

# Statement of Community Involvement

Adopted November 2014

Blackpool Council



## Statement of Community Involvement

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## Glossary

**Adoption** - Formal adoption of a planning document by the Council for forward planning and in the determination of planning applications.

**Authority Monitoring Report (AMR)** - Report produced annually which sets out progress against the Council's Local Development Scheme and analyses the impact and effectiveness of current planning policies.

**Community** - A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common (Oxford Dictionary).

**Community Infrastructure Levy** - A payment made to the Council by developers to fund infrastructure that is needed to serve the development and wider area. This can include new transport schemes, community facilities, schools and green spaces.

**Core Strategy** - This is the plan that sets out the long-term spatial vision for Blackpool, the spatial objectives, and the strategic policies that will deliver the vision.

**Development Plan Document (DPD)** - Planning documents that form the Development Plan. These are subject to independent examination by a Planning Inspector before adoption.

**Examination** - Independent public examination to test the 'soundness' of a Development Plan Document and to ensure that the necessary legal requirements for its preparation have been undertaken.

**Hard-to-reach-group** - Group of local residents or individuals, who may represent a particular sector of society, who are identified by the

Council as experiencing particular barriers to participation. Additional effort may be required to ensure these individuals can contribute effectively to the planning process.

**Lancashire Minerals and Waste Local Plan** - A folder of documents produced by the Joint Authorities to guide mineral and waste related development in Lancashire.

**Local Development Document (LDD)** - The collective term for Development Plan Documents (DPDs), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)** - A project plan and timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan. It can be amended and updated as necessary.

**Localism Act** - The Localism Act has devolved greater powers to local government and neighbourhoods and given local communities more rights and powers over decisions in their area.

**Local Plan** - The collection of development plan documents setting out the overall planning strategy, policies and proposals for Blackpool.

**National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)** - The document setting out the Government's national planning requirements, policies and objectives. The NPPF is a material consideration in the preparation of planning documents and when considering planning applications.

**Neighbourhood Plan** - A duty under the Localism Act 2011 which gives authorised groups the power to prepare a development plan for their area. This plan could include general planning policies and allocations of land for new development.

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**Planning Aid** - Voluntary service provided by planners. It provides free and independent professional advice on various planning matters to individuals or groups unable to afford to pay for the full costs of such advice.

**Planning Inspectorate** - The organisation which processes planning appeals and holds examinations of DPDs, Local Plans and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

**Public consultation** - A process through which the public is informed about proposals prepared by a planning authority or developer and invited to submit comments on them.

**Site Allocation and Development Management DPD** - Document that allocates sites for specific developments/uses e.g. housing and business land. It also sets out a number of more detailed Development Management policies which are used to determine planning applications.

**Specific/Statutory Consultees** - Individuals/organisations which the Council must consult on planning matters to accord with government regulations.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** - Document that sets out the Council's approach for involving the public and other stakeholders in the preparation of planning documents and the determination of planning applications.

**Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)** - A formal process which analyses and evaluates the environmental effects of a plan or programme (carried out in conjunction with Sustainability Appraisal).

**Submission** - Submission of the final draft of a document to the Secretary of State for independent public examination by the Planning Inspectorate.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** - Supporting planning guidance related to a policy contained within a Development Plan Document.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** - The formal process which analyses and evaluates the environmental, social and economic impacts of a plan or programme.

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 This **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)** sets out how and when the community and other stakeholders will be consulted on the preparation and revision of planning documents that make up the Blackpool Local Plan and how the community will be consulted on planning applications.

1.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires the local planning authority to prepare a 'Statement of Community Involvement' which seeks to ensure the active, meaningful and continued involvement of the local community and stakeholders throughout the planning process. The Council first adopted its SCI in 2007 and we have now updated this document to comply with new legislation.

1.3 Blackpool Council believes that wide ranging community involvement in the planning of new homes, business etc and consultation on planning applications is beneficial for all parties involved, including local residents, organisations, businesses and the Council itself.

