12</sup> .  Publish documents and details on the Council website.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Focus Group</li> <li>• Collate, analyse and build on consultation carried out by other sections of Council (e.g. Horizons Consultation on Transport strategy) or as part of the development of the Community Strategy</li> <li>• Use results of Consultation on Issues Report, published in January 2003</li> <li>• Circulate/ consult LSP to discuss findings and suggest sources of evidence.</li> </ul>
Pre-submission Involvement	Minimum requirements under Regulation 26 are to: - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make copies available for inspection</li> <li>• Publish copies on website</li> <li>• Send to the DPD bodies<sup>13</sup></li> <li>• Give notice by local advertisement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on Consultation/ Involvement carried out in January to April 2003 on the Issues Report and Draft Spatial Strategy</li> <li>• Formally consult LSP Stakeholder Forum/ Panel</li> <li>• Publish issues &amp; options in Council Newspaper inviting comments</li> <li>• Hold focus group/ workshop events with DPD Bodies on key policies and proposals.</li> </ul>
Submission Document	Under Regulation 28(3), inform: -	Notify all resident and amenity groups and all

<sup>12</sup> "General consultation bodies" are defined in Regulation 2 of the Regulations - See Glossary

<sup>13</sup> DPD bodies are defined in Regulation 24 of the Regulations - See Glossary

Document/Activity	Statutory Requirements	Additional RBC Community Involvement to meet local characteristics and preferences
	<p>(a) Each of the specific consultation bodies<sup>14</sup> to the extent that the local planning authority thinks that the proposed subject matter of the DPD affects the body; and</p> <p>(b) Such of the general consultation bodies<sup>15</sup> as the local planning authority consider appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitted document &amp; associated matters (including statements of consultation and public participation) made available for inspection (includes website) and sent to DPD Bodies</li> <li>• Notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Notify anyone who requested to be notified of submission.</li> </ul> <p>All representations must be placed on the Council website.</p>	<p>participants of earlier community involvement exercises who indicated that they wished to be included on the Council's LDF database. Provide press and PR information. Arrange meetings/ exhibitions/ drop-in/ workshop events to explain and discuss Submission Documents and/ or contentious issues, as appropriate.</p>
Public Examination	<p>At least 6 weeks before the examination starts:</p> <p>-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Publish details on website</li> <li>• Notify people who made representations of date examination starts and name of person appointed to hold examination.</li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 34)</p>	
Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted document &amp; adoption statement</li> </ul>	

<sup>14</sup> "Specific consultation bodies" are defined in Section 2 of the Regulations

<sup>15</sup> "General consultation bodies" as defined in section 2 of the Regulations

Document/Activity	Statutory Requirements	Additional RBC Community Involvement to meet local characteristics and preferences
	<p>made available for inspection (includes website)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Notify anyone who requested to be notified of adoption</li> <li>• Send adoption statement etc. to Secretary of State.</li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 36)</p>	
<b>Site Specific Allocations Document</b>		
Evidence Gathering/ Options Consultation	<p>Minimum requirements under Regulation 25 are to consult: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(ix) The regional planning body;</li> <li>(x) Each relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority; and</li> <li>(xi) The Highways Agency; and</li> <li>(xii) General consultation bodies<sup>16</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>Publish documents and details on the Council website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning Focus Group</li> <li>• Collate, analyse and build on consultation carried out by other sections of Council (e.g. Horizons Consultation on Transport strategy) or as part of the development of the Community Strategy.</li> <li>• Use results of Consultation on Issues Report published in January 2003.</li> <li>• Circulate/ consult LSP to discuss findings and suggest sources of evidence.</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> "General consultation bodies" are defined in Regulation 2 of the Regulations - See Glossary

