



**NORWICH**  
City Council

# **Statement of Community Involvement for Norwich**

A code of practice for involving the community in planning issues

November 2016 (amended September 2020)

## Foreword

The coronavirus outbreak (Covid-19) has impacted on how we can currently engage with the community, with several methods in the 2016 SCI not possible under the current government guidelines on social distancing. At the time of writing the government guidelines restrict some peoples' movement and some workplaces remain closed. Places where hard copies of documents were routinely placed are still impacted from the guidelines, with local authority offices largely closed to the public and Norfolk libraries only partially reopened. Government guidelines also advise that the virus can exist on surfaces, such as hard copies of documents.

The impact of the coronavirus, and the advice from the government therefore makes the physical inspection of documents more difficult for the following reasons;

- Restrictions on movements may prevent people visiting the location of the documents;
- May be impossible to provide an address for the provision of a hard copy due to closures of offices/libraries; and
- Concerns regarding the public sharing hard copies.

New planning guidance (updates to the National Planning Policy Guidance) has been published for Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) policies which allows local planning authorities to review and update them accordingly. This guidance allows for temporary alterations to be made where the current policy cannot be complied with due to the current social distancing restrictions in response to the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance advises that temporary revisions to SCIs made under this guidance do not need to be publicly consulted on.

The SCI published in November 2016 has been amended, as below, to allow for the current restrictions. The changes to the SCI are anticipated to be temporary and have been limited to those required as a direct result of the coronavirus pandemic. The changes are proposed to ensure the safety of our communities, key partners, businesses and council staff.

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# 1. Introduction

## Why we are preparing the Statement of Community Involvement

1. The city council is always looking for ways for the community to become more involved in its plan making and decision taking. We want to encourage more people to be involved and to make that as easy as possible. We hope that your local knowledge will help to make sure that development in the city benefits everyone whilst protecting the special qualities of the city. How we will ensure that you are part of this process is set out in this statement.
2. Under Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, all local planning authorities in England and Wales must prepare a Statement of community involvement (SCI) and must carry out planning consultations in accordance with it. The SCI is a 'code of practice' setting out how the council intends to involve people in planning decisions. This can include both decisions about planning policy (plan-making) and decisions on planning applications.
3. This is the fifth edition of the Statement of community involvement. It temporarily replaces the version published in November 2016.

## Need for review

4. Due to the current coronavirus (Covid-19) outbreak the government has issued guidance regarding social distancing, some of which impacts the range of methods of community involvement available.
5. New planning guidance has been published for Statement of Community Involvement policies which allow local planning authorities to review and update them accordingly. This guidance allows for alterations to be made where the current policy cannot be complied with due to the current social distancing restrictions in response to the coronavirus outbreak. The guidance can be found here; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-making#covid19>
6. The changes to this document, which are as a result of social distancing requirements, are anticipated to only be temporary. The changes are made to ensure the safety of our communities, key partners, businesses and council staff.
7. SCIs are required to be updated every 5 years. It is anticipated that a more thorough review of this document will occur next year, in 2021.
8. Under the national planning system, the council must prepare a local plan, which will guide the city's development and growth over the next 15 to 20 years. With an up to date local plan in place, it is clear how the council intends to provide for new housing and employment in the city, how much development will be planned for and where it will go. A local plan also sets out clearly what will and what will not be allowed in certain areas and which areas must be protected from development altogether. Local plans must be reviewed regularly to remain up to date and respond to changes in local circumstances. Plans must also be consistent with national

planning policy and guidance. If this guidance changes, local planning policy usually needs to change too.

9. Since we published the last Statement of community involvement in 2013, there have been a number of important changes to the national planning system which will affect how we prepare and consult on plans and proposals in future. Further changes in national rules are expected in coming years, particularly as a result of measures announced in the forthcoming Housing and Planning Act.
10. In relation to plan-making, the government has made it clear that it expects councils to prepare local plans and put them in place as quickly as possible. Recent government announcements suggest that councils which do not already have up to date local plans will be expected to prepare and adopt them (that is, complete the legal process to bring them into force) by the end of 2017. Councils which fail to produce timely local plans might also face possible sanctions and financial penalties. Councils that have adopted their plans recently must keep them up to date and review them as soon as practicable. There will also be an increased role for neighbourhood plans prepared directly by local communities.
11. Although Norwich's main local plan documents were adopted as recently as December 2014, the overall planning strategy for the Norwich area, the Joint core strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk, is becoming out of date and a new local plan needs to be prepared to manage and shape longer term growth and development. At the same time, there is a need for an overall planning framework to establish future needs and set targets for housing and jobs in Norfolk and ensure that new local plans for individual districts are consistent with those targets.
12. Accordingly, in partnership with Broadland and South Norfolk Councils and Norfolk county council, we are starting work on a new Greater Norwich Local Plan that will set out a development strategy for the wider Norwich area between now and 2036, as well as a broader Norfolk Strategic Framework to set overall planning targets.
13. In relation to planning applications, the government has made further changes in national planning rules which mean that more kinds of development can be carried out and more kinds of premises can change their use without planning permission – called permitted development. As part of the drive to encourage more housebuilding, the government will also be changing and simplifying the planning process for housing, granting automatic “permission in principle” for new housing development on previously developed sites which councils have listed as suitable. Local plans will also have to identify land for low cost starter homes on all suitable housing development sites.
14. During this period of rapid change, we must strike a careful balance between meeting our obligations to government to prepare plans and decide applications as quickly as possible, and making sure that local people still have a meaningful opportunity to comment on and influence planning policies and proposals. In order to meet government directives we will need to review some of the consultation arrangements for plan-

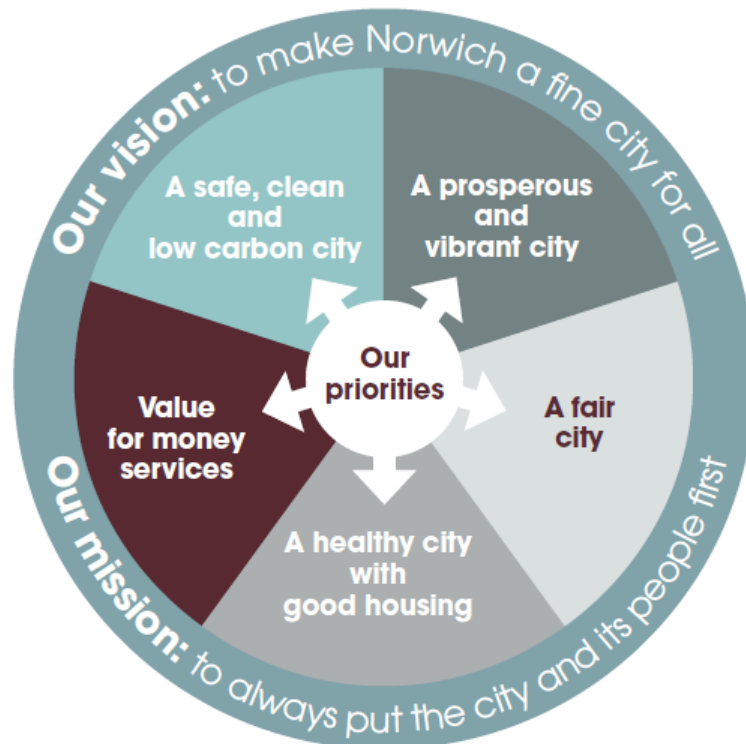
making in the 2013 Statement of Community Involvement, particularly to streamline certain procedures and (where this is unavoidably necessary) to reduce the length of time we consult on key documents.

