

Appendix 1

Wiltshire Council

Local Development Framework

Statement of Community Involvement

Recommended to Council

23 February 2010

How to use this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Chapter 1 introduces the SCI and the planning system.

Chapter 2 contains details of the Wiltshire community to identify **who** Wiltshire Council will consult on planning matters.

Chapter 3 introduces the methods of consultation which Wiltshire Council will use and how these will be resourced. This chapter is concerned with **how** Wiltshire Council will consult you on planning matters.

Chapter 4 explains **how** and **when** you can become involved in the production of planning policy documents for Wiltshire.

Chapter 5 explains **how** and **when** you can become involved in the determination of planning applications in your area.

Chapter 6 outlines how Wiltshire Council will monitor the success of consultation initiatives, and sets out how and when Wiltshire Council will review the SCI.

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Glossary of terms

A brief explanation of the key terms in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is provided in this glossary. We have tried to keep the use of acronyms to a minimum throughout the document. All those acronyms which have been used are identified and explained below.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) The council is required to produce a report in December each year assessing the effectiveness of the Local Development Framework.

Core Strategy The core strategy is the key planning document for an area. The core strategy sets out the long-term vision for the area and provides the strategic policies and proposals that will deliver that vision. The core strategy is a development plan document.

Development plan The development plan consists of the Regional Spatial Strategy prepared by South West Councils (the Regional Planning Body) and Development Plan Documents produced by Wiltshire Council (or jointly with neighbouring authorities). Planning applications must be determined in accordance with the development plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Development Plan Document (DPD) A number of documents setting out the council's planning policies and proposals. DPDs are subject to community involvement, consultation and independent examination.

Independent examination Development plan documents are subject to an examination by a planning inspector to test 'soundness'.

Local Area Agreement (LAA) This is an agreement between Wiltshire and central government, which sets out targets for improvement in the local area. The LAA for Wiltshire is included within the Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW). The LAA includes actions for Wiltshire Council, the police, the NHS, the fire service, the voluntary sector and the business sector.

Local Development Documents (LDD) The individual documents that make up the Local Development Framework. They can take the form of Development Plan Documents or present guidance in the form of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

Local Development Framework (LDF) This is simply the term used to describe the 'folder' of documents which form the local spatial planning framework for Wiltshire.

Local Development Scheme (LDS) The LDS sets out the timetable for preparing the local development framework. This includes details of the topics to be covered by individual DPDs.

Local Transport Plan (LTP) The LTP is a statutory document that steers the development of national transport policies at the local level.

Material consideration A material consideration is any planning matter which is relevant to a particular case.

Minerals and waste development plan documents DPDs that set out the planning policy for Wiltshire with regards to minerals extraction and waste management.

Planning Inspectorate (PINS) The Planning Inspectorate holds independent examinations to determine whether or not DPDs are 'sound'. The Planning Inspectorate also handles planning and enforcement appeals.

Proposals Map The council must produce a proposals map which illustrates all of the policies contained within adopted DPDs. The proposals map must be revised every time a new DPD is adopted.

Sound/soundness This describes where a DPD is considered to 'show good judgement' and also to fulfil the expectations of legislation, and conforms to national and regional planning policy.

South West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) The RSS sets out the south west region's policies in relation to the development and use of land. Local planning policies in the Local Development Framework must be in conformity with those in the RSS.

Spatial planning An approach to planning that uses land in the most effective way to promote 'sustainable development'.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) A document explaining to the community how and when they can be involved in the preparation of the Local Development Framework and the determination of planning applications, and the steps that will be taken to encourage this involvement.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) An SEA is an assessment of the environmental impacts of policies and proposals.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) SPDs do not have 'development plan' status, but are intended to elaborate upon the policies and proposals in DPDs. They can be used as a 'material consideration' in the determination of planning applications.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) An SA is an assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of policies and proposals.

Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) The SCS sets out the strategic vision for sustainable communities in Wiltshire, and forms the basis of the Local Area Agreement. The Core Strategy aims to deliver the spatial aspects of the SCS.

Sustainable development Defined as ‘development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’.

Wiltshire community The Wiltshire community is made up of all the people who live, work or have an interest in Wiltshire and its continued development. Wiltshire Council keeps a database of all the people and organisations interested in the Local Development Framework or planning applications. This database is continually evolving as organisations are added or removed.

Wiltshire Compact The Wiltshire Compact is an agreement between the statutory and voluntary sectors in Wiltshire. It aims to improve the quality of life in Wiltshire by improving joint working arrangements between these sectors.

Wiltshire Council This is the unitary authority which was formed on 1 April 2009, replacing the former Kennet, North Wiltshire, Salisbury and West Wiltshire District Councils and Wiltshire County Council.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Wiltshire Council's vision is to "create stronger and more resilient communities¹". A key part in achieving this vision will be ensuring that these communities are involved in decision making. The SCI describes how Wiltshire Council will involve the community in planning for the future use of land in their area and how planning can achieve local, open, honest decision-making in Wiltshire.
- 1.2 The SCI is here to provide the community with clarity on the levels of involvement that they should expect in planning processes. The SCI explains in detail the council's policy for engaging the community in the preparation of the Wiltshire Local Development Framework (LDF) and in the consideration of planning applications. The principles in the SCI will also guide consultation on the Local Transport Plan (LTP).
- 1.3 Wiltshire Council is committed to using new and innovative ways of involving the community in the planning system. The council will use a combination of methods, such as public exhibitions and meetings and online consultations. Further details of the methods the council will use are provided in appendix 1. The council wants to ensure that everyone with an interest in planning understands how they can contribute to, and influence, the planning decision-making process.
- 1.4 This SCI builds on the work already carried out in Wiltshire by the former district councils in the preparation of their individual LDFs and by the former county council, in conjunction with Swindon Borough Council, in the preparation of joint minerals and waste DPDs. The development management teams of the former district councils also have an extensive experience of consultation and will utilise this knowledge when engaging in planning applications. This has assisted the local community in understanding how to become involved in the process effectively. The transfer of these skills will form a key part of the updated consultation strategy.
- 1.5 Wiltshire Council's commitment is to provide opportunities for you to influence planning decisions that affect you or your community directly.

¹ This vision is taken from 'Our First Year Plan 2009-10'

The planning system

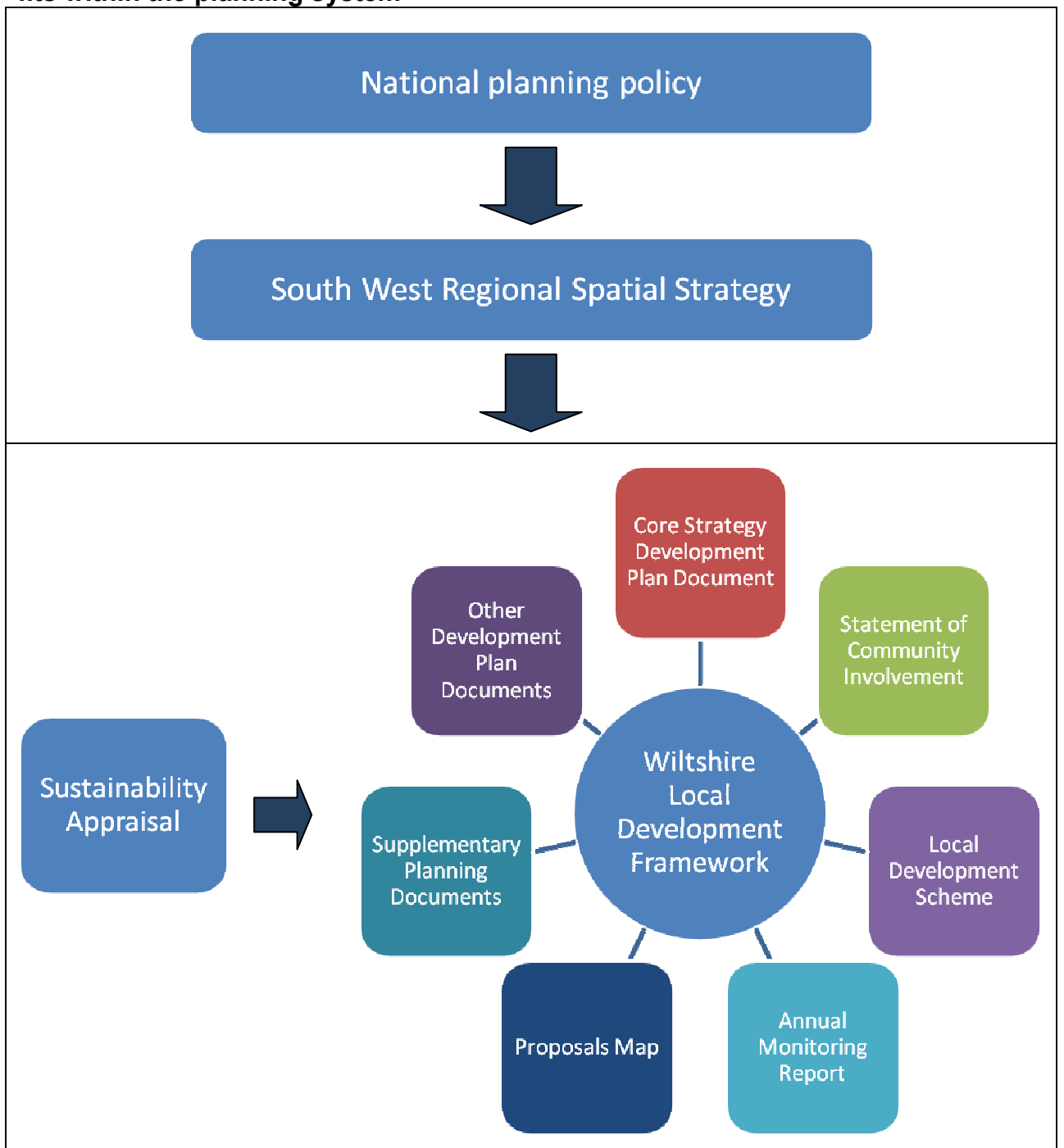
- 1.6 The current planning policy system consists of:
- National policy in the form of planning policy statements/guidance, planning circulars, and national policy statements
 - Regional policy in the form of regional spatial strategies (RSS), and
 - Local policy in the form of local development frameworks (LDF).
- 1.7 Together regional and local policy form the statutory development plan for the area. The documents which will form the Wiltshire LDF are illustrated in diagram 1 overleaf. These documents will outline the spatial planning strategy for Wiltshire. Further details on the contents and timetable of these documents are set out in the Wiltshire Local Development Scheme².
- 1.8 Planning applications are determined according to the policies in the development plan for the area unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Material considerations may include site specific details, emerging planning policy and relevant local planning guidance and strategies, such as village design statements or conservation area management plans.

Spatial planning and development management in Wiltshire

- 1.9 Planning in Wiltshire is delivered by the spatial planning and development services. The spatial planning service is part of the wider economy and enterprise service, and has three broad functions:
- Preparing the LDF, a group of planning policy documents that act together to guide development in Wiltshire.
 - Monitoring the effectiveness of existing planning policies and collating information that informs the preparation of these policies.
 - Protecting and conserving Wiltshire's landscape and natural heritage, and working with countryside colleagues to provide facilities, access and opportunities for people to enjoy it.
- 1.10 The development service is concerned with determining planning applications. There are currently four development management teams, based in north, south, east and west Wiltshire. There is also a minerals and waste development management team, which is concerned with the determination of applications for minerals extraction and waste management facilities. Contact details for the teams within the spatial planning and development services are provided at the end of this SCI.