Document/Activity	Statutory Requirements	Additional RBC Community Involvement to meet local characteristics and preferences
Pre-submission Involvement	<p>Minimum requirements under Regulation 26 are to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make copies available for inspection</li> <li>• Publish copies on website</li> <li>• Send to the DPD bodies<sup>17</sup></li> <li>• Give notice by local advertisement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build on Consultation/ Involvement carried out in January to April 2003 on the Issues Report and Draft Spatial Strategy</li> <li>• Formally consult LSP Stakeholder Forum/ Panel</li> <li>• Publish issues &amp; options in Council Newspaper inviting comments</li> <li>• Hold focus group/ workshop events with DPD Bodies on key policies and proposals.</li> </ul>
Submission Document	<p>Under Regulation 28(3), inform: -</p> <p>(a) Each of the specific consultation bodies<sup>18</sup> to the extent that the local planning authority thinks that the proposed subject matter of the DPD affects the body; and</p> <p>(b) Such of the general consultation bodies<sup>19</sup> as the local planning authority consider appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitted document &amp; associated matters (including statements of consultation and public participation) made available for inspection (includes website) and sent to DPD Bodies</li> <li>• Notice by local advertisement</li> </ul>	<p>Notify all resident and amenity groups and all participants of earlier community involvement exercises who indicated that they wished to be included on the Council's LDF database. Provide press and PR information. Arrange meetings/ exhibitions/ drop-in/ workshop events to explain and discuss Submission Documents and/ or contentious issues, as appropriate.</p>

<sup>17</sup> DPD bodies are defined in Regulation 24 of the Regulations - See Glossary

<sup>18</sup> "Specific consultation bodies" are defined in Section 2 of the Regulations

<sup>19</sup> "General consultation bodies" as defined in section 2 of the Regulations

Document/Activity	Statutory Requirements	Additional RBC Community Involvement to meet local characteristics and preferences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify anyone who requested to be notified of submission.</li> </ul> <p>All representations must be placed on the Council website.</p>	
Site Allocations Representations	<p>Regulation 32 applies to a site allocation representation: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Make a site allocation representation and a statement of the matters in paragraph (3) available for inspection</li> <li>(b) Publish details on the authority's website</li> <li>(c) Send details to the DPD bodies</li> <li>(d) Give notice by local advertisement.</li> </ul>	
Public Examination	<p>At least 6 weeks before the examination starts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> <li>• Give notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Publish details on web site</li> <li>• Notify people who made representations of date examination starts and name of person appointed to hold examination.</li> </ul> <p>(Regulation 34)</p>	
Adoption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted document &amp; adoption statement made available for inspection (includes website).</li> <li>• Notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Notify anyone who requested to be notified of adoption</li> </ul>	

Document/Activity	Statutory Requirements	Additional RBC Community Involvement to meet local characteristics and preferences
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send adoption statement etc. to Secretary of State. (Regulation 36)</li> </ul>	

Central Reading Action Area Plan		
Evidence Gathering/ Options Consultation	<p>Minimum requirements under Regulation 25 are to consult: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(xiii) The regional planning body;</li> <li>(xiv) Each relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority; and</li> <li>(xv) The Highways Agency; and</li> <li>(xvi) General consultation bodies<sup>20</sup>.</li> </ul> <p>Publish documents and details on the Council website.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Planning Focus Group</li> <li>Collate, analyse and build on consultation carried out by other sections of Council (e.g. Community Strategy Consultation, Town Centre Strategy, Horizons Consultation on Transport strategy).</li> <li>Use LSP to establish Stakeholder Planning Forum/ Panel to discuss findings and suggest sources of evidence.</li> </ul>
Pre-submission Involvement	<p>Minimum requirements under Regulation 26 are to: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make copies available for inspection</li> <li>Publish copies on website</li> <li>Send to the DPD bodies<sup>21</sup></li> <li>Give notice by local advertisement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build on Consultation/ Involvement carried out in January to April 2003 on the Issues Report and Draft Spatial Strategy</li> <li>Survey Work in respect of town centre living</li> </ul>