15. Taken together, the changes in the planning system will inevitably affect the way that local plans are prepared and how planning applications are made and dealt with. This means that the way we involve local people in the planning process also needs to change. In cases where no planning application is needed, the city council cannot always let people know about all development which is happening in their area. In a very small number of cases, the national rules have been tightened, for example changing a shop to a betting shop now needs permission where it did not before, as does changing the use of or demolishing a local pub which is registered as an Asset of Community Value. The permitted development rule changes are designed to speed up the planning process, get development going and make smaller scale building projects and minor changes easier. But they will sometimes mean that local people will have less opportunity than before to have their say.

### **Planning and community Involvement**

16. The council produced a Community engagement strategy (CES) in 2009 outlining the council-wide approach to community involvement. The Statement of community involvement shows how this approach will be applied to plan making and decision making on planning applications.
17. The Council developed the Community engagement strategy to support the overall citywide vision and objectives in its corporate plan. The priorities within the latest corporate plan (2015-2020) are shown in figure 1 on page 4.

# Council priorities



## Our core values

Everything we ever do as an organisation, whether in teams or as individuals, will be done with our core values in mind. These are:

- P Pride.** We will take pride in what we do and demonstrate integrity in how we do it.
- A Accountability.** We will take responsibility, do what we say we will do and see things through.
- C Collaboration.** We will work with others and help others to succeed.
- E Excellence.** We will strive to do things well and look for ways to innovate and improve.

Figure 1: Extract from the Corporate Plan 2015-2020 (Norwich City Council)

18. In order to achieve the council's vision and priorities through the planning service, it is essential that there is effective public involvement in plan-making and decision making on planning applications and that clear standards are set for when and how involvement will take place.

## The Compact: Code of practice on involvement

19. Norwich City Council is a signatory of The Compact. The Compact is a national agreement between the government and community sectors, which aims to improve the way voluntary and community sectors, and local councils involve each other, including involvement in the planning process. We will continue to provide a positive framework for productive working relationships and will ensure that the guidelines set out in the Compact are

met where possible. In some circumstances it may be necessary to depart from the Compact should new legislation change the regulations for involvement of others in plan-making and planning applications, or if full compliance with the compact is likely to result in penalties or sanctions for the Council through failure to meet prescribed Government targets for plan-making or decision-taking.

20. Further details on consultation arrangements for planning policy are provided in section 2 – Consultation on planning policy documents. Consultation arrangements for development management are provided in section 3 – Consultations on planning applications.

### **The Council's commitment to equality**

21. The council has a commitment to equality which is a statutory duty under the Equality Act (2010). This is particularly relevant to planning which has a role to play in promoting equality of opportunity and cohesion by considering the needs of the community. The council recognises that equality of opportunity in practice includes ensuring that vulnerable or disadvantaged groups have their voices heard and their needs considered. This statement supports that objective through providing guidance on how to get people involved. The impact of planning activities and decisions will be assessed in order to ensure that there are no unintended negative impacts on vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. The assessments will focus on the six protected characteristics of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief, but will also consider the wider implications of socio-economic inequalities on community cohesion. This is normally carried out through an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) which takes place at the beginning of the plan-making process.
22. It is recognised that there may unfortunately be some impacts upon vulnerable or disadvantaged groups as a result of the temporary changes proposed to the SCI. However these changes are made in direct response to the government's guidelines on social distancing as a result of the coronavirus outbreak and are intended to ensure the safety of our communities, key partners, businesses and council staff, to include any vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. As such the council will endeavour to be as flexible as practicable during this time of social distancing to reduce any impact upon vulnerable or disadvantaged groups. Individuals or groups who would benefit from further assistance, such as hard copies of papers, should contact the relevant officer.

### **The role of councillors**

23. Councillors have three roles: as decision makers, as community representatives and as communicators to exchange and share information and discuss the issues and concerns of local electors with council officers and other stakeholders. Members of the public can make their views known to ward councillors, the relevant council executive member/portfolio holder, or at planning applications committee in a number of ways; by letter, email, or face-to-face discussion.



24. However, it is important that the consultation process is used because this is how views are registered in the plan-making or planning application process. This ensures that while councillors hear what you have to say, you will not miss the opportunity to be heard at committees or at any subsequent appeal, inquiry, hearing or examination.
25. As permitted under the Coronavirus Act 2020, planning committee meetings are not currently being held at the City Hall due to the current guidance on social distancing. They are instead being conducted online and made available to watch on the council's Youtube channel. This will continue to be reviewed, and options such as hybrid meetings will be considered (where some attendees are in-person and some are remote). Current information is available here;  
<https://cmis.norwich.gov.uk/live/Meetingscalendar.aspx>

### **RTPI Planning Aid England**

26. The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) Planning Aid England offers assistance and advice on the planning system to individuals and groups who are unable to pay for independent professional planning advice. Planning Aid encourages people to get involved in the planning system to help shape their own environment. The council supports the work of Planning Aid and will work with the service to provide independent advice for some of the involvement procedures proposed in this document.
27. RTPI Planning Aid England can be contacted via planning aid advice line:
- Tel: 0330 123 9244  
Email: [advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](mailto:advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)  
Web: [www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid](http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-aid)

## 2. Consultations on planning policy documents

### National policy requirements

28. National planning policy makes clear that local planning authorities must seek the views of communities and other stakeholders from an early stage in the plan-making process, stating:

*'Early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area, including those contained in any neighbourhood plans that have been made.'*

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), 2012; para 155.

29. The Localism Act 2011 has made a range of new powers available to communities across the country to enable them to play a greater part in planning for their future. One of these powers is neighbourhood planning, which we discuss in more detail later in this SCI. The Localism Act also introduced a Duty to Cooperate which is a legal duty on local planning authorities, county councils and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of Local Plan preparation in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. In simple terms, this means that councils cannot plan for new development within their areas in isolation, but must make sure that neighbouring councils and other organisations which provide services across larger areas participate fully in plan-making to ensure a co-ordinated, strategic approach to development and growth across administrative boundaries.