### 1.4 How will the general public benefit?

- Local services will be better able to meet local needs
- Greater community cohesion and inclusion
- More public ownership, a greater sense of democracy and active citizenship

### 1.5 What can individuals and organisations expect to achieve by getting involved?

- An ability to influence the decision making process and 'make a difference'

- An increased understanding of how policies are developed and proposals delivered
- Enhanced sense of contributing to the future of the community
- Better quality outcomes through joint working

### 1.6 Benefits to the Council include:

- Wider contributions to problem solving as local expertise, opinions and insight are brought to the planning process
- Increased support for local planning policies
- A contribution to sustainable development by enabling all members of society to be heard and to contribute to the future of their communities.

1.7 The overarching benefit in developing policies and proposals together with the community is the resolution of conflict. The planning system not only recognises the importance of participation, it also ensures that communities are engaged at the outset. This means that communities help shape policies and proposals rather than the traditional style of communities just responding to the ideas of the Council.

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## 2 Who We Consult

2.1 Planning guidance, provided by the Government, sets minimum requirements for involvement with local communities. The guidance allows local authorities to be flexible over exactly who will be consulted depending on the type of document being produced. However, there is great value going beyond the minimum standards further to get greater community involvement.

### Specific Consultation Bodies

2.2 We are required to consult a range of organisations which the Government calls 'specific consultation bodies' as defined in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. For Blackpool, these are:

- Lancashire County Council
- Fylde Borough Council
- Wyre Borough Council
- Neighbouring Parish Councils
- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- Highways Agency
- English Heritage
- Coal Authority
- United Utilities
- Homes and Communities Agency
- Marine Management Organisation
- Relevant health authorities
- Relevant electricity and gas companies
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- Lancashire Police and Crime Commissioner

2.4 In addition, the Council will also consult the following organisations on the scope of Sustainability Appraisals where relevant:

- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- English Heritage

### General Consultation Bodies

2.5 We are also required to consult 'General Consultation Bodies'. These are defined as:

- Voluntary groups, some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the Borough
- Bodies who represent interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups
- Religious groups
- Groups who represent disabled persons
- Those representing the interests of person carrying on business in the Borough.

2.6 Our own consultation database contains over 1000 groups, organisations and companies from the following categories:

- Local Members of Parliament
- Youth Groups, Schools, Colleges
- Ethnic Minority Groups
- Internal Consultees at Blackpool Council
- Disability Groups
- House Builders/Developers
- Councillors
- Religious Groups
- Local Residents Associations
- Local Businesses/Business Groups
- Planning Agents
- National & Regional Conservation/ Preservation Groups
- Older Persons Groups
- Local Conservation, Heritage & Amenity Groups
- Holiday Accommodation Providers

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- Other Local Organisations e.g. Area Forums
- Public Transport Operators

2.7 A database containing contact details of groups and individuals was compiled at the start of the Local Plan process and is continually updated as consultations take place. The database is linked to our online consultation portal which also contains comments and representation made on previous consultations. The database is open for any group or individual to register and receive notifications of future planning consultation events and contains over 1000 groups and individuals.

2.8 Interested parties wishing to be added to the consultation database should email [development.plans@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:development.plans@blackpool.gov.uk)

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## 3 Types of Community Involvement

3.1 There are various types of consultation and community involvement that the Council will use when preparing planning documents and consulting on planning applications.

3.2 The SCI was originally adopted in 2007 however there have been significant changes in the way people interact with the Council since this time. Internet usage has increased and many planning applications and consultation responses are now submitted online.

3.3 However, the Council recognises that not everyone has access to the internet. Libraries provide a free way of accessing online

information and consultations. In addition, documents will also be available in different formats, including paper, electronic and large print formats on request.

3.4 Figure 1 identifies the different levels of community involvement. This can range from the publication of information to active participation in workshops. Figure 2 sets out the various consultation methods the Council will adopt when preparing planning documents and consulting on planning applications. These will be used where appropriate taking into account the document that is being consulted on.