² The Wiltshire Local Development Scheme is available at:
www.wiltshire.gov.uk/localdevelopmentscheme

Diagram 1: The Wiltshire Local Development Framework, and how this fits within the planning system



2 The Wiltshire community

- 2.1 Wiltshire Council is committed to open and honest dialogue with the community and will endeavour to include as many bodies, organisations and individuals in the planning process as possible. This chapter details who and what we consider to be the Wiltshire community. In addition to this we detail how we will link in with some of the existing community initiatives in Wiltshire. The aim of this SCI is to allow opportunities for involvement in the planning process by all sections of the community.

Whom to consult?

- 2.2 Wiltshire Council has undertaken work to define our 'community'. A list of consultees has been developed based on past experience and previous consultation exercises carried out by the former district and county councils. This list also draws on central government advice, previous local plan processes, the Sustainable Community Strategy, and other community planning processes.
- 2.3 The consultees in the council's community database have been identified through consolidation and evaluation of the existing consultee databases. The database will be the first point of reference that the council will use when determining which groups should be consulted in relation to each LDF document. The list has been sub-divided into three categories: specific consultation bodies (people we have to consult by law at certain stages of the LDF); the local community (people who live and work in Wiltshire); and the extended community (people who have an interest in planning in Wiltshire). Together the local and extended communities form the general consultation bodies. The regulations³ require that Wiltshire Council must consult general consultation bodies as considered appropriate during the preparation of the LDF. The three categories are summarised below.

³ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended in 2008 and 2009.

2.4 The **specific consultation bodies** include:

- Central, regional and local government and regional agencies (including neighbouring local authorities)
- The Secretary of State for Transport (in relation to the Secretary of State's functions with regard to railways and highways)
- Statutory advisory bodies (the Coal Authority, the Environment Agency, English Heritage, and Natural England⁴)
- Town and parish councils within or adjacent to Wiltshire
- Infrastructure providers,
- Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service
- Primary care trusts operating in any part of Wiltshire
- Police authorities operating within or adjacent to Wiltshire

2.5 The **local community** includes:

- The general public
- Community area boards and community area partnerships
- Resident/community/civic societies and associations
- Local businesses and business groups
- Charity and voluntary organisations
- Under-represented groups within the community

2.6 The **extended community** includes:

- Landowners, developers and agents
- National interest groups
- General business and industry
- Housing bodies
- Transport bodies
- Regional development agencies

2.7 Wiltshire Council is committed to undertaking regular reviews of the Wiltshire community database. We wrote to all the members on the database to check that they wished to continue to be contacted by the new Wiltshire Council in regard to planning matters. In addition, any interested groups or bodies may contact the spatial planning policy team by telephone, email or post to request to be added to or removed from the community database.

⁴ The Homes and Communities Agency will also be a specific consultation body from the 6 April 2010.

Area based involvement

- 2.8 In some cases it may not be appropriate to consult with the whole Wiltshire community, for example, if the issue is likely to have only a localised impact within a certain parish. In these cases, consultation may be undertaken on an area basis, subject to this fulfilling the minimum legal requirements. Conversely, when a proposed policy or development is likely to have an impact on a wider area it will be important to ensure that all those who may be affected have a chance to have their say. This may apply, for example, when development is planned in a town, but would have an impact on the outlying villages. Wiltshire Council will therefore carefully consider the appropriate area for consultation in all cases.

Cross boundary working

- 2.9 Wiltshire Council works with Swindon Borough Council to prepare joint minerals and waste planning policy documents. Consideration will therefore be given to the Swindon Borough Council SCI⁵ when undertaking consultation on these documents and consultation will also involve the Swindon community. Collaboration with adjoining councils may also be relevant for other planning policy documents and in these cases consultation will extend beyond the Wiltshire community.

Complete community involvement

- 2.10 In addition to the consultees above we are proposing to increase the scope of public consultation and directly engage with groups in our community who do not normally get involved, or have limited opportunity to be involved with the planning system in Wiltshire.

⁵ The Swindon SCI was adopted in January 2007 and can be accessed at: www.swindon.gov.uk/environment-planning-sci

2.11 Those groups which have been under-represented within the planning process in Wiltshire include the following:

- People with disabilities
- Children and young people
- 25-40 year olds (especially those in employment)
- Lone parents
- Those who don't speak English as their first language
- Older people
- Black and minority ethnic people
- Gypsies, travellers and canal dwellers
- The military
- Isolated rural people and community groups
- Residents who work outside Wiltshire
- People who work in Wiltshire but live elsewhere.

2.12 In order to reach the groups above, and those not identified, a continual process of fostering and creating relationships is being established. Initiatives such as partnership and cross-team working with relevant external bodies and internal council departments responsible for these groups will ensure the council actively engages these groups. Examples of some of the methods we will use to encourage the involvement of under-represented groups are provided in table 1 below. We will monitor the extent to which we are succeeding in involving the groups listed above and review our methods on a regular basis.

Table 1: Examples of methods for involving under-represented groups

| Method | Groups targeted |
|---|--|
| Use of techniques such as forums and interactive sessions. | Young people and 25-40 year olds. |
| Information to be available in electronic format and consultation responses able to be submitted online. | Isolated rural people, children and young people, and people who may not have time to attend events, such as working people. |
| Provide copies of consultation materials in large print, Braille, and audio format on request. Hold exhibitions and events in locations with easy access. | Older people and people with specific access needs. |

Engaging with landowners, infrastructure providers and developers

2.13 Landowners, infrastructure providers and developers are identified above as forming part of the extended community. National planning policy emphasises the importance of early engagement with landowners, infrastructure providers and developers when producing the core strategy and other DPDs. Therefore, in addition to the general consultation procedures outlined in chapter 4, Wiltshire Council will seek to involve landowners and developers in the production of DPDs using methods such as:

- Holding forums at the early stages of DPD production, in order to gain input from landowners, infrastructure providers and developers. These forums may be directed towards those who are likely to have a specific interest in the subject matter of the DPD.
- Involving landowners and developers in the evidence gathering stages of DPDs. This may include 'call for sites' exercises, in which developers and landowners are invited to put forward potential development sites for consideration through the DPD process.

Links with existing community groups and partnerships

2.14 Planning has a role as a facilitator for a number of other plans, strategies and community ambitions. The following paragraphs describe how the planning teams will work with other community groups and partnerships when promoting community involvement.

Community area boards

2.15 Across Wiltshire, there are 18 area boards representing 20 community areas. The area boards provide an opportunity for Wiltshire Councillors, statutory public service partners including the police and the NHS, together with key representatives of the community area (such as town and parish councils, housing associations, businesses and voluntary groups) to consider and help shape services and proposals within the context of the geography, character and identity of local places.

2.16 The area boards also provide a valuable way of discussing proposals, collecting evidence, publicising information and involving the community and its elected representatives in the development of spatial planning policy at an early stage. They may also provide an appropriate forum to discuss the detail of community infrastructure that forms part of major planning proposals, such as the nature of traffic calming measures, and the nature and location of public open space to be provided within a proposed development. Further details on pre-application discussions are provided in Chapter 5 of this SCI. Planning applications are considered through Area and Strategic Planning Committees. A handbook has been produced which provides more detail on the

area boards and how these will be run. The handbook is available to download from the council website⁶.

Community area partnerships

- 2.17 Community area partnerships have developed in Wiltshire over a number of years, with membership including town and parish councils, representatives of business, the voluntary sector, local people and community leaders. Community area partnerships are independent of the council and have a key role in representing the local community at the community area boards. The partnerships are responsible for producing community area plans in consultation with local people and these plans form part of the evidence base for the Wiltshire LDF. Community area partnerships will be consulted in the development of planning policy, but are not involved in the scrutiny of planning applications.

Thematic delivery partnerships

- 2.18 The thematic delivery partnerships are responsible for delivering specific action and developing strategy to achieve the ambitions in the Local Agreement for Wiltshire (LAW), including the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The thematic delivery partnerships help influence and develop strategy in the Wiltshire Co-ordinating Group and the Wiltshire Assembly, as well as being responsible for delivering the actions and targets of the LAW through the Wiltshire Public Service Board. There are eight thematic delivery partnerships linked to the LAW ambitions. These are the Wiltshire Strategic Economic Partnership, the Wiltshire Children and Young People's Trust Board, the Community Safety Partnership, the Housing Partnership, the Resilient Communities Partnership, the Transport Partnership, the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance, and the Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board.

Vision Boards

- 2.19 Vision boards have been established to develop and deliver a range of regeneration initiatives that together form a vision for each of the principal urban areas of Chippenham, Trowbridge and Salisbury. The membership of vision boards includes representatives of business, the voluntary sector, community leaders and council members. The vision boards are independent of the Council and are instrumental in driving forward the vision for each town. They have been identified as having a key role in the development and implementation of strategy.

⁶ Wiltshire's Area Boards: The Handbook is available at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/areaboards

Town and parish councils

2.20 Town and parish councils are the most local tier of democratic representation and, as such, they provide a key link with local communities. Wiltshire Council is required to consult town and parish councils by regulation (they are statutory consultation bodies). Responses to our pre-draft consultation on the SCI indicated that town and parish councils wish to remain fully involved in planning processes, and Wiltshire Council is committed to continuing to consult with the local councils. Town and parish councils are often involved with the production of parish plans, village design statements and similar documents. Further details on how these documents can be integrated within the LDF are provided in chapter 4.

Local strategic partnership

2.21 The local strategic partnership (LSP) for Wiltshire is the Wiltshire Assembly. This brings together around 300 partners to articulate the vision for Wiltshire and produce the sustainable community strategy. These partners represent the Wiltshire family of partnerships, led by the Public Service Board, which is responsible for the development of the local area agreement (LAA) – the action plan of the community strategy, and the Wiltshire Coordinating Group, which focuses on service delivery against the targets in the LAA. Public, business, and voluntary/community sector organisations, MPs, area boards, community area partnerships, thematic delivery partnerships, town and parish councils and local specialist groups all form part of the LSP.

Other plans and strategies

2.22 Alongside links with the groups set out above, the spatial planning team will also seek links with other plans and strategies. The Wiltshire Sustainable Community Strategy and the Wiltshire Compact are two documents which we will refer to and these are explained in turn below.

Wiltshire Sustainable Community Strategy

2.23 The Wiltshire Sustainable Community Strategy sets out an overarching vision for Wiltshire and includes analysis of the key characteristics, trends and challenges in the county. The strategy forms the basis of the Wiltshire Local Area Agreement. The current Wiltshire Sustainable Community Strategy was published in 2007 and is available on the council website⁷. It is likely that it will be updated in the near future.

⁷ The Wiltshire Sustainable Community Strategy is available at:
www.wiltshire.gov.uk/wiltshirefamilyofpartnershipsworkingtogether

The Wiltshire Compact

- 2.24 The Wiltshire Compact is a set of principles which determine how the statutory and voluntary/community sectors will behave towards one another. Wiltshire Council has signed up to the Wiltshire Compact and therefore agrees to act within the principles which are expressed in the Wiltshire Compact codes of practice. The code of practice on communication and consultation sets the minimum consultation period at eight weeks, and recommends a standard consultation period of 12 weeks. The spatial planning and development services will endeavour to comply with the consultation guidelines set out by the Wiltshire Compact where practicable.