### What kinds of documents are consulted on?

30. Development plan documents or DPDs (now more usually called "local plans") are the formal policy documents which make up the statutory development plan for Norwich. Once adopted, these have full legal weight in decision making. The council's decisions to approve or refuse any development which needs planning permission must be made in accordance with the policies in the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
31. Supplementary planning documents (SPD) help to support and explain in more detail how the city council will implement particular policies and proposals in the local plan. SPD can also take the form of master plans, detailed design briefs or development briefs for sites identified for future development ("allocated") in the plan, as well as for other emerging sites. SPD can be reviewed frequently and relatively straightforwardly to respond to change, whereas a review of the policies in the plan is a longer and more complex process.

32. The planning policy documents to be prepared by the council are identified in the Local development scheme (LDS). The LDS includes a timetable of when we aim to produce the documents, and the various stages they must go through to be adopted. The LDS is available on the Council's website and is reviewed and updated regularly (hard copies are available on request):  
[https://www.norwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/1671/local\\_development\\_scheme](https://www.norwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/1671/local_development_scheme)

### **The current local plan**

33. The currently adopted development plan (the local plan) for Norwich comprises the Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (the JCS) adopted in March 2011, amendments adopted January 2014; the Norwich Site Allocations and Site Specific Policies Local Plan (the Site Allocations Plan), adopted December 2014; the Norwich Development Management Policies Local Plan (the DM Policies Plan), adopted December 2014; and the Northern city centre area action plan (NCCAAP) for part of Norwich city centre, adopted March 2010. The NCCAAP runs only to March 2016 and will expire during the currency of this Statement of Community Involvement. The JCS will be replaced by the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP), which is scheduled to be adopted in 2020.
34. The table in figure 2 shows the relationship between these documents, as well as the supplementary planning documents which are already in place to support their policies. More details of supplementary planning documents the council intends to prepare in future are in the LDS. Both the LDS and this Statement of community involvement (SCI) are procedural documents that support the production of the local plan setting out what will be produced and explaining how people can get involved with the process.

### **The emerging local plan**

35. The proposed Greater Norwich Local Plan (GNLP) will be a new statutory local plan for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk to update the present Joint Core Strategy (JCS). This will, similarly, set out a statement of strategic planning policy for the wider Norwich area but, unlike the present JCS, will also include policies and proposals for individual sites. As such, the GNLP will eventually also replace separate site allocations plans for individual districts. It is the only formal Development Plan Document in the current Local Development Scheme programme.
36. The proposed Norfolk Strategic Framework (NSF) will be a non-statutory strategic policy statement which will set broad strategic targets and priorities for the next round of statutory local plans for individual local planning authorities in Norfolk, facilitating joint working across district boundaries and helping to fulfil the statutory Duty to Co-operate.
37. Both the above documents will cover the period to 2036. The work programme for the preparation of the GNLP and NSF is set out in the latest revision of the Norwich Local Development Scheme which was

published in March 2016. The programme is subject to review dependent on the extent of evidence likely to be required.

### **Procedural Requirements**

38. Local plan documents must be prepared in accordance with a nationally prescribed procedure set out in the national Local Planning Regulations for England, which were last reviewed in 2012. This procedure will be followed in preparing the Greater Norwich Local Plan, but a more streamlined and fast-track process will be used for the Norfolk Strategic Framework, as this is not a local plan but an evidence framework to inform other plans.
39. At key stages of plan-making there is an opportunity for the public to comment on emerging planning policies and proposals in the documents. At the end of the process, development plan documents must be submitted to the Secretary of State and be independently examined by a government appointed inspector to assess their soundness and legal compliance before they can be adopted by the city council and come into force.
40. Certain other documents must be published alongside each DPD, including:
  - the independently prepared sustainability appraisal (SA) report of the DPD at each stage (a sustainability appraisal scoping report is prepared and consulted on at the start of the process to set out what sustainability issues and objectives the SA should cover and what evidence it will use);
  - a policies map, setting out the DPD's policies and proposals on a map base (if relevant);
  - a statement of consultation summarising public representations made to the plan and how they have been addressed (called the "Regulation 22(c) statement");
  - copies of any representations made;
  - any other supporting documents considered by the council to be relevant in preparing the plan; and
  - an adoption statement and environmental statement (when the plan is adopted).
41. The local plan is supported by a range of research reports, studies and topic papers making up a detailed evidence base which informs and justifies its policies.

### **Meeting the Duty to Cooperate**

42. For many years Norwich City Council has worked in close cooperation with its neighbouring councils Broadland and South Norfolk to plan for and deliver major growth envisaged for the Norwich Policy Area. This work was first undertaken as part of a formal Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP), whose responsibilities have since been inherited by

its successor the Greater Norwich Growth Board (GNGB). The Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk was produced by the GNDP, which includes the Broads Authority and Norfolk County Council working in partnership with the three districts. Other documents produced by the GNDP include the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule for each district/authority area. The Community Infrastructure Levy is a statutory charge on new development introduced by the CIL Regulations 2010. It came into force in Norwich in 2013.

43. As noted above, the need for councils and other agencies to work together in developing effective planning strategies for their areas is now a legal duty. Councils must show that they have met this statutory Duty to Cooperate in order for local plans to be accepted (found “sound” and “legally compliant”) when those plans are independently examined by government. Work on preparing the overall Norfolk Strategic Framework – although it will not be a formal local plan – will involve the city council in joint working with all the local planning authorities and other relevant bodies across Norfolk.
44. The planning policy documents which have been (and will be) prepared jointly by the Norwich area authorities are set out in the respective Local Development Schemes for each authority. Public involvement in their preparation is guided by the community involvement standards as set by the partnership councils jointly in their respective statements of community involvement. For the current round of joint local plan preparation, consultation standards and consultation periods will be common across the three local authority areas and all the participating authorities will work to the same consultation timeframes for key documents in their SCIs.