Figure 1: Levels of Community Involvement

<b>INFORMATION</b>	Providing information, e.g. through leaflets, council website, Twitter and Facebook
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	Consulting you on your views, e.g. through surveys, exhibitions and formal responses to the Local Plan
<b>PARTICIPATION</b>	Engaging you in workshops, where you would be more actively involved

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Figure 2: How we will consult

Consultation Method	Main Consideration and Benefits
Documents available for inspection at Council offices and local libraries	This is a minimum requirement as set out in The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The availability of these documents will be advertised by a variety of ways including email, website and letter (where appropriate).
Emails/letters to specific consultation bodies, as listed in the regulations and other general consultees (as appropriate)	<p>For the case of specific consultees this is a minimum requirement. The relevant specific consultees will be notified at the appropriate time during the preparation of planning documents.</p> <p>The Local Plan database contains details of all consultees and is regularly updated as consultation events take place. As email is the preferred means of consulting, we will not send notifications by post where a valid email address is held.</p>
Website – to be used for publishing documents & comment forms	<p>The council website plays an important role in consultation on planning applications and planning documents. It contains a large amount of information including current local plan documents including the evidence base. There is also the facility to view current and determined planning application through the planning applications search function (<a href="http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/planningapplications">www.blackpool.gov.uk/planningapplications</a>).</p> <p>You are also able to register online to be notified of planning applications in your area. Your profile determines the type of information provided and the frequency with which the information is sent. You can perform a wide range of searches including simple address or postcode based searches or more advanced spatially oriented searches such as within an electoral ward or within 500m of a specified location.</p>

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Printed media – local newspaper, Your Blackpool, leaflets and newsletters	<p>It is no longer a requirement for local authorities to advertise planning documents in the local press. However, there may be occasions when it is considered appropriate to publish a public notice in the local newspaper.</p> <p>In certain circumstances, it may be appropriate the send a press release to the Gazette in order for an article to be published.</p> <p>Your Blackpool, the Council’s newspaper is distributed to all homes and business in the Borough several times a year. We will endeavour to use Your Blackpool to inform residents of current consultations, however as Your Blackpool is only a quarterly publication; this is dependant on Your Blackpool publication dates.</p>
Posters – to be displayed in public areas such as schools and shops	<p>Going out into the community to provide information and access views - potentially reaching those who wouldn’t otherwise become involved. Posters will be used (where appropriate) to advertise forthcoming consultation events.</p>
Public exhibitions/displays	<p>Whilst this method is not appropriate to all consultations, public exhibitions can help engage the community with regards to specific areas/issues.</p>
Area Forums	<p>Contact details of the Area Forum Chairs are held on the consultation database and will be informed of all future Local Plan consultations via email. Where appropriate an information board will be displayed at the Area Forum ‘Marketplace’ and in certain circumstances it may be considered appropriate to give a presentation to the Area Forum.</p>
Meetings with selected stakeholders and key interest groups	<p>This brings together representatives to provide direct input on specific issues.</p>
The Planning Agents Forum	<p>This group provides a forum for passing on planning information and updates and canvassing professional opinion on proposed documents such as SPDs.</p>

3.5 We believe that everyone has the right to be informed and, where possible, be involved in planning. However not everyone wants to, or can, be involved all of the time. It is important

that we consider the different reasons for this and do our best to address them. Figure 3 lists the **barriers to participation** and how we might overcome them.