Links with the Local Transport Plan

- 2.25 The Local Transport Plan (LTP) is made up of a long-term strategy, including transport objectives and policies, and a shorter-term implementation plan, which is a programme of transport schemes and measures. The LTP is an important tool to help local authorities work with partners and stakeholders to strengthen its role in promoting the general well-being of a community and its citizens. In particular, the LTP can help to support and facilitate the development growth that is being proposed through the LDF.
- 2.26 The government requires local authorities to involve the community in the preparation of LTPs. While the LTP preparation process is different to that employed for the LDF, the council is fully committed to ensuring that the preparation of the Wiltshire LTP will continue to involve comprehensive and widespread consultation with the community based on the principles set out in this SCI.

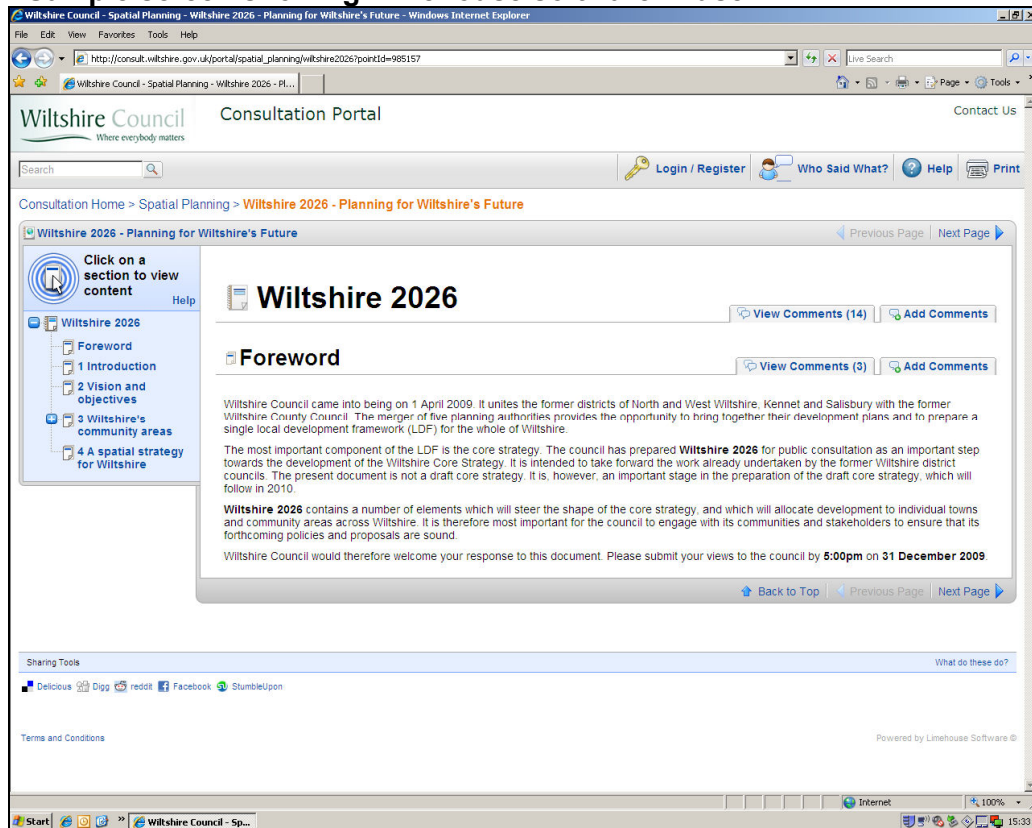
3 Methods of consultation and resources

- 3.1 This chapter introduces the methods of consultation which we will use and how these will be resourced. It explains how we will consult you on planning matters.
- 3.2 Various consultation techniques will be used to obtain feedback during the development of local planning policy, relating to the type and scope of the document. At each stage of policy preparation there will be different levels of consultation. This reflects national planning policy, which specifies that the level of consultation when preparing development plan documents should reflect the scale of the issues involved⁸. We will also use various techniques for consultation on planning applications.
- 3.3 There are three basic categories that these techniques fall into, dependent upon the required outcomes and appropriate level of engagement:
- Awareness raising – informing the Wiltshire community of the consultation and signposting access to that consultation.
 - Existing networks – using established forums, partnerships and other networks to gather opinions on the consultation.
 - Direct involvement – using public participation events and face-to-face meetings to consult with the Wiltshire community.
- 3.4 Details of the consultation methods we will use are presented in appendix 1. The list in appendix 1 is not exhaustive and not all of the methods are necessarily appropriate for consultation at all stages of planning policy preparation, or for all planning applications.
- 3.5 The process of planning policy preparation and consultation has been made more efficient with the use of specialist computer software provided by a company called Limehouse. All documents prepared by the council are available to view and comment upon via the council's website. The council is aiming to conduct all correspondence on policy documents electronically through the web. This will reduce costs by significantly limiting the amount of paper produced and distributed during consultations, as well as generally helping to speed up the processes of document preparation and consultation activity.

⁸ See paragraph 4.25 of Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning

- 3.6 Documents will be made available on the web for people to view and comment upon electronically via a simple series of standard, easy to use representation forms. Anyone who has previously submitted representations to the council and provided an email address will be automatically set up as a user of the Limehouse software and notified about how to operate the system. However, as all the council's documents will primarily be available on the website, anyone with an interest in submitting representations electronically can also register to use the Limehouse software.

Sample screen showing Limehouse software in use



- 3.7 The council's website provides full support to all those wishing to use the electronic consultation system. A short introductory video tutorial is available to help users navigate the website and explain how to prepare and submit comments on policy documents at the click of a button.
- 3.8 However, the council recognises that not all people with an interest in planning matters within Wiltshire have access to a computer, or the desire to submit comments on documents electronically. Therefore, measures are in place to ensure that paper copies of documents are available and representation forms can be sent to those people who prefer such methods of engagement. The council will also receive representations in a number of forms and will endeavour to make the options for response as transparent and as easy as possible to allow all parts of the community to respond at any stage of the planning process.

- 3.9 The resources that will be made available to provide and support consultation during the LDF process will principally comprise the staff from within the spatial planning policy and minerals and waste policy teams. Support may be provided from other council teams, particularly relating to issues of housing, economic development, regeneration, climate change, countryside, environmental health, the Sustainable Community Strategy, urban design and historic buildings. The development management (planning applications) element of the SCI will be implemented by staff from the development management teams. Specialist consultants may be used as part of the process and will also possibly provide training sessions, specialist sessions and forum facilitation where required.

4 Community involvement in the LDF

- 4.1 This chapter sets out when and how we plan to involve you in the preparation of LDF documents. The box below sets out the minimum legal standards the council must achieve when preparing LDF documents.

Minimum legal standards

The legal requirements for consultation on LDDs are set out in the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2004, as amended in 2008 and 2009. The council is obliged to meet these basic standards, which can be summarised as follows:

- Formal consultation for a defined period. This must be for a minimum of six weeks for DPDs and between four and six weeks for SPDs.
- Notification and issue of information to specific consultation bodies which the council considers would have an interest in the subject matter.
- Notification to other consultees as the council considers appropriate.
- Make information available on the council's website.
- Make information available at the principle council office, and at other places in the area as the council considers appropriate.
- Publish details of the formal consultation by local advertisement.
- Publish a statement setting out who has been consulted during preparation of DPDs and SPDs and how this consultation was undertaken. This statement will include a summary of any issues raised and details as to how these issues have been addressed.
- There is also a requirement for the council to notify certain bodies when it is intending to produce a DPD. These bodies can then make representations to the council regarding the contents of the proposed DPD. In addition, certain bodies must be invited to comment before the council prepares an SCI.

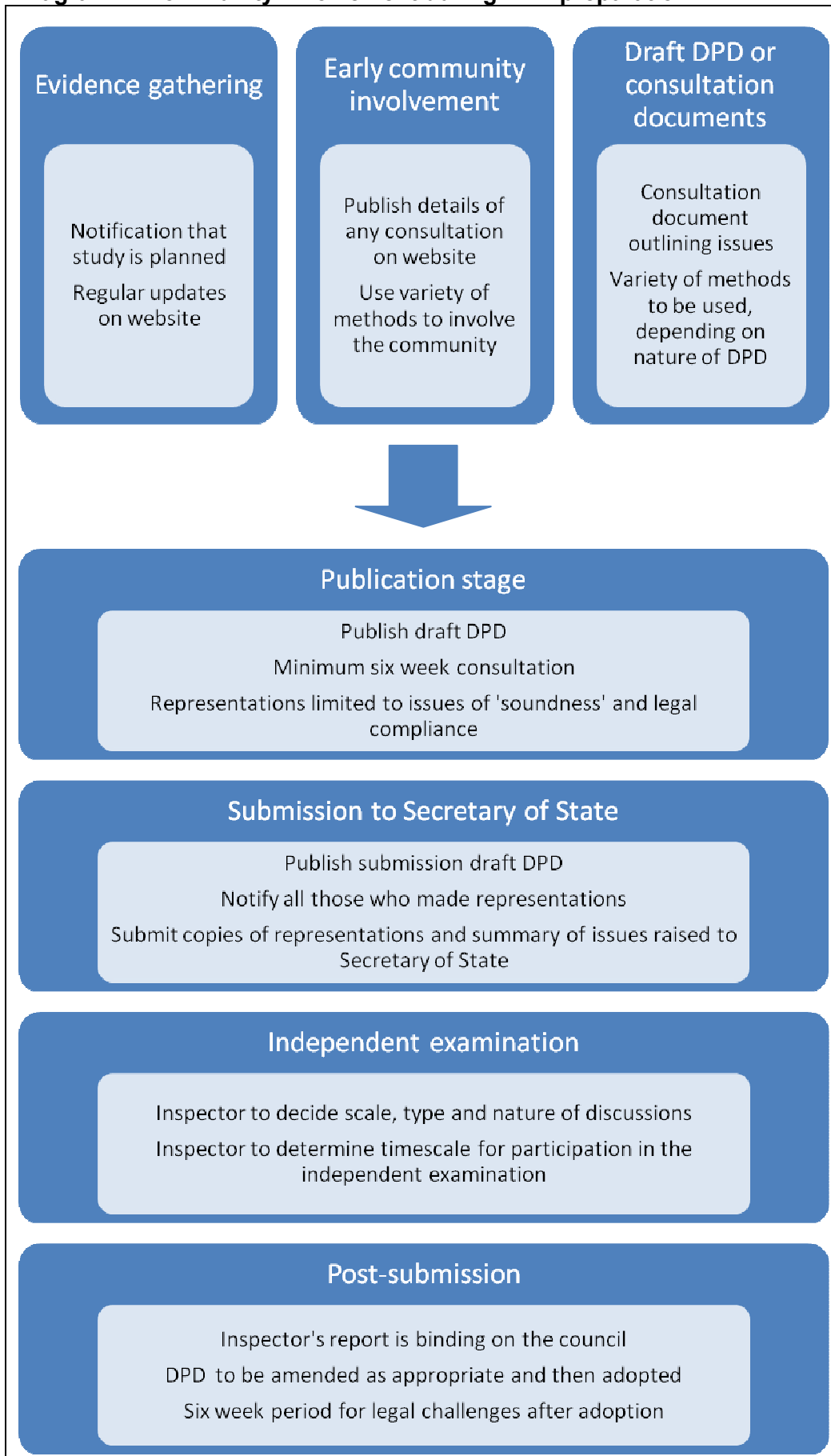
- 4.2 Wiltshire Council will endeavour to exceed the minimum requirements for consultation where possible. For example, consultation periods for DPDs will follow the guidelines set out in the Wiltshire Compact (8-12 weeks) where practicable. Every effort will be made to undertake consultations outside August and the end of year holiday periods. However, where this is unavoidable, due to the need to make progress on development plan preparation, the Council will seek to ensure that a reasonable part of the consultation period extends beyond these.