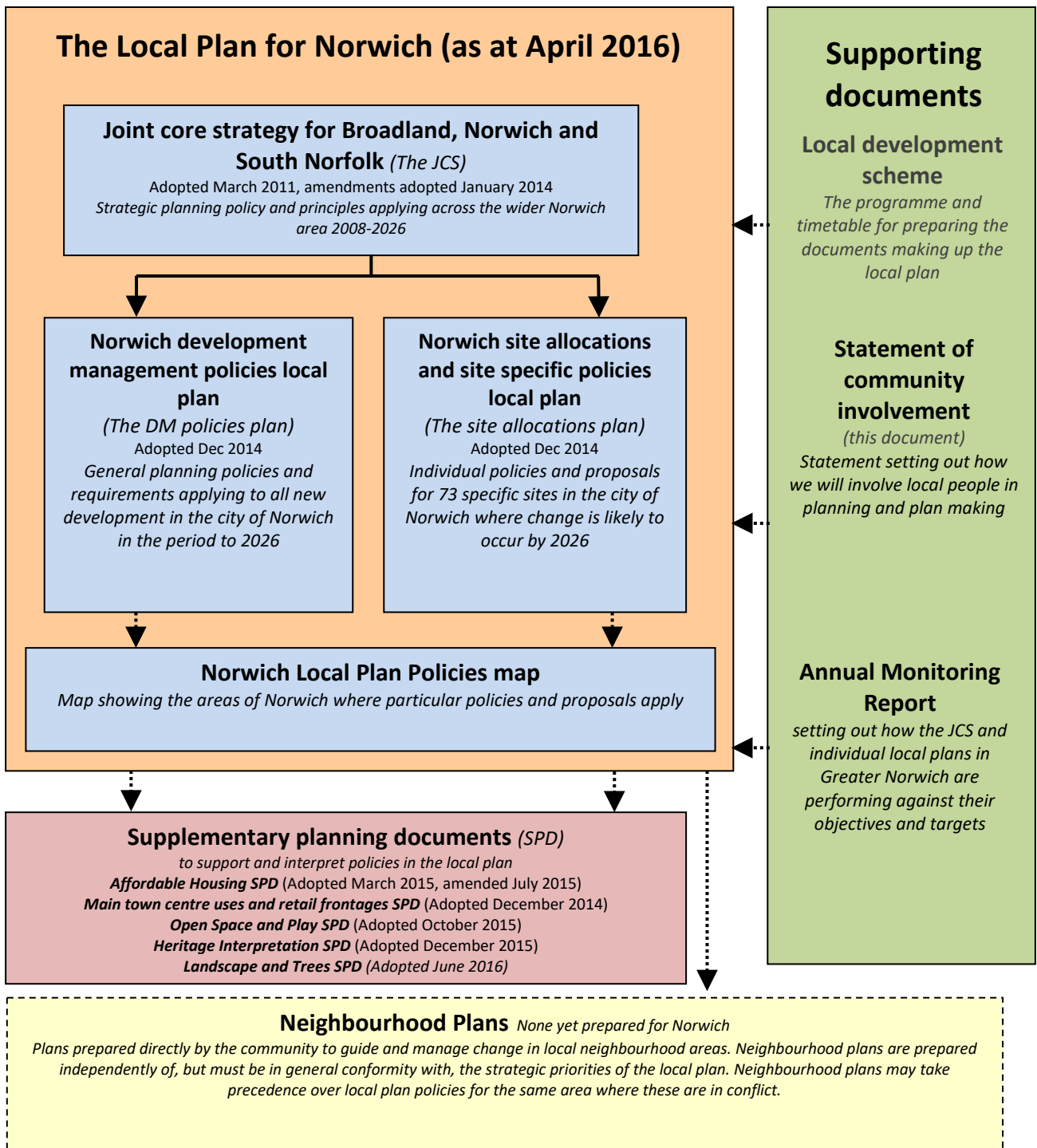


Figure 2: Documents making up the adopted local plan

## Consultation Methods

Please note that due to the Government's guidance on social distancing in relation to the coronavirus outbreak not all of the consultation methods listed below may be possible at present. We will continue to utilise electronic means of communication but may not be able to engage in face to face events or provide hard copies in a manner in which we have previously done so. We will continue to monitor Government guidance and tailor our consultation methods appropriately. We may use alternative approaches to consultation.

45. The council has a well-established procedure for involving people in plan-making. We will continue to develop our understanding of different consultation techniques over time and learn from what works, and what doesn't. A variety of methods have and will be used during consultations, taking into consideration issues being consulted on and the needs of the audience. These include the use of appropriate locations, and/or the use of particular presentation media for presentations to blind people, people with impaired hearing, and people with mental health issues or learning difficulties.
46. Consultation is carried out increasingly by electronic means but is still rapidly evolving in the digital age. Although almost all the documents we consult on are made available electronically, the challenge remains as to how information can be publicised effectively to attract the widest audience. The council is steadily expanding the use of interactive web technology to enable direct access to its services across a range of devices and allow local people to make payments, submit comments and report issues and problems direct via online forms. We will endeavour in future planning consultations to integrate these mechanisms where possible and extend the use of social media to help access "hard to reach" groups, especially younger people. We will also continue to use more traditional methods of consultation to include those without access to the internet or social media.
47. Based on our current success and lessons learned from previous consultations, we will endeavour to use a range of consultation approaches, as necessary and where permitted by the current guidance on social distancing. These are set out in the following list:
- Letters/emails to groups and individuals
  - newspapers and Citizen magazine
  - paper documents
  - council's website
  - "planning for real"<sup>1</sup> type events

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<sup>1</sup> "Planning for Real" is a nationally recognised planning process where residents take a hands-on role in registering their views, identifying priorities and suggesting solutions for development in their area

- presentations to community groups
- public meetings
- focus groups
- exhibitions
- local councillors
- social media
- local radio

48. We acknowledge that it is important to make public consultation arrangements as extensive as possible to make sure the public can get their voice heard. However, it is not always possible or appropriate to consult using all the methods listed above. We will make sure that consultations are tailored appropriately to the kind of plan, policy or proposal being consulted on and the stages it has reached. We will ensure that people with no access to the internet, email, text or social media are kept informed by traditional, non-electronic means.

#### **How long will consultations last?**

49. At all consultation stages the Council will comply with the minimum legal requirements. The National Compact (see paragraph 15 above) states that local authorities should "...where it is appropriate, and enables meaningful engagement, conduct 12-week formal written consultations, with clear explanations and rationale for short timeframes or a more informal approach."

50. In most circumstances a 12 week consultation period will not be needed to respond to emerging plans and policies. This is because

- In future, the need to expedite the production of statutory local plans to meet more rigorously enforced government targets for speedy plan-making and timely review mean that an extended period of public consultation may not always be achievable within the timeframes available. In these circumstances the reasons for reducing the consultation timescale will be clearly set out.
- the council's programme for preparing planning policy documents must be set out in the statutory Local Development Scheme (LDS) and this gives details of forthcoming documents and expected timescales well in advance;
- The council's forward agenda gives advance notice of documents which will be considered by council committees.

51. The following timescales will be adhered to for documents consulted on:

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using 3D models, plans and maps. Sessions are usually facilitated by an independent organisation such as Planning Aid England.