<sup>20</sup> "General consultation bodies" are defined in Regulation 2 of the Regulations - See Glossary

<sup>21</sup> DPD bodies are defined in Regulation 24 of the Regulations - See Glossary

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formally consult LSP Stakeholder Forum/ Panel Publish issues &amp; options in Council Newspaper inviting comments</li> <li>• Hold focus group events with DPD Bodies</li> <li>• Publish preferred Options in Council Newspaper</li> <li>• Hold travelling road show at local halls &amp; shopping centre.</li> </ul>
<p>Submission Document</p>	<p>Under Regulation 28(3), inform: -</p> <p>(a) Each of the specific consultation bodies<sup>22</sup> to the extent that the local planning authority thinks that the proposed subject matter of the DPD affects the body; and</p> <p>(b) Such of the general consultation bodies<sup>23</sup> as the local planning authority consider appropriate.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Submitted document &amp; associated matters (including statements of consultation and public participation) made available for inspection (includes website) and sent to DPD Bodies</li> <li>• Notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Notify anyone who requested to be notified of submission.</li> </ul> <p>Any person may make representations during 6 weeks from date of notice. All representations must be placed on the Council website.</p>	<p>Notify all resident and amenity groups and all participants of earlier community involvement exercises who indicated that they wished to be included on the Council’s LDF database. Provide press and PR information. Arrange meetings/ exhibitions/ drop-in/ workshop events to explain and discuss Submission Documents and/ or contentious issues, as appropriate.</p>

<sup>22</sup> “Specific consultation bodies” are defined in Section 2 of the Regulations

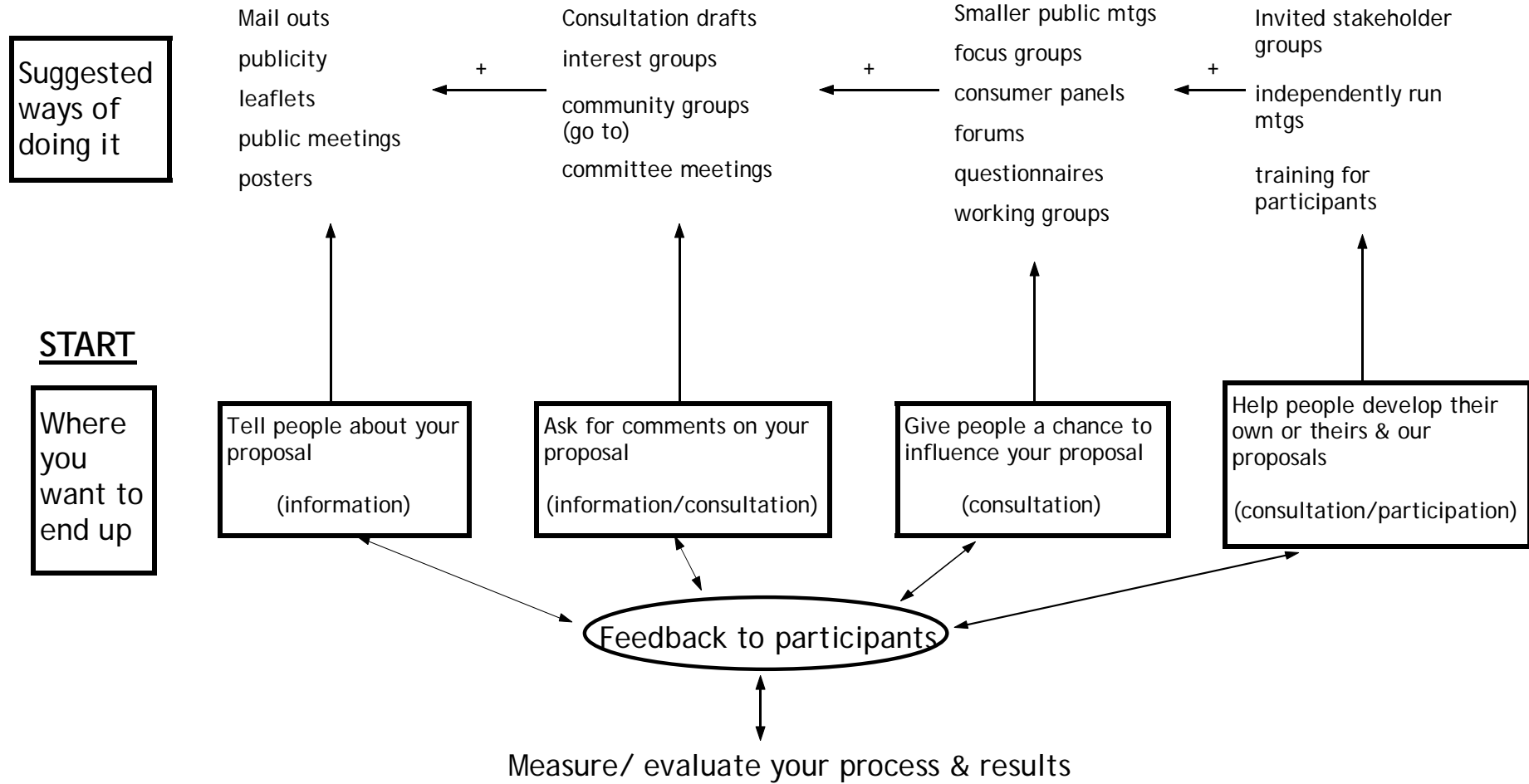
<sup>23</sup> “General consultation bodies” as defined in section 2 of the Regulations