- 4.3 The following sections will identify the ways in which you can be involved at different preparation stages of LDF documents. There are three different types of LDF document which we will ask your opinion on: Development Plan Documents (DPDs); Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs); and Sustainability Appraisal (SA). These are covered, in turn, beginning with DPDs.

Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 4.4 There are various opportunities for the community to influence the policies in DPDs. It is important for us to get your opinion on these policies as planning applications in your area will be determined with reference to them. The process for preparing a DPD can be broadly split into informal and formal stages:
- Informal stages – These include evidence gathering, early community involvement and the production of draft DPD/consultation documents. The council is required to notify certain bodies that it intends to produce a DPD and must invite comment from these bodies as to what the DPD should contain. This notification and invitation for comment is the only formal requirement at the early stages of DPD production and further involvement at these stages is carried out at the council's discretion. However, early involvement is vital in ensuring the DPD fulfils the community's needs and these early stages are your opportunity to comment on the content of the DPD.
 - Formal stages – These include publication, submission to the government, independent examination and adoption of the DPD. There is a formal requirement for a consultation lasting at least six weeks at the publication stage. Consultation at this stage has a different purpose to that at the early stages and representations should focus on whether or not the DPD is 'sound' and has been produced in accordance with legislation.
- 4.5 Diagram 2, on the next page, outlines the opportunities for community involvement during DPD preparation. Further detail on each of the seven stages is provided in the supporting text below.

Diagram 2: Community involvement during DPD preparation



The informal stages in detail

Evidence gathering

4.6 In order to ensure the policies in our DPDs are based on evidence, a period of gathering together relevant information will be undertaken. This may be collated either from internal sources and teams within the council, or we may use external expertise such as private consultants or national bodies, such as the Environment Agency. This evidence will be used to identify the key issues associated with planning for future development in Wiltshire.

- 4.7 To ensure that you are aware and able to influence our evidence base we will:
- notify relevant groups, organisations and individuals where appropriate
 - update our website regularly with details of the evidence we are collecting and the finalised reports displaying the results⁹.

What we want from you

During the evidence gathering stage, opportunities for community involvement are likely to be limited to us seeking your specialist knowledge and experiences to help us better understand specific issues. Consultation at this stage is likely to focus on the extended community and specific consultation bodies.

Early community involvement

4.8 The early stages of community involvement are similar to the evidence gathering in that it is the council's opportunity to gather information on specific issues. We will use a variety of different methods to collect your knowledge and expertise and find out about your concerns and wishes.

4.9 As with the evidence gathering stage we will publish details of any opportunities for community involvement on our website and notify relevant groups, organisations and individuals.

4.10 This stage of DPD preparation is seen as an opportunity to undertake more open and wider consultation with the whole community, including the local community, seeking to gather wider community views and to ensure they are taken into account when producing the DPD.

⁹ Details of our current evidence and the projects we are undertaking can be found at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planningpolicyevidencebase

- 4.11 Methods of involvement at this stage could include the following:
- Focussed questionnaires, working groups and/or specialist sessions seeking views on particular issues.
 - Forums for particular groups if they have specific knowledge of an area or subject. For example we may seek the views of one particular community area board on local issues, or possibly an environmental group such as the Wiltshire Environmental Alliance if the issue is relevant to them.
 - Where we want to gather a wider community view it may be appropriate to hold a public exhibition and/or surgeries or interactive sessions to raise awareness of a certain issue.
 - If necessary full use will be made of external and internal media sources, both broadcasting and written, to publicise issues and generate interest. The exact use of media will depend on the scope and range of the consultation exercise.

Draft DPD/consultation documents

4.12 During the preparation of some DPDs it will be necessary for the council to consult on various proposals, whether this is a draft of the whole DPD or a targeted consultation relating to certain sections of the DPD. This is an important process as it will assist in a thorough examination of the options before submission of the DPD. This stage, though an informal part of the process, will involve a public report.

4.13 Various techniques will be used during consultations on draft documents and different groups will be targeted. Flexibility will be employed to take account of the type of DPD. This is in line with the national guidance that the level of involvement should be 'appropriate' to the DPD concerned.

What we want from you
This is an important stage as future development in Wiltshire will begin to be set out by these documents. We will want to capture your views to make sure the initial stages of our plans and policies are going to meet the community's needs and desires.

4.14 A wide variety of issues, options and constraints will have emerged through the evidence gathering and early community involvement discussed above. At this stage we will be showing you our early thoughts on what plans and policies the DPD is likely to include.

How we will gather your views

During the consultation on draft documents we will:

- Bring together all of the relevant issues identified in a draft DPD or consultation document. Consultation on this document will take the form of notifying community members via letter/email of the document and updating our website accordingly stating, amongst other things, when and how comments can be made.
- The draft documents will be deposited as considered appropriate at libraries, information points and the main council offices. Copies of the document will be available for purchase to the general public. Where appropriate, summary documents will be produced, at for example community area level, explaining the key points and issues.
- Consider appropriate methods of signposting information regarding the DPD being consulted on. This may include production of a spatial planning service newsletter or briefing note, informing the community of the key issues currently being tackled by the planning service.
- Depending on the scale of issues raised, we may hold a series of forums where community members with an expressed interest in the particular issues can attend and determine the issues they believe should be taken forward to the publication stage. The use of external facilitators may be appropriate.
- Appropriate use will be made of external and internal media sources, both broadcasting and written, to publicise issues and generate interest.
- Details of our response to representations received will be contained within the 'Pre-Submission Consultation' document which will be prepared when the DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State.

- 4.15 At every consultation exercise and/or correspondence with the community, we will state the current stage of the document, its importance and the next stages in its development. Any comments received will be fully considered and taken into account before progressing to the next stage.

Formal stages

Publication stage

- 4.16 Unlike the previous stages of the preparation process, the publication stage is the first **formal** period for representations and the way we involve you is dictated by regulations.
- 4.17 By this time in the document's preparation, all options will have been considered and we will produce a draft DPD identifying the proposed policies for development in Wiltshire.

What you need to know: legal compliance and 'soundness'

The DPD must be produced in accordance with relevant legislation. This includes the requirements that the DPD:

- has been prepared in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement
- has been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2004, as amended
- has been subject to a sustainability appraisal
- is in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy
- has regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy.

To be sound, the DPD must be:

- justified; this means that the DPD must be founded on a robust and credible evidence base and must be the most appropriate strategy when considered against the reasonable alternatives
- effective; this means that the DPD must be deliverable, flexible, and able to be monitored
- consistent with national policy.

(Adapted from Planning Policy Statement 12)

- 4.18 The nature of how you can comment changes at this stage. The consultation and involvement carried out during the informal stage should ensure that all appropriate issues have already been raised. Representations at this stage should relate to the 'soundness' and legal compliance of the DPD. Details of the requirements for legal compliance and soundness are outlined in the box above¹⁰.

¹⁰ It should be noted that, before adoption of the Wiltshire Council SCI, DPDs in Wiltshire have been prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, as amended in 2008 and 2009. This is in accordance with the Local Government (Structural Changes) (Transitional Arrangements) (No. 2) Regulations 2008, as amended in 2009.

- 4.19 The process of advertising the publication to make you aware of the DPD will be similar to the draft DPD stage. As with the draft DPD stage, notification by letter and/or email to everyone on the consultation database will give details of how to respond to the council.
- 4.20 At this stage we will:
- invite formal representations to be made within a specified period of at least six weeks
 - ensure all representations on the DPD are catalogued in a database, in preparation for the submission stage.
- 4.21 The council will review all the representations made and summarise the main issues. The council will then respond to the main issues in a report that will be submitted to Secretary of State alongside the submission draft of the DPD.
- 4.22 Only in exceptional circumstances will changes be made to the DPD at this stage. If the council does wish to make significant changes based on the comments received, it will consider whether or not these changes can be addressed through an addendum. Where the changes can be addressed through an addendum, this will be published for further comment, and will then be submitted with the DPD to the Secretary of State. Ultimately it will be the inspector who will decide, during the public examination, whether or not these recommended changes will take place (see the next stage and the box below).
- 4.23 If issues are raised at this stage, which necessitate fundamental changes to the DPD, then the council may decide to delay submission of the DPD in order to undertake further work as required. This would necessitate further consultation with relevant specific consultation bodies, followed by publication of the altered DPD for formal representations.

Submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State and independent examination by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS)

- 4.24 Following the steps above, the DPD will be formally submitted to the Government Office for the South West (acting for the Secretary of State) and the Planning Inspectorate (PINS). At this stage we will:
- submit copies of all representations received during the publication stage and a summary of the main issues identified. We will also submit a statement outlining consultation exercises undertaken during the earlier stages, and the ways in which this has influenced the DPD
 - publish the submission draft DPD and such associated submission documents (evidence base) as are appropriate
 - notify, by letter and/or email, the current position to all those who made representations. We will also update our website, and will publish a local advertisement setting out the time and location of the examination, and the name of the inspector.
- 4.25 The inspector will at this point consider the conformity of the DPD preparation process with the council's SCI. If it fails to comply, the DPD may have to be withdrawn.

Independent examination

What you need to know – the independent examination

The purpose of the independent examination is to ascertain whether the DPD is sound and legally compliant. The examination usually involves informal discussions. Round table sessions are held to discuss specific issues before the inspector.

At this stage, it will be up to the discretion of the inspector to decide the scale, type and nature of discussions, as well as the timescale for participation in the independent examination. The inspector will have access to all representations made at the publication stage and will also have a report written by the council summarising the main issues and its response to them. Details and timescale will be made available at a pre-examination meeting.

Post-submission and adoption

- 4.26 Following the independent examination, the inspector will prepare a report advising of any changes to the DPD which are considered appropriate in order to make it sound. The inspector's report will be binding on the council which will amend the DPD on the basis of this report and adopt the DPD as soon as possible after receipt of the report. There is a six week period for legal challenge after adoption.

At this stage we will:

- notify, by letter and/or email, all those who made representations
- update our website accordingly, including publishing the inspector's report and all modifications to the DPD as a result
- publish notification of adoption of the DPD by local advertisement
- issue a spatial planning team newsletter if considered appropriate.

Supplementary planning documents (SPDs)

- 4.27 The process for adopting SPDs is different from that for DPDs, as there is no requirement for SPDs to undergo independent examination. This means that the opportunities for community involvement in the preparation of SPDs are slightly different, particularly in the later stages.
- 4.28 The degree of community involvement will inevitably vary according to the nature of the SPD, and the methods used will be proportionate to the SPD concerned. Consultation will generally be focused on the area covered by the document. As with DPDs however, there are plenty of opportunities to become involved. Diagram 3 below demonstrates the opportunities available at the four main stages. Further detail of the consultation to be undertaken during the preparation of SPDs is provided in the following paragraphs.

Informal stages

Evidence gathering and early community involvement

- 4.29 In terms of the evidence gathering and early community involvement stages, the council will normally follow similar processes to those used for DPDs, as set out above. However, any consultation will be proportionate to the subject matter of the SPD, and may be limited to the local area which is most likely to be affected by the contents of the document.