Document type	Normal period for consultation	Circumstances in which the consultation period will be extended
Development plan documents (DPDs)	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>six weeks</b> (42 calendar days) on DPDs	Where a normal period of consultation would take in all or part of the Christmas/New Year holiday, the Easter holiday or the July/August summer holiday period in addition to bank holidays, extra days will be added to allow for this, up to a maximum of 14 calendar days over and above the statutory minimum.  At its discretion, and only in the early, informal stages of DPD/SPD production, the Council may allow additional time for representations to be made in circumstances where there is a justifiable reason for not responding within the deadline.  In accordance with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity, we will not normally run consultations on planning documents in the six week period immediately before local council elections. ("Purdah").
Neighbourhood development plans ("Neighbourhood plans")	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>six weeks</b> (42 calendar days) when proposals for neighbourhood plans prepared by designated neighbourhood planning bodies are published	
Future reviews of this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	We will consult for at least <b>six weeks</b> (42 calendar days) on any future reviews of this SCI	
Supplementary planning documents (SPD) including planning briefs	We will consult for at least the minimum statutory period of <b>four weeks</b> (28 calendar days) on SPD and on planning briefs which have the status of SPD	
Non-statutory planning documents and informal advice notes	We will consult for a period appropriate to the coverage and content of the document concerned	

52. For supplementary planning documents (SPDs) and planning briefs, the Local Development Regulations specify a minimum four week consultation period, although the period for legal challenge after adoption is longer than it is for DPDs. Because supplementary planning documents typically relate to small geographical areas or subjects of specialist interest, shorter consultation periods are justified, particularly as similar lead-in times and reporting arrangements exist for SPD as they do for development plan documents.

53. For neighbourhood plans a separate period of public consultation by the neighbourhood planning body proposing the plan is required before a draft plan can be formally submitted to and accepted by the council, although at the time of writing no neighbourhood plans have been prepared or proposed in Norwich.

### Who will we involve, and how?

54. The Council's Community engagement strategy (CES) "Working Better Together" identifies five levels of involvement:

- Keeping you informed;
- Asking what you think;
- Deciding together;
- Acting together; and
- Supporting independent community initiatives.

55. Different types of policy documents need different levels of involvement, depending on factors such as how many people would be affected by the proposed policy and the type of impact it would have. Detailed guidance on who we will involve, how, and at what level at the various stages of the plan making process is given in the tables on the following pages.

## Public involvement in Local Plans (Development plan documents)

Key stages	Involvement Level	Public/stakeholder involvement arrangements
<p><b>1. Pre-production/evidence gathering</b> The information needed for the plan is prepared and potential issues identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking you what you think</li> <li>• Deciding together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing to statutory environment bodies to initiate Sustainability appraisal screening</li> <li>• Early involvement of relevant stakeholders</li> <li>• Hold focus group sessions where necessary to help decide issues to be included in the plan (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance)</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Draft Local plan</b> The information gathered at first stage is taken into account in the drafting of detailed policies and allocations. Depending on the level of complexity, the draft local plan stage may involve more than one period of consultation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking you what you think</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish draft documents for consultation for a minimum of <b>six weeks</b>, and, at the start of the consultation period, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ publish the Sustainability scoping report or appraisal as appropriate;</li> <li>▪ inform specific consultation bodies (this will be done by email where possible: postal mailing will be used where there is no email address on the database);</li> <li>▪ inform relevant consultation bodies , other interested bodies and individuals on the consultation database, as above;</li> <li>▪ publish electronic copies of the consultation documents on the Council’s website;</li> <li>▪ make hard copies of consultation documents available for inspection at the Council’s office and the Millennium library (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance);</li> <li>▪ issue press release in local papers;</li> <li>▪ add consultation information on Council’s social media sites.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Arrange public meetings, exhibitions, focus groups as appropriate (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Publication of the Local plan</b> The Local plan is finalised and published for a last stage of consultation. Comments at this stage will only be sought on soundness and legal compliance of the plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking you what you think</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the Local plan and relevant documents for consultation for a minimum of <b>six weeks</b>, and, at the start of the consultation period, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ publish a statement of the representations procedure;</li> <li>▪ publish the Sustainability appraisal report for consultation;</li> <li>▪ publish a consultation statement summarising all comments received from the previous stages and how the comments have been considered and taken into account;</li> <li>▪ publish relevant supporting documents;</li> <li>▪ inform specific consultation bodies, as above;</li> <li>▪ inform relevant general consultation bodies , other interested bodies and individuals on the consultation database, as above;</li> <li>▪ publish electronic copies of all the documents on the Council’s website;</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Key stages	Involvement Level	Public/stakeholder involvement arrangements
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ make hard copies available for inspection at the Council's office and the Millennium library (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance);</li> <li>▪ issue public notice in local newspapers;</li> <li>▪ issue press release in local newspapers;</li> <li>▪ add consultation information on Council's social media sites.</li> <li>• Arrange exhibition or presentation to interest groups if necessary, and where possible and subject to social distancing guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Submission</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No involvement</li> </ul>	The draft Local plan, and all supporting documents and the comments received from public consultation are submitted to the Secretary of State, who appoints an independent planning inspector. The hard copy documents are made available at Council's offices and the Millennium library (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance).
<b>5. Public examination</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No involvement</li> </ul>	The Local plan and the comments received are examined by the planning inspector, followed by the inspector's report.
<b>6. Adoption</b> The Local plan is adopted following the consideration of the recommendations in the inspector's report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping you informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make the inspector's report available for inspection on the Council's website and at the Council's office (hard copies will be made available where possible and subject to social distancing guidance)</li> <li>• Inform consultees who previously made representations about the availability of inspectors report</li> </ul> Following adoption of the Local plan, we will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the Local plan, make electronic copies available on the Council's website and hard copies available at the Council's office (hard copies will be made available where possible and subject to social distancing guidance)</li> <li>• Publish adoption statement in Local newspapers</li> <li>• Send adoption statement to specific and general consultees and those who made representations at previous stages or those who have asked to be notified of the adoption</li> <li>• Make the Sustainability appraisal and other supporting documents available for inspection for six weeks after adoption</li> <li>• provide information about the adoption of the plan on Council's social media sites</li> </ul>

## Public involvement in Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and planning briefs

Key stages	Involvement Level	Public/stakeholder involvement arrangements
<p><b>1. Pre-production/evidence gathering</b> The information needed for the plan needs to be prepared and potential issues need to be identified.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking you what you think</li> <li>• Deciding together</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging relevant stakeholders in deciding the level of detail to be included in the plan and to identify key issues that need to be addressed</li> <li>• Where necessary, preliminary consultations will be carried out prior to the publication of draft SPDs</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Draft SPDs/ Planning briefs</b> A Draft SPD/planning brief is prepared following the initial evidence gathering stage. Consultations at this stage will involve publishing a draft of the SPD/ planning brief for comment.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asking you what you think</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the Draft SPD/planning brief for consultation for a minimum of <b>four weeks</b>, and, at the start of the consultation period, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ make electronic copies of the plan and supporting documents available on the Council's website;</li> <li>▪ make hard copies of the plan and supporting documents available at the Council's office and Millennium library for inspection (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance);</li> <li>▪ inform relevant specific and general consultees and those on the consultation database who may have an interest on the issues (this will be done by email where possible: postal mailing will be used where there is no email address on the database);</li> <li>▪ issue a press release for the matters concerned if appropriate;</li> <li>▪ provide consultation information on Council's social media sites.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Arrange exhibition or presentation to interest groups if appropriate (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance)</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Adoption</b> The Council will consider the representations received through the consultations and make any amendments necessary before adopting the SPD/ planning brief.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping you informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the SPD/planning brief – make electronic copies and any supporting documents available on the Council's website and hard copies available at Council's office (hard copies will be made available where possible and subject to social distancing guidance)</li> <li>• Publish a consultation statement summarising all comments received from the previous stages and how the comments were considered and taken into account</li> <li>• Send an adoption statement to those who have made representations during the previous consultations and those who have asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD/planning brief.</li> <li>• provide information on Council's social media sites</li> </ul>