<p>Site Allocations Representations</p>	<p>Regulation 32 applies to a site allocation representation: -                  (a) Make a site allocation representation and a statement of the matters in paragraph (3) available for inspection                  (b) Publish details on the authority's website:                  (c) Send details to the DPD bodies                  (d) Give notice by local advertisement.</p>	
<p>Public Examination</p>	<p>At least 6 weeks before the examination starts:                  -  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Publish details on web site</li> <li>• Notify people who made representations of date examination starts and name of person appointed to hold examination.</li> </ul>                 (Regulation 34)</p>	
<p>Adoption</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted document &amp; adoption statement made available for inspection (includes web site)</li> <li>• Notice by local advertisement</li> <li>• Notify anyone who requested to be notified of adoption</li> <li>• Send adoption statement etc. to Secretary of State</li> </ul> (Regulation 36)	

<b>Supplementary Planning Documents</b>		
<b>Evidence Gathering</b>		
Pre adoption consultation	<p>Regulation 17: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Make copies available for inspection</li> <li>(b) Publish on website</li> <li>(b) send to the bodies specified in paragraph</li> <li>(3) (a) specific consultation bodies</li> <li>(b) General consultation bodies as the authority consider appropriate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold interactive event and public meeting for development briefs and other SPD's at a local venue within participation period, as appropriate</li> <li>• For general policy documents, publish in Council Newspaper and hold focus group meeting with interested parties.</li> </ul>
Adoption	<p>Regulation 18: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopted document, adoption statement &amp; statement of representations made available for inspection (includes website).</li> <li>• Notify anyone who requested to be notified of adoption.</li> </ul>	
<b>Major Planning Applications</b>		
Pre-Application Community Involvement by Applicant		<p>Applicant to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare and disseminate information on intentions and other information to involve local community in accordance with a project plan and address database, developed in conjunction with and agreed with the local planning authority;</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To arrange and hold, at the applicant's expense, at least one, professionally facilitated, interactive involvement event designed to enable all consultees to attend, receive information, participate and feedback information on their area and community, and their views on possible development or other changes in the area. Details of the time, location, materials, facilitation arrangements and event programme should be agreed in writing with the local planning authority. A public report of community involvement would be required for submission with any planning application, detailing the extent of the community involvement exercise carried out, reporting all views and responses and indicating the actions that have been carried out or that it is proposed are carried out in order to meet the views and concerns raised by the community involvement.</li> </ul>
<p>Formal Consultation on registered application by Local Planning Authority</p>	<p>Minimum requirements as set out in Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.</p>	<p>Council's existing policy on publicising planning applications is attached at Appendix 5.</p>