Formal stages

Publish draft SPD

- 4.30 The **formal** public participation that is required by the regulations is to publish the draft SPD and invite representations. This consultation is not limited to issues of soundness and legal compliance, and the draft SPD may be changed in the light of the representations received. The draft SPD will be published together with a statement setting out how any consultation was undertaken during preparation of the SPD and summarising the main issues that emerged. Representations will be invited during a four to six

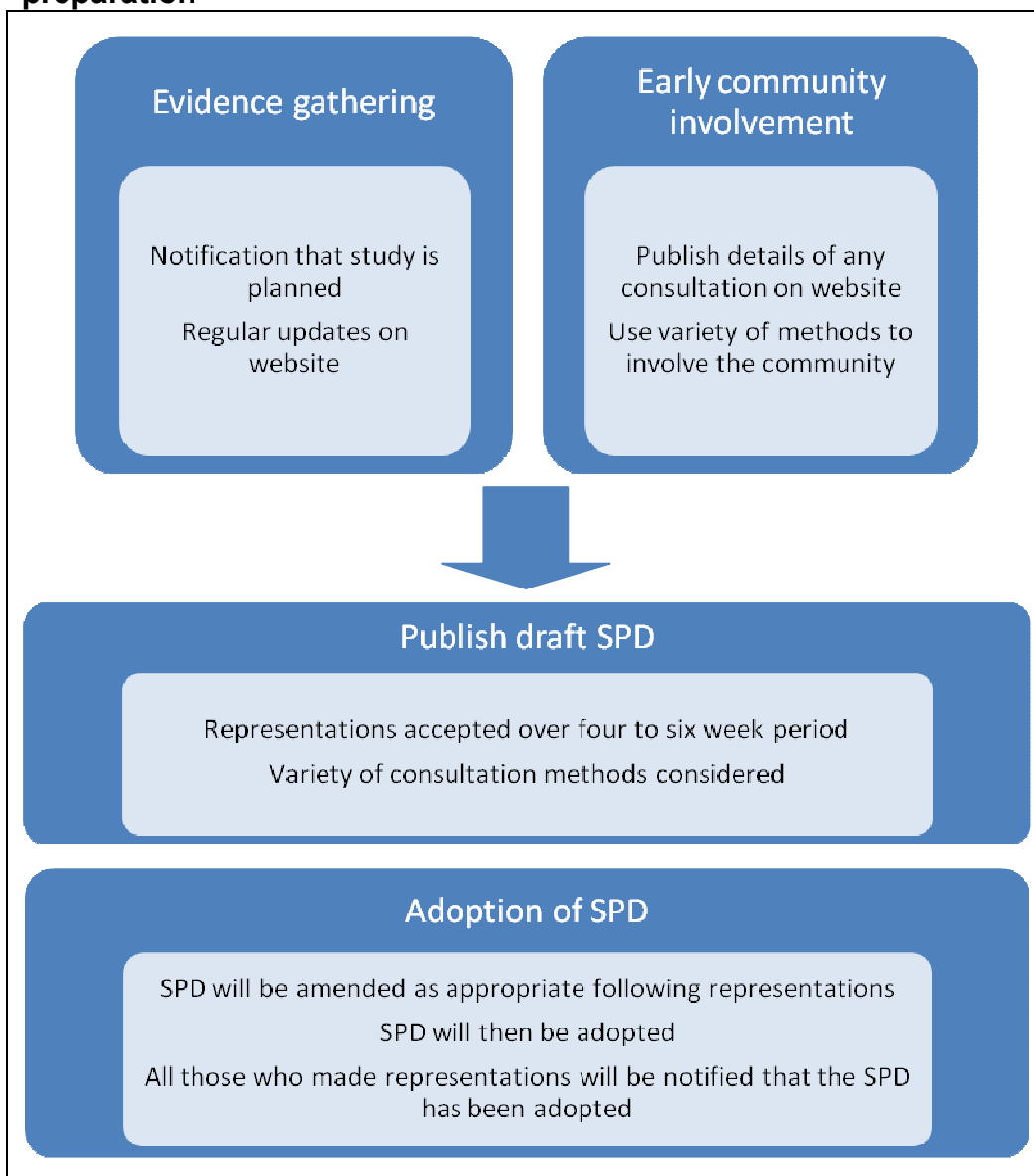
week period; the regulations require that consultation is for no longer than six weeks.

4.31 In addition to the minimum requirements at this stage we will:

- where possible attend meetings of the organisation/groups or bodies making up the community members directly affected by the SPD
- make appropriate use of the media to publicise the consultation.

4.32 At the end of all community consultation exercises, comments received will be fully considered and taken into account before progressing to the next stage.

Diagram 3: Opportunities for community involvement during SPD preparation



Adoption

- 4.33 After this period, we will amend the draft SPD, taking into account appropriate representations received. The SPD will then be placed before the relevant council committee for adoption. Upon adoption of the SPD we will:
- send a letter and/or email to all those who have made representations, explaining what we have done in relation to their comments
 - publish a statement which contains a summary of the representations received and outlines how the SPD has been altered as a result of the representations
 - make copies of the amended adopted document available on the council's website
 - make copies of the amended adopted document available at the principle council office and at libraries and other information points as appropriate
 - if necessary, produce a briefing note to accompany the adopted document and explain its content.

Other supplementary documents

- 4.34 Alongside SPDs, there are other documents which may have an influence on planning policy and are regarded as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. These documents may be produced by other teams within Wiltshire Council, for example conservation area appraisals and management plans, by local communities and parish councils, for example parish plans and village design statements, or by external bodies, for example Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) management plans.
- 4.35 The purpose of an SPD is to provide further detail to amplify policy in the core strategy or another DPD. Therefore, the council will need to have adopted the relevant DPD before documents such as village design statements can be adopted as SPD. Under certain circumstances it may be appropriate for such documents to be adopted as SPD once the appropriate DPD has been adopted. However, supplementary documents may be endorsed by Wiltshire Council as 'supplementary guidance', and may subsequently have weight in planning decision-making processes. Details of the approach to be followed for consultation on village design statements, parish and town plans and conservation area appraisals and management plans are provided below.

Village design statements

- 4.36 Village design statements are based on an analysis of the design characteristics of the village. They aim to influence the design of future development, so that it is in keeping with the existing local character. The statements are produced by the local community, with only advisory input from Wiltshire Council. A key element of village design statements is that they should represent the views of the whole village community, and early community involvement is therefore encouraged.
- 4.37 The approach outlined below gives an indication of best practice when preparing a village design statement:
- An initial consultation should be undertaken to identify the characteristics of the village which are felt to be important by the local community. This could include a 'village character workshop' and a questionnaire delivered to every household.
 - The local community should be kept informed as the village design statement progresses. A range of methods should be used, and sufficient time should be allowed for responses at each stage. This may involve exhibitions/meetings to discuss draft documents at various stages of production. Details of progress should be provided on notice boards/at information points within the village. It may also be appropriate to notify each household of progress using leaflets/newsletters, and to publish details of any consultation in the local press.
 - Planning officers, parish councils, and the Wiltshire councillor for the area concerned should be kept informed throughout the process. Planning officers will not attempt to direct the development of the village design statement, but may be able to provide useful help and advice on the relevant planning processes.
 - Clear records should be kept of all consultation events and responses.
- 4.38 The final village design statement should include details as to the consultation which has been undertaken, the responses received and how these have influenced the content of the document.
- 4.39 If village design statements are to be adopted as SPDs then a formal consultation on the draft document will be required. This formal consultation will be led by Wiltshire Council and will follow the requirements for consultation on a draft SPD, as set out above. The formal consultation will be in addition to the early community involvement suggested above.

Parish and town plans

- 4.40 Parish and town plans set out a vision for the future of the community, and the actions which are needed to achieve this. The production of parish and town plans is led by town and parish councils, and should reflect the views of the whole community. Consultation during the preparation of town and parish plans should follow similar principles to those set out above for village design statements. It is important that the local community are involved in the process of producing the plan, that council officers and Wiltshire councillors are kept informed, and that clear records are kept of any consultation events. If the parish or town plan is to be adopted as an SPD then a formal consultation led by Wiltshire Council will be required.

Conservation area appraisals and management plans

- 4.41 Conservation area appraisals and management plans differ from village design statements and parish and town plans in that they are produced by the Wiltshire Council development management teams. Conservation area appraisals give an overview of the history and development of the conservation area and define the distinctive characteristics of the area. Conservation area management plans identify measures to maintain or improve the conservation area and may include details of suggested boundary changes. Wiltshire Council will follow a similar process for consultation on both conservation area appraisals and management plans, as set out below.
- 4.42 Before preparing a conservation area appraisal or management plan, the officer responsible for the document will:
- notify the relevant Wiltshire councillor, area board manager, and parish council of the intention to prepare an appraisal or management plan
 - contact other relevant individuals and groups, such as local history or interest groups and internal council departments, as appropriate
 - publish details of the likely timetable for production of the document on the council website, and consider holding a public meeting.

- 4.43 A draft document will then be produced, following best practice guidance. Consultation on the draft appraisal or management plan will be focused on the area covered by the document, and will include:
- hard copies of the draft document to be available at the local library and at the local council offices
 - direct notification to identified consultees
 - discussion of the document at a public meeting if considered necessary
 - direct notification and leaflet drop to any properties affected by proposed changes to the boundaries
 - site notices to be displayed in a number of locations within the conservation area
 - notices to be published in the local newspaper
 - details to be provided on the council website.
- 4.44 The consultation will run for at least six weeks, after which the draft document will be amended as appropriate. A consultation summary will be produced at this point, setting out who was consulted, how the consultation was undertaken, which issues were raised, and how these issues were addressed. Any revisions which affect the boundary of a conservation area will be subject to a further consultation with those people affected, with at least four weeks for responses to be received.
- 4.45 If the proposals involve the designation or changes to the boundary of a conservation area then this needs to be approved by the appropriate council committee. If the document is approved, all those who responded to the consultation will be notified, site notices will be displayed and the council website will be updated accordingly. If the conservation area boundary has been revised, then English Heritage and the Government Office for the South West should be notified, and notices must be published in the London Gazette and at least one local paper.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

- 4.46 Current legislation requires that all DPDs and certain other documents are subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and that a report on the findings of the SA is published alongside the DPD. SA performs a key role in providing a sound evidence base for the DPD and ensures that sustainable development is treated in an integrated way in the plan preparation process.
- 4.47 SA fully incorporates the requirements of the European Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment, which requires that an assessment of the significant environmental effects of the DPD should be undertaken through a strategic environmental assessment (SEA).
- 4.48 Following recent changes in the regulations¹¹, an SA is no longer required for all SPDs. However, it is still necessary for the local authority to publish a 'screening report' which draws on the SA report of the parent DPD, and which clarifies whether or not the SPD is likely to lead to any further significant effects. The screening report should also ensure that any requirements under the European Directive on SEA are met for the SPD.
- 4.49 The legal requirements to carry out SA and SEA are different. However, they are combined into a single process, meeting the requirements of both. For ease of reference, this SCI will refer to both processes as Sustainability Appraisal (SA). A number of key stages can be identified for community involvement in the preparation of the SA. These are presented in diagram 4 below.

Context, objectives and baseline

- 4.50 The first stage of SA is the establishment of an evidence base for the SA, and this is often referred to as the scoping stage. This evidence base will be developed using the existing local development framework evidence base.
- 4.51 When developing the evidence base during the scoping stage, the following actions will be undertaken:
- identifying relevant policies, plans and programmes
 - collecting baseline information
 - identifying the sustainability issues and the appraisal objectives
 - considering options and alternatives.