## Publicising Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood plans are prepared independently by the local community. As such, deciding how to involve people about what should be in a neighbourhood plan and determining what issues it will cover is the role of the neighbourhood forum or other designated body<sup>2</sup> actually proposing the plan. The council does not itself have a direct role in preparing a neighbourhood plan but must provide technical advice and support to any group proposing one, to ensure that it will be broadly consistent with the existing development plan for the area. The council is only required to consult formally at key stages, following the legal procedures as described below. The neighbourhood planning body must abide by the neighbourhood planning regulations and must consult “meaningfully” about a proposed plan, but is not bound by this Statement of Community Involvement.

Key stages	Involvement Level	Public/stakeholder involvement arrangements
<p><b>1. Neighbourhood Area Application</b> A neighbourhood forum or other prospective neighbourhood planning body applies to the city council to designate a Neighbourhood Area for which they propose to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan. The city council publicises the application and invites representations over a minimum 6 week period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping you informed</li> <li>• Asking you what you think</li> <li>• Supporting independent community initiatives.</li> </ul>	<p>Publish the Neighbourhood Area proposal and invite representations for a minimum of six weeks, and, at the start of the period,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make electronic copies of the proposal documentation available on the Council’s website;</li> <li>• make hard copies of the proposal documentation available at the Council’s office and Millennium library for inspection (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance);</li> <li>• inform relevant specific and general consultees and those on the consultation database who may have an interest in the proposal (this will be done by email where possible: postal mailing will be used where there is no email address on the database);</li> <li>• issue a press release relating to the proposal if appropriate;</li> <li>• add information about how to respond to the proposal on the Council’s social media sites.</li> </ul>

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<sup>2</sup> In areas without a parish or town council (such as Norwich), local people will need to decide which organisation should produce a neighbourhood plan. These can be existing community groups or local people forming a new group. In both cases they will need to be formally designated and must meet the basic conditions set out in the Localism Act. This includes having at least 21 members and being established to promote the wellbeing of the neighbourhood area. It must be open to new members and have a written constitution and have taken reasonable steps to secure membership from residents, business and local elected members across the neighbourhood area.

Key stages	Involvement Level	Public/stakeholder involvement arrangements
<p><b>2. Submission of a Neighbourhood Plan</b> The neighbourhood forum submits the Neighbourhood Plan to the city council. The council invites representations on the submitted plan over a minimum 6 week period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping you informed</li> <li>• Asking you what you think</li> <li>• Supporting independent community initiatives</li> </ul>	<p>Publish the submitted plan and invite representations for a minimum of six weeks, and, at the start of the period,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make electronic copies of the submitted plan available on the Council’s website;</li> <li>• make hard copies of the submitted plan available at the Council’s office and Millennium library for inspection (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance);</li> <li>• inform relevant specific and general consultees and those on the consultation database, as above;</li> <li>• issue a press release relating to the Neighbourhood Plan if appropriate;</li> <li>• provide information about how to respond to the plan on the Council’s social media sites.</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Publication of examiners report</b> The city council publishes the report of the examination into the submitted Neighbourhood Plan and the decision of the council as to whether or not it accepts the examiner’s recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping you informed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make electronic copies of the examiner’s report and decision statement available on the Council’s website;</li> <li>• make hard copies of the examiner’s report and decision statement available at the Council’s office and Millennium library for inspection (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance);</li> <li>• inform relevant specific and general consultees and those on the consultation database, as above;</li> <li>• Provide information about the examiner’s report and decision on the Council’s social media sites.</li> </ul>
<p><b>4. Referendum information statement</b> The city council publishes the Referendum Information Statement and specified documents, setting out the date and procedure for the Neighbourhood Plan referendum. A minimum of 28 working days’ notice will be given.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping you informed</li> </ul>	<p>No less than 28 working days before a Neighbourhood Plan referendum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make electronic copies of the referendum information statement and documentation available on the Council’s website;</li> <li>• make hard copies of the referendum information statement and documentation available at the Council’s office and Millennium library for inspection (where possible and subject to social distancing guidance);</li> <li>• inform relevant specific and general consultees and those on the consultation database, as above;</li> <li>• Provide information about the referendum on the Council’s social media sites</li> </ul>

Key stages	Involvement Level	Public/stakeholder involvement arrangements
<p><b>5. “Making” of the neighbourhood plan</b> The city council confirms that the Neighbourhood Plan has come into effect (has been “made”)<sup>3</sup>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keeping you informed</li> <li>• Supporting independent community initiatives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Publish the neighbourhood Plan – make electronic copies and any supporting documents available on the Council’s website and hard copies available at Council’s office</li> <li>• Notify those who have asked to be informed about the making of the neighbourhood plan.</li> <li>• Provide information about the made plan on Council’s social media sites.</li> </ul>

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<sup>3</sup> Under planning legislation, neighbourhood development plans prepared by the community are referred to as being “made” when they take legal effect. This is distinct from local plans prepared by a council or other local planning authority, which are “adopted”.



### 3. Consultations on planning applications

Please note that due to the Government's guidance on social distancing in relation to the coronavirus outbreak not all of the consultation methods listed below may be possible at present. We will continue to utilise electronic means of communication but may not be able to engage in face to face events or provide hard copies in a manner in which we have previously done so. We will continue to monitor Government guidance and tailor our consultation methods appropriately. We may use alternative approaches to consultation.

#### Introduction

56. Planning applications are considered through the development management process. It is important that the views of the general public and stakeholders are taken into account to inform decisions.
57. The legal minimum requirements of publicity on planning applications are set out in legislation. These requirements include publication on the Council's register, notices displayed near the site and/or neighbours being notified directly. For some applications, an advertisement is required in a local newspaper. Similar requirements apply to applications for listed building consent.
58. This section sets out the council's approach to encouraging, and requiring where necessary, developers to undertake pre-application consultations and for the involvement of the community in commenting on planning applications.
59. The Planning service standards outline how people can expect to be involved in planning applications and the service they can expect to receive including response times to letters, emails and phone calls. The most up-to-date Planning service standards are available on our website at [www.norwich.gov.uk](http://www.norwich.gov.uk); these will be updated when appropriate to reflect any future changes in legislation or internal processes.