# READING'S CONSULTATION GUIDELINES



## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

AAP	Area Action Plan
AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
Development Plan	This will consist of regional spatial strategies and development plan documents contained within the local development framework.
DPD	Development Plan Documents
DPD bodies	<p>Means the bodies consulted by a local planning authority under Regulation 25<sup>24</sup>, i.e.</p> <p>(a) Each of the specific consultation bodies to the extent that the local planning authority thinks that the proposed subject matter of the DPD affects the body; and</p> <p>(b) Such of the general consultation bodies as the local planning authority consider appropriate.</p> <p>(2) If the document is the local planning authority's Statement of Community Involvement, the requirement referred to in paragraph (1)(a) is satisfied -</p> <p>(a) By an authority whose area is in a region other than London, if the authority consult -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) The regional planning body;</li> <li>(ii) Each relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority; and</li> <li>(iii) The Highways Agency.</li> </ul>
EA	Environment Agency

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<sup>24</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004

<b>General Consultation Bodies</b>	Means the following bodies - (a) Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area; (b) Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area; (c) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area; (d) bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area; and (e) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the authority's area.
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>GLOBE Groups</b>	Globe stands for 'Go Local On a Better Environment'. These groups were established in the mid 1990's by Reading Borough Council, following the undertaking of the Agenda 21 agreement by central Government. The Globe Groups around Reading work towards improving their local environment in ways that they believe will benefit local residents. Reading's Globe Groups meet regularly to discuss issues that they would like to raise with the Council. They also provide an opportunity to share experiences and information about what is occurring in their area of Reading. The Reading Globe Assliance (TREGA) is the umbrella organisation that looks after all the Globe Groups. Further information about the Reading Globe Groups can be found at <a href="http://reading-city.net/trega/">http://reading-city.net/trega/</a> .
<b>GOSE</b>	Government Office for the South East
<b>JSPU</b>	Joint Strategic Planning Unit
<b>LDD</b>	Local Development Document comprising development plan documents (DPD), supplementary planning documents (SPD) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
<b>LDF</b>	Local Development Framework comprising a portfolio of local development documents that will provide the framework for delivering the spatial planning strategy for the area.

<b>LDS</b>	Local Development Scheme - will set out the programme for the preparation of the local development documents. All plan-making authorities must submit a local development scheme to the First Secretary of State for approval within six months of the commencement date of the Act. The transitional arrangements allow for policies in existing adopted plans to be saved for three years from the date of commencement of the Act.
<b>Local Plan</b>	A borough-wide or district-wide development plan or county-wide plan covering minerals or waste under the former planning policy system.
<b>LSP</b>	Local Strategic Partnership
<b>PINS</b>	Planning Inspectorate
<b>PPG</b>	Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's which will now be superseded by Planning Policy Statements or PPS's)
<b>PPS</b>	Planning Policy Statement (PPS's which replace Planning Policy Guidance (PPG's))
<b>RPG</b>	Regional Planning Guidance
<b>RSS</b>	Regional Spatial Strategy - will be prepared by the regional planning body (in our case by the South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA)). The regional spatial strategy will set out the policies in relation to the development and use of land in the region and will be approved by the First Secretary of State.
<b>SA/ SEA</b>	Sustainability Appraisal/ Strategic Environmental Assessment. Sustainability Appraisal is required for all LDD's. Sustainability Appraisal needs to be undertaken in a way that incorporates the requirements for SEA.  SEA is a generic term used internationally to describe environmental assessment as applied to policies, plans and programmes. Statutory requirement under the European 'SEA Directive' (2001/42/EC).