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Figure 3: Barriers to getting involved

Barriers to getting involved	What can the Council do about it
The cost of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure availability in a variety of public places.</li> <li>Ensure availability on the Council's internet site.</li> </ul>
Lack of time to comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Produce easily understood documents that are not repetitive or too long.</li> <li>Provide an 'easy-to-use' website.</li> <li>Provide email friendly comment forms that are easy to use</li> </ul>
Time (of meetings/activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consider evenings and weekends.</li> </ul>
Incomprehensible 'Planner' speak and jargon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of Plain English and simplification of text.</li> </ul>
Complex procedures and inability to understand matters which will affect them (e.g. young children)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide user guides on the planning system and the planning applications procedure.</li> </ul>
Perception that only objections are sought	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure those that support proposals to express their opinions.</li> </ul>
Accessibility of meeting for those with mobility or sensory difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Choose locations that meet accessibility standards where possible.</li> <li>Choose locations that provide a hearing loop where possible.</li> </ul>
Physically unable to attend meetings and non-PC literate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure detailed coverage in the local free newspaper.</li> <li>Continued use of paper comments forms.</li> <li>Contact Disabilities Information Service about reaching those people who are disabled and cannot access buildings, public transport or are unable to read or hear announcements.</li> </ul>
Accessibility of meetings to those without a car	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use of venues accessible by public transport where possible.</li> </ul>
Apathy and disinterest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Always try to relate issues, particularly strategic, to the local level.</li> <li>Target groups for consultation who do not normally take an interest.</li> </ul>
Mistrust and public cynicism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Make sure that consultation responses are fair and accurate and that full explanations are given for the decisions made.</li> <li>Present information in a way that does not suggest that decisions have already been made.</li> </ul>
Disaffected groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use outreach workers to access information.</li> </ul>

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3.6 We will, at all times, endeavour to apply a range of consultation techniques appropriate to the level of planning whilst ensuring that ‘barriers to participation’ are actively reduced using a range of methods set out in Figure 2.

3.7 The following groups have been identified as being hard to reach:

- Children and young people
- Old people
- People with disabilities
- Black and ethnic minorities
- Faith Communities
- People who live in the district but who work elsewhere
- People who work in the district but who live elsewhere

3.8 The Council endeavours to consult these groups on all planning documents it prepared where appropriate, taking account of the actions set out in Figure 3. The Council has also sought to include groups which represent hard-to-reach sectors of the community in list of general/non-statutory consultees on the planning consultation database.

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## 4 Community Involvement in the Local Plan Process

4.1 The Local Plan is made up of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). We will involve the local community in the preparation and development of each of the DPDs and SPDs that we produce.

4.2 In Chapter 3 we set out the different ways in which we will consult the community. However, not every consultation method is appropriate and this will depend on the type of document we are producing and at what stage we are at.

### Development Plan Documents

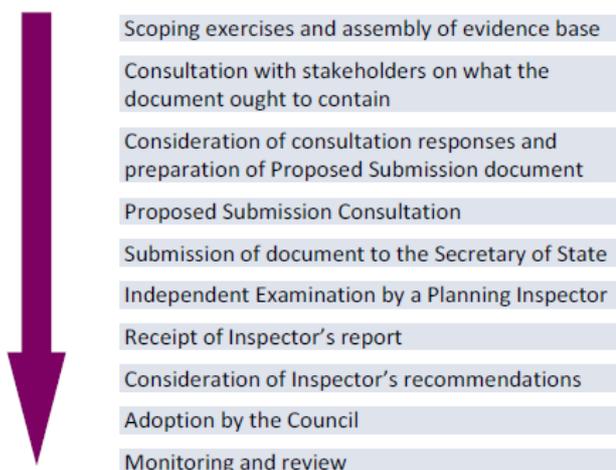
4.3 DPDs are examined by an independent inspector, have statutory planning weight and are the principle consideration against which planning applications are determined. Examples include the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Development Management Policies and Area Action Plans.

4.4 The process of preparing each Development Plan Document involves several stages (see figure 4).

4.5 A sustainability appraisal will accompany each of the DPDs at appropriate stages, with concurrent consultations. The legislation seeks stakeholder involvement in the plan making process as early as possible.

4.6 This process starts with the preparation stage, to seek comments and views on what the DPD ought to contain. The results of this consultation will inform the next stage of the DPD – the Proposed Submission.