¹¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 as amended in 2008 and 2009.

- 4.52 This scoping stage will establish a set of sustainability objectives against which DPDs can be assessed. These sustainability objectives will be included in an SA Framework to be used in undertaking appraisals.

Consulting on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal

- 4.53 The scoping report sets out the conclusions from the 'context, objectives and baseline' stage, and includes the SA Framework mentioned above.
- 4.54 As part of DPD preparation, the SEA consultation bodies will be consulted on the information and level of detail contained within the scoping report (which will cover the SEA Directive's environmental report requirements).
- 4.55 We will also work together with, and consult members of our community, adjacent local authorities and other established groups, such as the local strategic partnerships, in this important initial stage of the SA, with a balance between those concerned with social, environmental and economic issues. An SA Working Party has also been established to discuss all aspects of the SA process.

Assessing alternative options and preferred spatial strategies

- 4.56 We will seek to integrate consultation on the assessment of alternative/preferred spatial strategies in the SA process with consultation on draft documents for individual DPDs. Consultation at this stage will therefore incorporate similar methods to those used during the draft DPD/consultation document stage, as set out above.
- 4.57 There is no mandatory requirement to consult on the SA at these initial stages of DPD development. However, it is best practice, and public participation will help to ensure the SA will be comprehensive and robust enough to support the DPD during the later stages of public consultation and examination.

Consulting on the draft plan and the SA Report

- 4.58 The SA Report on the draft DPD is a key part of the appraisal process. It provides the public with information on the effects of the plan (and the alternatives). This means the public is fully informed when they are consulted and are able to comment on the plan, the alternatives and their appraisal.
- 4.59 At publication, we will produce and publish the SA Report alongside the draft DPD. The SA Report will set out how the appraisal was carried out and how options were assessed and carried forward. It will also indicate clearly which options were not taken forward,

drawing on the evidence base and appraisals to show why they were not pursued.

- 4.60 At this stage, consultees will be invited to consider both the draft DPD and the accompanying SA Report. Consultation will follow the same methods as those detailed for the publication stage of the DPDs. We will consider each representation made in relation to the draft SA Report, and any amendments will be made as appropriate.

Changes to the DPD with significant sustainability effects

- 4.61 The more robust the consultation and engagement processes, the less likely it is that changes will later be needed to the DPD and accompanying SA. However, where proposed changes to a DPD have significant sustainability effects, relevant sustainability appraisal information will be made available in the form of a revised SA Report, and published to provide an opportunity for representations to be made on the changes.

Final report

- 4.62 The final SA Report will be submitted with the DPD to the Secretary of State as a submission document, along with any revisions or supplements to it. The SA report will be relied upon by the council as evidence that the DPD has been subject to sustainability appraisal in accordance with current legislation and guidance.

SA statement to accompany adopted DPD

- 4.63 When a DPD is adopted (incorporating any changes required by the inspector), we will issue a statement summarising, in relation to the SA:
- sustainability considerations, and how these have been integrated into the development plan document;
 - options and consultation responses - how any responses received on the SA reports (at all stages) have been taken into account;
 - alternative options - reasons for the choice of alternatives in light of other reasonable alternatives considered in the SA; and
 - monitoring sustainability effects - measures to be taken to monitor the significant sustainability effects of implementing the development plan document.

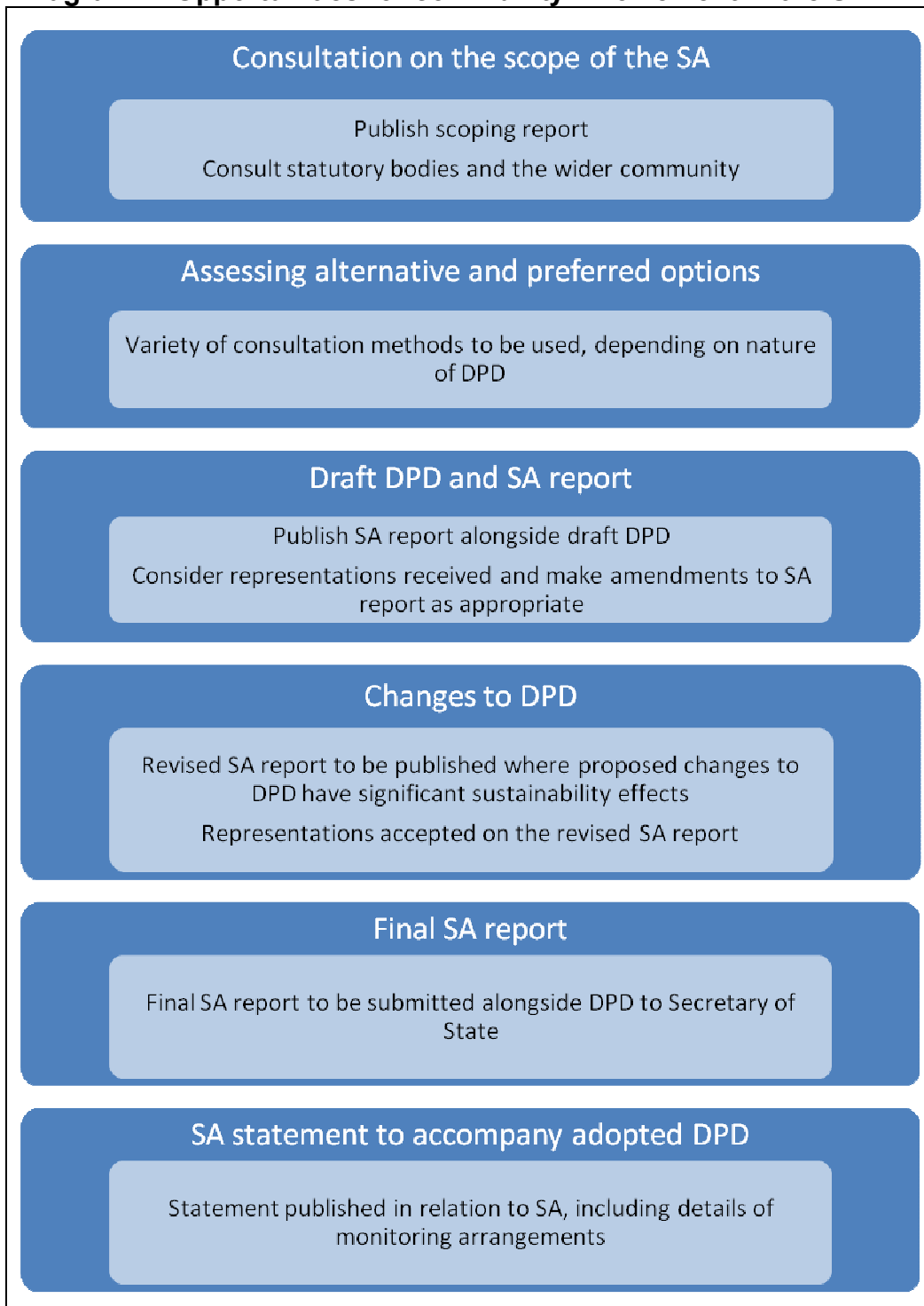
Monitoring significant sustainability effects

- 4.64 SA requires arrangements to be set up for monitoring the significant effects of implementing an adopted DPD. Monitoring arrangements should be designed to provide information that can be used to

highlight specific performance issues and significant effects, and lead to more informed decision-making.

- 4.65 The SEA Directive specifically requires monitoring to identify ‘unforeseen adverse effects’ and to enable appropriate remedial action to be taken. The results of significant effects monitoring will be published annually in the council’s Annual Monitoring Report.

Diagram 4: Opportunities for community involvement in the SA



Community involvement in planning applications

- 5.1 This chapter explains how and when you can become involved in the determination of planning applications in your area.

How can I find out about planning applications in my area?

- 5.2 Wiltshire Council is responsible for handling all planning applications in Wiltshire, ranging from householder extensions to large applications dealing with employment, residential development and minerals extraction/processing and waste management. The degree of community involvement will inevitably vary depending on the nature of the individual application.
- 5.3 The council takes the following steps to promote involvement on each planning application:

Online details

Details of each application received are displayed on our website. Once the application is determined, copies of the decision notice and the officer's report are also available. The website facility allows individuals to submit comments electronically.

Site notices

All planning applications are advertised by a site notice displayed on or close to the site, allowing 21 days for a response.

Neighbour notification

Where appropriate, neighbours are notified by letter that an application has been received. Further detail on this is provided below.

Town/parish council notification

The town/parish council is sent details of every application in their area and is given 21 days to respond, or longer by agreement in exceptional circumstances. The consultation period is limited to 21 days in order to meet the statutory deadline for determination of the application.

Weekly lists

Weekly lists of applications received are produced and are available both online on the council's website and on request via e-mail to local organisations. They are also sent to Wiltshire councillors.

- 5.4 In addition, the council advertises in the weekly local press all applications that fall within the following criteria:

Applications advertised within the weekly local press:

- Applications which affect the character or appearance of a conservation area
- Applications for works to listed buildings and developments likely to affect the setting of listed buildings
- Developments affecting public rights of way
- Developments of ten or more houses or employment development with 1,000 square metres or more floorspace
- Developments on sites which have an area of one hectare or more
- Waste management development and development relating to minerals extraction
- Other developments likely to be of wider interest to the community, such as planning applications for telecommunication masts or wind turbines
- Developments that are a departure from the policies of the development plan.

- 5.5 The cost of advertising in the weekly local press exceeds £130,000 per year, or £500 for every working day. In July 2009 the government published a consultation paper outlining possible changes to the current mandatory requirement to publish planning applications in the local press. Research undertaken by the council indicates that the most effective form of public consultation on planning applications is via neighbour notification and site notices, with no evidence of any response from newspaper advertising. If the government subsequently amends the legislation to remove the requirement for newspaper advertising, the council will review whether to continue this form of public engagement, based on an assessment of the costs and benefits to local residents and taxpayers. Any changes could be implemented in 2010.

- 5.6 The council recognises that many people are most interested in applications that directly affect them, such as householder applications, which constitute almost 50% of all planning applications received in Wiltshire. The council endeavours to notify occupiers of premises which adjoin the application site and may be affected by the proposed development individually by letter that an application has been received. They are invited to view the application and make any written observations within 21 days¹².

¹² This is to enable the council to determine the application within the statutory period

Are other organisations notified of planning applications?

- 5.7 The council also recognises the need to involve other organisations, both local and national. Statutory consultations are carried out on many applications with bodies such as the Environment Agency (flood risk); the regional offices of English Heritage (important listed building/conservation area/ancient monument issues) and Natural England (biodiversity issues). However, involvement also takes place with local non-statutory bodies that can offer valuable advice, such as community area boards, Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE), local civic societies and local branches of national organisations such as the Ramblers Association. Whom we consult will vary with the nature of the proposal and the location. Consultees have 21 days in which to respond.

Involving your community group

Your community group is welcome to comment on applications. If you wish to be alerted about planning applications in a particular area please contact the council to receive a regular electronic copy of the weekly list.

- 5.8 To minimise both costs and carbon footprint, most consultations are carried out electronically.
- 5.9 To assist parish/town councils and community groups, the council will, on request, provide advice and training on how planning applications are determined and what issues can be taken into account in deciding a planning application.

How can I comment on a planning application?