**SEERA** South East England Regional Assembly

**SCI** Statement of Community Involvement: sets out the standards which the plan-making authority intend to achieve in relation to involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all local development documents and in major development control decisions. Consultation and participation required in processing of the SCI. The SCI will be subject to independent examination. A consultation statement showing how the local planning authority has complied with its Statement of Community Involvement will be required for all local development documents.

**SPD** Supplementary Planning Document - cover a wide range of issues on which the plan-making authority wishes to provide policy guidance to supplement the policies and proposals in development plan. Replaces SPG (Supplementary Planning Guidance). Documents will not form part of the development plan or be subject to independent examination.

#### Specific Consultation Bodies

(a) In relation to a local planning authority whose area is in a region other than London, means the regional planning body and the bodies specified or described in sub-paragraphs (i) to (x): -

(i) The Countryside Agency

(ii) The Environment Agency

(iii) The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England

(iv) English Nature

(v) The Strategic Rail Authority

(vi) The Highways Agency

(vii) A relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority

(viii) A Regional Development Agency whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority

(ix) Any person-

(aa) to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003; and

(bb) who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local planning authority,

(x) If it exercises functions in any part of the local planning authority's area: -

(aa) A Strategic Health Authority,

(bb) A person to whom a licence has been granted under Section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989,

(cc) A person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986,

(dd) A sewerage undertaker,

(ee) A water undertaker.

SPG	Supplementary Planning Guidance (now replaced by SPD or Supplementary Planning Document)
Structure Plan	Development plans prepared for a County
UA	Unitary Authority.

## Reading Borough Council

### Existing Procedures for Publicity for Planning Applications

1. Upon receipt of a planning application, the planning officer will carry out consultations with neighbours and other bodies. Neighbours will be identified from the Ordnance Survey 1:1250 plans and from any received information on postal changes. Neighbours constitute those properties the officer feels near enough to the proposal to be affected by it. The officer will also decide if an advertisement should be placed in the newspaper (including major applications, listed buildings or where there is considerable doubt about neighbours addresses). It is not always necessary to notify every single adjoining land owner. For example, an application for a front dormer does not mean neighbours to the rear will be affected. In line with current practice, consultees are given 3 weeks to reply from the date of the letter and from the date of the advertisement in the paper.
2. When deciding who to notify, the planning officer will decide how many site notices (yellow notices) should be sent out to the applicant. A large site with several accesses would require more than one. Site notices will be sent out along with a letter<sup>25</sup> explaining to the applicant what to do with them and the consequences of failing to do it.
3. The applicant receives the site notice(s) and is requested to post on the site within seven days. The applicant then fills in the 21 day consultation period and returns a counterfoil to Reading Borough Council stating when the notice was posted and when the 21 day period expires (this will normally be later than the 21 day period referred to in the consultation letter).
4. The planning officer does a site visit (usually 2-3 weeks after receipt of an application) and checks if the site notice(s) are displayed properly. This is noted on the file. If the notice is not displayed, the officer will note the addresses of all properties surrounding the site and upon return to the office, will arrange for those who have not already been notified by letter (if any) to receive a letter and have three weeks to reply.
5. If significant amendments are made to the plans, any neighbours deemed to be affected will be notified and have 2 weeks to comment (not all changes merit reconsultation; they must be substantially different in impact to warrant the further delay in the planning process reconsultation causes).

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<sup>25</sup> Refers to site notice and letter templates that are no longer valid, as have been since updated.

6. Once the consultation period is up, a delegated decision is made or a committee report written (reports should not be written until the consultation period is up unless agreed by the Head of Planning). Care must be taken to ensure that the 21 day period has expired in the case of an application which has been advertised in the press.
7. The planning application file will contain evidence of the following: -
  - Details of the initial consultation list, including any local residents' groups
  - Details of the number of site notices sent
  - Proof from the applicant that notices were posted on site
  - Proof from the planning officer that notices were posted on site
  - Details of any additional letters sent out.