#### Pre-application consultation

60. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that local planning authorities should encourage other parties involved in the development process to take maximum advantage of the pre-application stage, so that prospective developers and applicants who are not already required to do so by law may engage effectively with the local community before they make a planning application. This should improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties.
61. The city council strongly encourages developers and agents of all application types to engage with the community at the earliest opportunity. For major schemes this is a requirement. This will give the best information on which to base proposals and enable any planning application that is subsequently made to have the best chance of success.
62. Early involvement between developers, the community, consultees and the local planning authority allows issues and concerns to be discussed before planning proposals are formally submitted for assessment and decisions are made. Pre-application involvement by all parties allows issues and concerns to be raised at

an early stage, potentially enabling them to be addressed and giving communities the opportunity to shape or influence the development proposals.

63. There are several levels of pre-application service available, depending on the type of development proposed. A fee will be charged for this service. Further guidance can be found on the Council's website at the following link <http://www.norwich.gov.uk/Planning/PlanningApplications/Pages/PreApplicationAdviceService.aspx>.
64. The Council strongly encourages applicants to consult the local community before submitting a planning application for significant development, in particular:
- Housing developments of 10 or more dwellings;
  - Any other development with a floor area of 1,000 square metres.
65. The Validation requirements produced by the Council provide details of the pre-application consultation requirements for applications. These will be regularly updated in accordance with legislative requirements. The validation requirements can be accessed from the Council's website: [https://www.norwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/1558/validation\\_requirements](https://www.norwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/1558/validation_requirements).
66. The figure on the next page gives some basic advice on how involvement and consultation would be expected to be conducted. If community consultation is impacted by the Government's guidance on social distancing, for example preventing large public meetings, developers and agents will be expected to consider alternative methods of effective consultation and explain their approach.

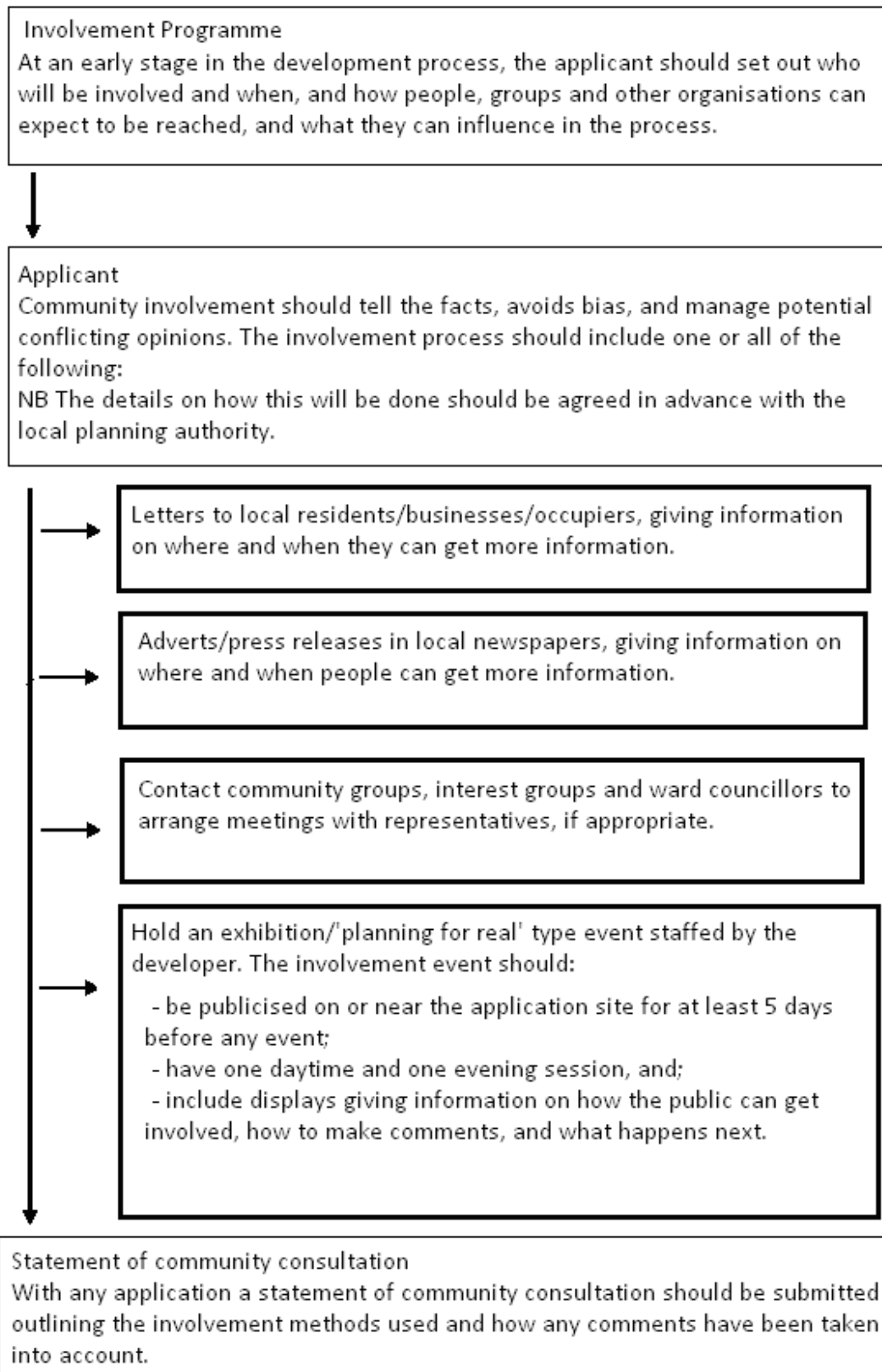


Figure 3: An example of how a pre-application community consultation could be conducted

## Planning application consultation

67. It is important that the community have suitable opportunities to be involved in commenting on planning applications and that those comments are taken into account when the decision is made.

68. The council has a well-established process of consultation on planning applications. The main way to find out information on planning applications is through the Planning Public Access service<sup>4</sup> on our website: <http://planning.norwich.gov.uk/online-applications>. You can also sign up to receive e-mail alerts of proposed developments in your area through this service. Other methods currently include:

- i) letters and emails to statutory consultees, other organisations and interest groups;
- ii) letters and emails to residents, businesses and properties within 10 metres of the boundary of the site;
- iii) the display of site notices (for some applications);
- iv) publication in local newspapers (for some applications);
- v) viewing of all comments received on our website;
- vi) viewing of all decision reports on our website;
- vii) presentations at committee (for some applications) (in accordance with the requirements of the Planning Service Code of Conduct);
- viii) committee papers – available a week before each meeting (on the website, and in paper form where possible and subject to social distancing guidance), and;
- ix) committee minutes – available 7 days prior to the next meeting.