- 5.10 The best way to express your views on a planning application is to contact the council electronically. There is an online system on the council's website or you can email. You can also send a letter.
- 5.11 Oral, anonymous or defamatory comments cannot be taken into account. You should ensure that your comments relate to relevant planning matters.
- 5.12 The council has an established procedure which enables members of the public to speak at council planning meetings. The details of this are set out in paragraph 9.5 of The Planning Code of Good Practice, which is available at

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/code_of_good_practice_for_members_30_04_09.pdf

Relevant planning matters include:

- the effect of the proposed development on the appearance of the area
- the quality of design
- significant overbearing impact and loss of outlook (e.g. significant overshadowing from a new building)
- the economic benefits of the proposal
- highway safety issues
- loss of important trees
- intrusion into the countryside
- significantly increased noise and disturbance
- national and local planning policies.

Concerns which are not normally relevant to the planning process:

- loss of private view
- loss of property value
- breach of private covenant
- loss of trade to a competitor
- the level of profit a developer might make
- personal circumstances of the applicant (other than in exceptional cases)
- moral objections e.g. to uses such as amusement arcades and betting offices
- conflict with private access rights.

5.13 The council will carefully take any comments made into account before a decision is made. All comments are scanned and added to the web site once email addresses and hand written signatures are removed (it should be noted that typed names and addresses remain visible).

5.14 The council may negotiate changes to applications where these are expedient. Re-consultation (usually for 21 days) will take place on amendments if the council considers that they raise new issues that could lead to further comment¹³.

¹³ This is to enable the council to determine the application within the statutory period

- 5.15 On many major applications, the council encourages applicants to carry out public consultation in the local area before submitting a planning application. This may take the form of a public meeting and display of their initial thoughts. The council may also suggest that the relevant community area board is specifically consulted at this stage. In these cases, you may be able to make your views known directly to the developer before the plans are finalised and submitted to the council.

Who decides whether planning permission should be granted?

- 5.16 Planning applications are usually determined by officers using delegated powers. The circumstances under which an application can, or cannot, be determined using delegated powers are set out in Wiltshire Council's Scheme of Delegation, which is subject to regular review.
- 5.17 Applications which cannot be determined under delegated powers are referred to either the Strategic Planning Committee or one of the four Area Planning Committees for a decision. The Strategic Planning Committee determines larger applications, which are of relevance beyond the local area.

Area Planning Committees

There are four Area Planning Committees where local decisions on planning applications are made by local members. These committees determine non-delegated applications which are outside the remit of the Strategic Planning Committee.

The Area Planning Committee meetings are held on an area basis, making it easier for people to attend. The four Area Planning Committees are based in Salisbury (Southern Area), Chippenham (Northern Area), Trowbridge (Western Area), and Devizes (Eastern Area).

The committees meet once every three weeks. Agendas are published in advance of each meeting, and can be viewed online.

If the application that you have expressed a view on is determined at a planning committee, we will endeavour to let you know the time and date of the meeting so you are given the opportunity to attend. You may have the opportunity to address the committee before the application is decided.

What public involvement is undertaken on major development applications?

- 5.18 The council understands that many people have an interest in major applications that affect a wide area. Wiltshire is largely a rural area and less than 4% of the applications received fall within the government's definition of major applications (10 or more houses; 1,000 square metres of floor space; development relating to minerals extraction; waste management development; or development on a site with an area of one hectare or more)¹³.
- 5.19 The applications that often provoke the most widespread interest are those that have an impact over a wider area summarised in the box below.

Examples of major development proposals

- Large or significant new housing or mixed use developments
- Large or significant new retail developments
- Waste disposal sites
- Large road schemes
- Mineral extraction

- 5.20 For proposals of this nature, the council will encourage prospective developers to undertake more extensive public involvement at an early stage, before a planning application is submitted. It will expect the developer to discuss with the council's planning officers details of how the community should be involved in the decision making process. The purpose of these discussions will be to:
- identify the groups/individuals that should be involved
 - agree how they should be involved
 - agree a timetable for their involvement
 - establish how the feedback from the consultation will be provided
 - discuss how the feedback from the consultation exercises will be incorporated into the development proposal.

¹³ As defined in the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995.

- 5.21 The level of community involvement agreed will aim to reflect the scale and complexity of the proposal and will be the responsibility of the developer. Good practice will involve organising a meeting at a local venue at a convenient time to which all residents and businesses in the immediate area likely to be affected by the development are invited to attend. Residents' groups, the local town/parish council and elected members should also be invited to attend, with the event publicised in local papers.
- 5.22 The proposal should not be presented as a completed project but should cover the options that can be considered. Feedback should be encouraged both at the event and subsequently.
- 5.23 When the planning application is submitted the council will expect the applicant to provide evidence that sets out how the community has been involved. This should take the form of a statement of community involvement outlining what public consultation has been carried out and how the results of the exercise have been taken into account in the submitted application. Where there is a local validation checklist for submission of the planning application, and where a statement of community involvement is a requirement of this checklist, the application will not be registered without one.

Pre-application discussions

- 5.24 Pre-application discussions are encouraged for all types of applications – major, minor and others. The objective of pre-application discussions should be to confirm whether the principle of development is acceptable and to clarify the format, type and level of detail required to enable the council to determine an application. For major applications it will also enable the applicant to discuss with the council details of how the community should be involved in the decision-making process.
- 5.25 It is recognised that at the very early stages of considering a development proposal applicants may wish for any discussions with the council to be confidential. However, applicants are encouraged to involve the local community as early as possible in the process of preparing their proposals. The community area boards may provide an appropriate forum for pre-application discussions for major applications which are of wider community interest. The council has pro-actively encouraged parish and town councils to take advantage of offers of pre-application discussion from prospective developers.

The Killian Pretty Review

The Killian Pretty Review (KPR) on the planning process recommended in its final report in 2008 that local planning authorities should publish a statement or code of good practice, clearly setting out the range of guidance and opportunities that it offers for pre-application advice.

The council will work within the framework of the KPR and will aim to publish a code of good practice on pre-application advice in 2010. This advice will include details of the situations when a planning performance agreement, or a simple project plan based approach, will be encouraged for major applications.

Planning obligations

5.26 Planning obligations are required where a new development generates wider impacts on the community that need to be mitigated. The obligations are usually entered into by the landowner and/or the developer to ensure that the costs do not fall upon the existing community. Obligations consultation will occur through both the LDF and the development management processes.

5.27 For major planning applications the council will encourage prospective developers to engage with relevant stakeholders at pre-application public meetings by setting out the details of the planning obligations they intend to provide.

What are planning obligations?

Obligations may involve paying for the additional infrastructure required as a result of the development, such as new schools, open spaces and roads, or ensuring that a balanced development takes place, including the provision of affordable housing.

5.28 When an application of this nature is submitted, the council will expect draft heads of terms of any planning obligation to accompany the application, so that full and proper consultation, including publication on the council’s website, can take place before the application is determined. Any application of this nature reported to a council planning committee will set out in the agenda the proposed heads of terms for any planning obligation.

Mineral extraction and waste management development

5.29 Applications relating to mineral extraction and waste management are dealt with through the processes outlined above. Mineral extraction and waste management developments are regarded as temporary uses of land, but can last for many years. In some cases it can take decades to work out and restore a quarry, during which time the active site will become part of the local context.

- 5.30 If planning permission is granted, the council will therefore encourage mineral and waste site operators to form liaison groups. Such groups facilitate regular liaison meetings between the site operator, the council and the local community, providing a forum in which representatives of the local community can raise any issues or concerns the community has.
- 5.31 To reinforce its support for local liaison groups where they already exist and to facilitate the setting up of new groups, the council will adopt and publish a protocol for the setting up and running of local liaison groups. This will be distributed to all operators of minerals and waste sites. The council will also maintain its involvement of local communities by producing annual site monitoring reports.

Involvement in other planning matters

- 5.32 There may also be issues of planning enforcement, with which the community may wish to become involved. A planning enforcement policy for the council is currently being prepared. This will set out how enquiries about possible breaches of planning control can be submitted and will include details of the service standards which will be applied by the council when handling enforcement enquiries and how members of the community can expect to engage in the enforcement process. Further details on planning enforcement are available on the Wiltshire Council website¹⁴.

¹⁴www.wiltshire.gov.uk/planningenforcement

6 Monitoring and review

- 6.1 This final chapter sets out how the council will review the implementation of the SCI in planning decision-making across Wiltshire.
- 6.2 The council will actively monitor the success of community involvement techniques, ensuring that the procedures for involving the community are achieving a representative level and that they are making best use of resources. This monitoring review will occur within the council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) after a major consultation exercise, when the extent to which the SCI is being successfully implemented will be assessed. The success of community involvement initiatives will be measured by:
- how successfully the community and other interested groups are able to find information on the LDF documents
 - the level of involvement of under-represented groups
 - respondents' satisfaction with the council's overall consultation standards.
- 6.3 The AMR will identify the key challenges and opportunities to the SCI enabling adjustments and revisions to be made. The AMR is undertaken on an annual basis and published by the end of December each year. The council will consider revising the SCI if the AMR concludes that one or more of the following indicators have been triggered:
- Where there is substantial dissatisfaction with the community involvement process for developing local planning policy.
 - Where there is substantial dissatisfaction with the consultation process for planning applications.
 - The council resolves that the Statement of Community Involvement will be revised.
- 6.4 This will not preclude any minor adjustments to the methods of consultation or updates to the consultation database provided that such changes do not undermine the SCI in a significant way.
- 6.5 Following any review of the SCI, a report will be produced outlining the findings. We will then use the findings to refine methods in the future as required. If a review of the SCI proposes changes, these will be considered by the council through the appropriate committee process.

Contacts for further information

Wiltshire Council website

Further detail on the planning processes discussed in the SCI can be accessed on the Wiltshire Council website at: www.wiltshire.gov.uk

Local Development Framework

For information about the Local Development Framework contact the Wiltshire Spatial Planning Policy Team:

Email: spatialplanningpolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01225 713489

Address: Spatial Planning Policy Team, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JN

Minerals and waste

For information about minerals and waste policy contact the Wiltshire Minerals and Waste Policy Team:

Email: mineralsandwastepolicy@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01225 713429

Address: Minerals and Waste Policy Team, Wiltshire Council, County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JN

Development management

For information about the process of applying for planning permission contact one of the following teams:

Minerals and waste development management

For information about minerals and waste planning applications contact the Minerals and Waste Development Team:

Email: mineralsandwastedevelopment@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01225 776655

Address: Minerals and Waste Development, Wiltshire Council, Bradley Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 0RD

Development Management North (based in Chippenham):

Email: developmentmanagementnorth@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01249 706444

Address: Planning Services, Wiltshire Council, Monkton Park, Chippenham, SN15 1ER

Development Management South (based in Salisbury):

Email: developmentmanagementsouth@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01722 434541

Address: Wiltshire Council, Planning Office, 61 Wyndham Road, Salisbury, SP1 3AH

Development Management East (based in Devizes):

Email: developmentmanagementeast@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01380 734735

Address: Development Service, Wiltshire Council, Browfort, Bath Road,
Devizes,
Wiltshire, SN10 2AT

Development Management West (based in Trowbridge):

Email: developmentmanagementwest@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01225 770344

Address: Planning Services, Wiltshire Council, Bradley Road, Trowbridge,
Wiltshire, BA14 0RD

The areas covered by the North, South, East and West Development Management teams are indicated on the map overleaf.