NB: The methods listed at ii), iii) and iv) above will be carried out in accordance with at least the minimum requirements of Section 15 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (or any updated version thereafter). The above list is not exhaustive and may be amended in response to future changes in national planning legislation or regulation. Full details of the consultation methods on planning applications can be found at the following links:

[https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20017/planning\\_applications/1201/april\\_2009](https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20017/planning_applications/1201/april_2009)

[https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20017/planning\\_applications/1202/june\\_2013](https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20017/planning_applications/1202/june_2013)

NB2: As permitted under the Coronavirus Act 2020, at present planning committee meetings are not being held at the City Hall due to the current

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<sup>4</sup> The Planning Public Access website allows you to search for details of planning applications, plans and supporting documentation that have been submitted to Norwich City Council's planning service.

guidance on social distancing. They are instead being conducted online and made available to watch on the council's Youtube channel. This will continue to be reviewed, and options such as hybrid meetings will be considered (where some attendees are in-person and some are remote). Current information is available here; <https://cmis.norwich.gov.uk/live/Meetingscalendar.aspx>

69. If any planning application is amended during the process of its assessment and the amendment would be likely to have a significant adverse impact on neighbouring properties, then the occupiers of properties affected will be re-notified. All revised or additional documentation or plans will be published on the website. If necessary, the case officer for the application will agree a new determination deadline with the developer/agent as required.
70. The Planning Portal ([www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)) provides information on planning in general, with Norwich City Council's website providing more specific information relevant to Norwich. Public Access contains details of all planning applications and comments of consultees and the consideration of the application by officers from December 2005 onwards, with some information on applications from January 1988 to November 2005.

### Material planning considerations

71. In the process of assessing an application the planning officer must have regard to material planning considerations. Some examples of material considerations and non-material considerations can be found below (please note, this list is not exhaustive). For example, the loss of property value is not a material planning consideration and will not be taken into account in the assessment of an application.
72. More advice on material planning considerations can be found via the Planning Portal and Planning Aid England by following the links below:

<http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/general/faq/faqapplyprocess%20-%20Whatarematerialconsiderations#Whatarematerialconsiderations>  
<http://www.rtpi.org.uk/media/686895/Material-Planning-Considerations.pdf>

<b>Material planning considerations</b>	<b>Non-material considerations</b>
National and local policies	Issues considered under Building Regulations
Planning history and previous appeal decisions	Land/boundary disputes, including rights of access
Case Law	Opposition to business competition
Impact on sunlight, outlook, privacy and amenity	Loss of property value
Highways issues (e.g. increased traffic movements)	Loss of view (NB this does not include 'outlook')
Effect on a Listed Building or Conservation Area	Opposition to the principle of a development if permission has been granted by an outline application or appeal decision

Figure 4: Examples of material and Non-material considerations  
(Source: RTPI/Planning Portal/ Planning Aid England)

## **4. Resources and management**

73. This section discusses the management of the involvement process and the resources available to the council. The local plan is managed by the council's planning policy and projects team and supported by officers from other council departments who will provide expertise, support and advice during the process. The resources are designed to ensure that the Local plan, Sustainable community strategy and other council strategies are linked and that all local community involvement events are coordinated.
74. The council will aim to make the most efficient use of limited staff time and resources to prepare local planning documents and involve people throughout the plan-making process. We will work closely with those involved to understand and agree policies and proposals at an early stage so that outstanding issues can be resolved where possible, meaning that fewer resources are needed at the examination stage to debate outstanding objections. From previous experience of consulting on planning policy documents, using time and resources efficiently to involve the public, developers and other stakeholders at the earliest stage can greatly shorten the length of examination time and reduce unnecessary delays in the plan production process. This helps to ensure that emerging policies and proposals have a broad consensus and will be appropriate and effective in bringing forward sustainable development.
75. The council may engage specialised agencies or consultants for specific parts of the planning policy framework such as master planning and evidence studies. They will be expected to undertake public participation and involvement on their proposals and results which will be consistent with this document.

## Appendix 1: Local plan consultees

In the planning policy making process, the Council is required to consult organisations which are known as either 'specific' or 'general' consultees. In addition the government has introduced a 'Duty to co-operate' in the 2012 planning regulations<sup>5</sup>; many of the consultees required under the Duty to co-operate are already included in the list of 'specific consultees' below, but for completeness they are all listed separately on page 25. As the legislation and regulations are frequently updated, the lists of consultees below may change over time and must be checked against the requirements set out in any new regulations.

The recent planning regulations set out the specific consultation bodies. Along with relevant government departments, the list contains the bodies below.

Regard will also be had to the consultation requirements indicated in the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations (2012 as amended).

### Specific consultation bodies

- The Coal Authority
- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- The Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- The Highways Agency
- Norfolk County Council
- Broads Authority
- Adjacent local authorities
- Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Clinical Commissioning Bodies (or successor health care bodies)
- NHS England Midlands and East (East)
- Norfolk Constabulary
- Police and Crime Commissioner
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- Relevant electricity and gas companies
- Relevant water and sewerage undertakers
- The Homes and Communities Agency
- Local nature partnerships

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<sup>5</sup> The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012



## **General consultation bodies - examples**

Through this Statement of community involvement, we are committed to involving a wide range of other groups, organisations and interested individuals in the planning process. This will ensure that as many people as possible who are interested are involved in the future development of Norwich.

The list below provides some examples of general consultation bodies:

- Community groups (area based and topic based)
- Parish councils in Norwich policy area
- Housing organisations
- Housebuilders
- Residents and tenants groups
- Business and commerce organisations
- Economic development agencies
- Educational bodies
- School councils
- Community safety bodies
- Environmental and heritage organisations
- Equal opportunities bodies
- Ethnic minority groups
- Disabled people's organisations
- Older people's groups
- Faith groups
- Health and social care groups
- Norfolk and Waveney Mental Health Trust
- Youth organisations
- Agents/developers
- Landowners
- Regeneration bodies
- Tourism bodies
- Transport bodies
- NCC Public Health
- Community centres
- Volunteer development organisations
- Sports and recreation organisations
- Health and Safety Executive

- Royal Mail
- Emergency services.
- Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show people
- Design Review Panel
- Norfolk Historic Environment Service
- Local Enterprise Partnerships
- Interested individuals

**Duty to Co-operate: consultees required under the 2012 Planning Regulations**  
 (as amended by the National Treatment Agency (Abolition) and the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (Consequential, Transitional and Saving Provisions) Order 2013)

- The Environment Agency
- The Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England (Historic England)
- Natural England
- The Civil Aviation Authority
- The Homes and Communities Agency
- Clinical Commissioning Groups (established under section 14D of the National Health Service Act 2006);
- The National Health Service Commissioning Board
- The Office of Rail Regulation
- Integrated Transport Authorities
- Highway Authority (Norfolk County Council)
- The Marine Management Organisation

Note that consultees specific to London are not included in this list.