Area Boards and Community Governance in Wiltshire

For information about area boards and community governance, contact the council's Community Governance Team

Email: areaboards@wiltshire.gov.uk

Phone: 01722 434255

Address: Community Governance Team, Wiltshire Council, County Hall,
Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, Wiltshire, BA14 8JN

Regional planning policy

Further information about the South West Regional Spatial Strategy can be obtained from the South West Councils website at www.swcouncils.gov.uk. Alternatively you can contact South West Councils using the details below:

Email: info@swcouncils.gov.uk

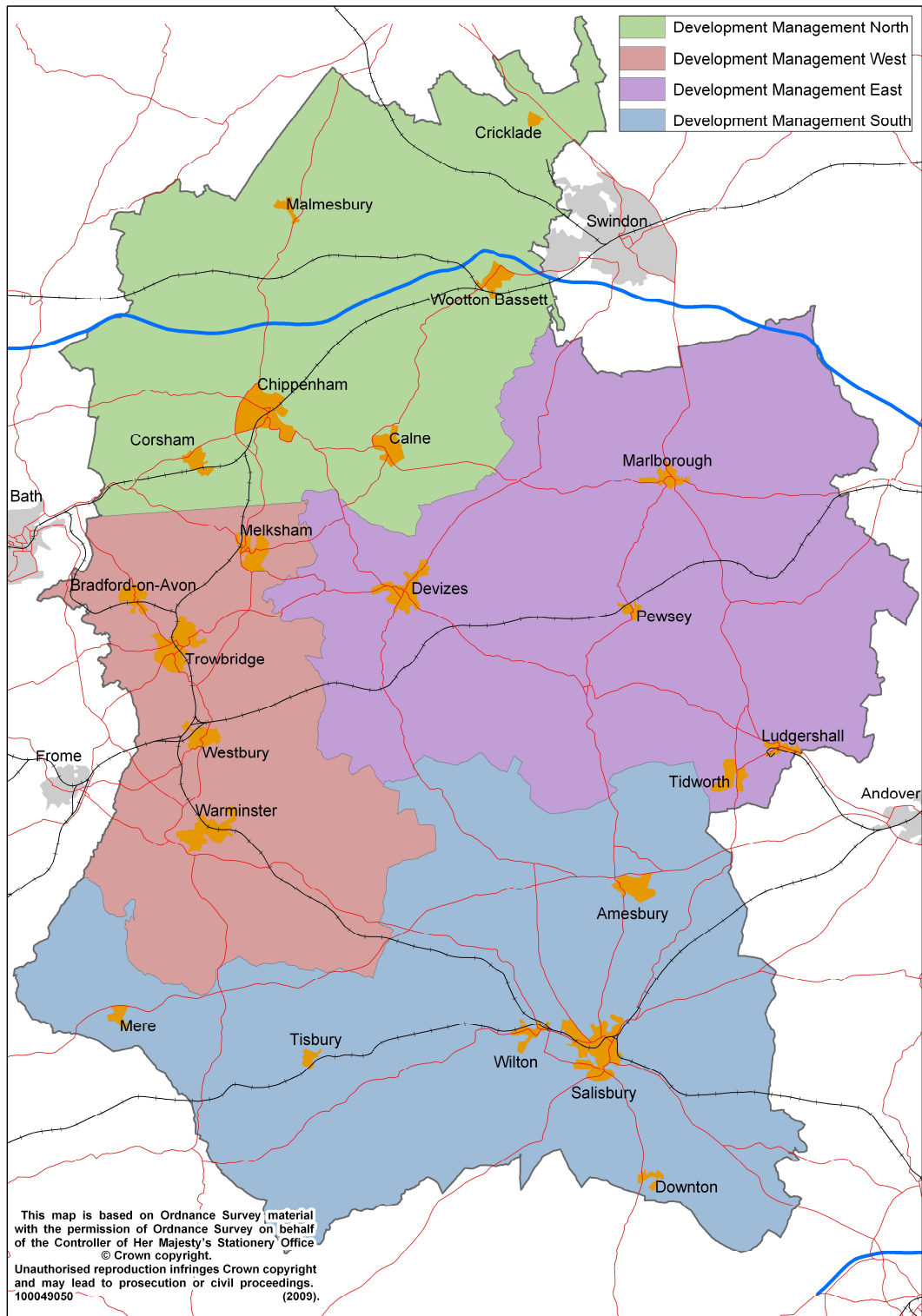
Phone: 01823 270101

Address: South West Councils, Dennett House, 11 Middle Street, Taunton,
Somerset, TA1 1SH

Planning Aid

Planning Aid is a nationwide charitable body providing free help and advice on planning matters to groups and individuals who cannot afford to pay a planning consultant. Further details are available on the Planning Aid website at: www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk.

Map showing areas covered by the North, South, East and West Development Management teams



Appendix 1: Methods of consultation

| Consultation method | Description | Strengths | Weaknesses | Cost | Staffing resources |
|--|---|---|---|--|----------------------------|
| Methods of involvement in the LDF | | | | | |
| Documents available at principal council office and for purchase | At certain stages of consultation the council will publicly display documents at the principle council office and at libraries and information points where this is considered appropriate. This is to allow the general public and interested parties to view planning documents without internet access. The council will also make these documents available for purchase at a reasonable price. | Access for all. All documents and any other relevant publications available in full. Purchased documents can be taken away and examined at leisure. | Available only during certain hours. May exclude groups and individuals with specific access needs. | Minimal. Printing costs may be high for purchased documents but could be covered by purchase cost. | Low |
| Online consultation (through Limehouse) | All new planning documents and consultation periods will be displayed on the council's website. Limehouse allows comments and feedback to be submitted online. | Available 24 hours a day and can be accessed anywhere. All documents available in full. | Not everyone has internet access. | Minimal once system is established. | Low once system is set up. |

| Consultation method | Description | Strengths | Weaknesses | Cost | Staffing resources |
|---|---|---|---|--|-----------------------------------|
| Notification and issue of information to specific consultation bodies and notification of other consultees as appropriate | A formal letter will be sent to all specific consultation bodies which the council considers would have an interest in the subject matter of a DPD or SPD. The letter will form part of the formal consultation process. In addition letters will be sent to other consultees on the council's community database, as considered appropriate. | Gives direct information to specific consultation bodies and to other consultees who are already on the council's community database. | Is generally limited to those that have already interacted with the planning process. Does not engage the wider community who are not already involved. Mail shots can be expensive and labour intensive if accompanied by a large amount of information. | Expensive with postage costs directly related to the amount of information sent; however emails are much less expensive. | High for letters. Low for emails. |
| Email to consultees on the council's community database | The council may use emails as opposed to letters for groups that regularly use their email accounts. | | | | |

| Consultation method | Description | Strengths | Weaknesses | Cost | Staffing resources |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|--|--|--------------------|
| Media advertising | <p>Radio – Where appropriate local radio stations will be sent press releases to publicise key planning documents of high public interest.</p> <p>TV – Where appropriate planning documents of high public interest may be promoted by press releases to local news television.</p> <p>Newspaper – Consultation periods and new planning documents will be advertised in advance of publication/consultation where this is considered appropriate.</p> | Notifies a wide range of people. Gives accessibility to all parts of the community. | Some local papers are not widely read. Lack of detail on hand and lack of opportunity for questions. | Low in terms of producing and disseminating notices. However, cost will relate to number of press outlets used and their charges. These can be quite high. | Low |
| Training sessions for specific groups | Training sessions may be provided for specific groups, such as town and parish councils. These sessions will be used to explain planning processes, thereby enabling attendees to respond effectively to consultation. | Leads to improved understanding of the planning process and the limits and constraints which apply when making planning decisions. | Limited to specific invitees. High staffing resources. | Expensive for venues and staff time. | High |

| Consultation method | Description | Strengths | Weaknesses | Cost | Staffing resources |
|---|--|---|---|--|--------------------|
| Focussed questionnaires | Focussed questionnaires may be used by the council as a valuable form of data collection to assess views and opinions. The information gathered from the questionnaires will directly feed into the production of new planning documents. | Gives opportunity to gather specific information from the wider community. May reach some people who would not normally engage in planning. | Limited to those questioned. Can only provide a snap shot of public opinion which may be affected by location, time or other factors. | Expensive if verbal questionnaires are used, as likely to be carried out by external company. Lower cost for written questionnaires. | Medium |
| Focus groups, working groups, and specialist sessions | Forums may be held to discuss relevant issues at key early stages in the production of new planning documents. This is in line with the government's objective of early consultation at the beginning of document production. Where a document has particular relevance a focused 'specialist' session may be undertaken to empower a particular target group. | Provides a forum for debate and for issues to be examined in public. Focuses on particular issues ensuring relevant consultees are engaged. | Limited community coverage. Requirements on staff resources could be high depending on time/number of sessions held. | Expensive for venues and staff time. Use of consultants could also be expensive. | Medium/high |

| Consultation method | Description | Strengths | Weaknesses | Cost | Staffing resources |
|---|---|--|--|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| Surgeries, presentations, exhibitions and public meetings | These may be held in the main towns of the county and in other locations where appropriate, to ensure as many people as possible are able to participate. Officers will attend with the expectation of explaining documents and increasing public awareness. Where possible, officers will also attend and address meetings of groups and organisations within the community during major consultation stages, although this will depend upon the time and resources available. | Allows display of information in different styles. Officers are on hand to help explain and interpret documents. | Involves large amount of advertising to provide information to community. Distance and location can be problematic to community. High staffing resources | Expensive for venues and staff time. | High |

| Consultation method | Description | Strengths | Weaknesses | Cost | Staffing resources |
|---|--|---|--|--|---------------------------|
| Methods of involvement in planning applications | | | | | |
| Online details | All new and a large number of historic planning applications can be viewed online on the council's website. The council is seeking to develop a system with an easy interface for users so they are able to comment and feedback online. | Available 24 hours a day and can be accessed anywhere. The whole planning application and all supporting documents are available in full. | Not everyone has internet access. | Minimal. Although developing a new online system may be expensive. | Low once system is set up |
| Neighbour notification letters | If the council receives a planning application that it feels may affect neighbouring properties then it will notify persons affected by writing to them directly. Recipients of neighbour notification letters have 21 days in which to respond. | Gives direct information to those targeted and ensures they are aware of potential changes in their area. | Is limited to notifying neighbours only and may not notify all those who have an opinion on the application. | Minimal. Major applications might require a large mail shot. | Medium/ High |

| Consultation method | Description | Strengths | Weaknesses | Cost | Staffing resources |
|---|---|---|--|---|--------------------|
| Site notices | All planning applications are publicised by a site notice, displayed on or close to the site. Site notices contain basic information about the application and also information about where more details can be obtained. A site notice will be placed in time to give respondents the statutory 21 day period for responses. | Site notices are designed to be placed in a position where the public can easily read them to allow anyone who is in the vicinity of the application site to become aware of the application. | Site notices can often be missed and they only notify persons in the vicinity although some applications may affect wider sectors of the public. | Minimal | Minimal |
| Statutory notices in the weekly local press | Local planning authorities are required to publicise certain applications by notice in a local newspaper. The newspaper in which the advertisement will appear will depend on the area in which the application is made. | Notifies a wide range of people. Gives accessibility to all parts of the community. | Some local papers are not widely read. Lack of detail on hand and lack of opportunity for questions. | Low in terms of producing and disseminating notices. However, the cost will relate to the number of press outlets used and their charges. | Low |