**Figure 4: DPD Preparation Process**



4.7 Consultation takes place on the Proposed Submission DPD, prior to it being submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. However, at this time, comments can only be made in relation to the issues set out below:

4.8 **Duty to Co-operate** – the Council has a Duty to Co-operate on strategic planning issues that cross into neighbouring areas. This includes working collaboratively with neighbouring councils and other public bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly co-ordinated and clearly reflected in the DPD.

4.9 **Legal and Procedural Compliance** – the DPD will be checked to ensure it is legally compliant and has:

- been prepared in accordance with the Council's Local Development Scheme and in general compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement

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- been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal
- regard to national policy

4.10 **Soundness** – To be found sound the DPD needs to meet the following requirements as set out in paragraph 182 of the NPPF:

- Positively prepared – the plan should be prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements, including unmet requirements from neighbouring authorities where it is reasonable to do so and consistent with achieving sustainable development;
- Justified – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy, when considered against the reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence;
- Effective – the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities; and
- Consistent with national policy – the plan should enable the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in the Framework.

### Examination in Public

4.11 The purpose of the Examination in Public is to determine if the document meets the requirements set out above. A DPD must be submitted for examination, even if no representations have been received. Generally the examination will be conducted through written representations although objectors have the right to be heard if they so wish.

### Inspectors Report

4.12 Following the examination, the Inspector will issue a report of recommendations. This report is binding and the local authority must adopt the changes required by the Inspector. Once the local authority has received this report, they have two weeks to check any facts and clarify meaning. The Inspector then sends the authority his/her final report.

### Adoption

4.13 Following receipt of the Inspector's report, the Local Authority must adopt the document as soon as is practicable. The Local Authority must also:

- Prepare an adoption statement to accompany the DPD which states the date of adoption and explains how people aggrieved by the DPD can object to the High Court.
- Advertise that the document has been adopted and where it can be viewed.
- Make the DPD and adoption statement available at principal council offices and on the local planning authority's website.
- Send a copy of the adoption statement to those who have asked to be notified of the adoption of the DPD and to the Secretary of State.

### Monitoring

4.14 The Council produces monitoring information which will be available on the website. Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (amended by the Localism Act 2011) requires every Local Planning Authority to report information on progress on

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the implementation of the Local Development Scheme and the extent to which the policies set out in the local development documents are being achieved.

### Supplementary Planning Documents

4.15 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) can be used to expand policy or provide further details to policies in DPDs. The Council is expected to produce a number of SPDs to support the future Core Strategy and Site Allocations and Development Management Policies.

4.16 SPDs are not subject to the same process of submission and examination as DPDs and do not require Sustainability Appraisals where they relate to a DPD that has undergone a Sustainability Appraisal. Consultation still however, plays a major role in the production of SPDs and the same general methods of consultation will be used for SPDs as DPDs. SPDs involve at least one formal round of consultation lasting a minimum of 4 weeks in accordance with the Local Plan Regulations.

### Community Infrastructure Levy

4.17 The Community Infrastructure Levy allows local authorities to set charges which developers must pay when bringing forward new development in order to contribute to the delivery of infrastructure to support development. Blackpool Council has recently undertaken a viability assessment to determine if the charging of CIL is viable for development in Blackpool.

4.18 If a decision is taken to pursue CIL, a draft charging schedule will be published for consultation along with the appropriate available evidence on infrastructure costs, other funding sources and economic viability. It is good practice

to allow at least a six week period for consultation, and longer if the issues under consideration are particularly complex. Any person may make representations about a draft charging schedule and that person must be heard before the examiner at the Community Infrastructure Levy examination, if they have requested to be heard and the request has been made as set out in CIL regulation 21.

### Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders

4.19 Unlike the other Local Plan documents, Neighbourhood Plans (and Neighbourhood Development Orders) are taken forward by communities themselves through Town or Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Forums (where an area is non parished), with the agreement of the Council. Neighbourhood Plans can establish policies for the development of land in a neighbourhood if the majority of voters in the neighbourhood give approval; these plans must be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan documents produced by the Council and national planning policy.

4.20 Consultation procedures for Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders are set out in the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Neighbourhood Forums are required to undertake pre-submission consultation themselves as set out in the Regulations. Following submission to the Council, the Council then publishes the plan or order for formal submission consultation. This is then followed by an independent examination. If a plan is found sound, a referendum will take place of the local neighbourhood to ensure support for the plan.

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## Reporting back on consultation

4.20 The Council is committed to reporting back on the responses to consultation. Following each stage of public consultation we will:

- Give full consideration to all representations received and engage in further discussions where this will assist the Council in developing the document.
- Produce consultation reports, detailing the comments we have received and explaining how we have dealt with comments and how they have affected the development of policy, for each document at each stage of the Local Plan process. These reports will be published on the website.

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## 5 Consulting the Community on Planning Applications

### Development Management

Development Management deal with planning applications for a wide variety of developments including new houses, extensions, new shops and changes of use.

### Pre-Application Discussions

5.1 A focus of the planning system is to encourage consultation at the start of the application process to shape application and ensure a positive outcome. Pre-application discussions can confirm whether the principle of development is acceptable and to clarify the format, type and level of detail required enabling Blackpool Council to determine the application. The broad requirements for community consultation may also be discussed.

5.2 We offer a pre-application advice service (subject to a fee). Details of this are available to view on the Council's website ([www.blackpool.gov.uk/planningapplications](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/planningapplications)). Depending on the type of proposal, we may require input from other Council Officers such as Highways. The Council will remain impartial at all times during the pre-application process.

5.3 Often discussions held between the applicant and the Council are 'in confidence' because they can be commercial confidential or because applications are not at a stage where they will be submitted. General planning advice continues to be given, generally over the telephone or by email, and this does not incur a fee. The Development Management team operates a Duty Line during office hours to ensure that basic planning advice is easily accessible.

5.3 The Council will encourage applicants and developers to also discuss proposals and engage with communities. Developers will then be encouraged to submit a consultation statement with their application. At this early pre-application stage community consultation is beneficial, because:

- early consultation and problem solving can result in applications that can be quickly processed;
- there is early availability of good quality information, enabling issues and problems to be addressed up-front.
- problems can be resolved avoiding possible public objections at later stages;
- it saves developer time and resources by avoiding the need to revise proposals at an advanced stage, which in turn leads to resource savings for authorities;
- it overcomes the perceived 'closed door' approach to determining planning applications ensuring an inclusive and transparent approach; and

5.4 These are three key types of application; 'major', 'minor' and 'listed building/conservation area' applications. Figure 5 sets out the types of applications and some recommended pre-application consultation methods. It is up to the developer/applicant/agent to determine the most suitable methods for use, depending on the size, type and location of the proposal.

**Figure 5: Types of Applications and Recommended Pre-Application Consultation Methods**

Application Type	Definition	What we encourage	Appropriate consultation methods
Major	<p>Major applications consist of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ 10 or more dwellings or a site area over 0.5 hectares.</li> <li>▪ 1000 sqm or more gross floorspace commercial</li> <li>▪ 1000 sqm or more gross floorspace leisure</li> <li>▪ Minerals and Waste applications</li> </ul>	<p>Developers to canvass local opinion.</p> <p>Greater Ward Councillor awareness and involvement.</p> <p>The submission of a consultation statement setting out pre-application discussions.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Public meetings</li> <li>▪ Public exhibitions</li> <li>▪ Surgeries</li> <li>▪ Workshops</li> <li>▪ Media</li> <li>▪ Website</li> <li>▪ Leaflets</li> </ul>
Minor	<p>Minor is defined as anything that is not considered significant, most often involving domestic extensions, changes of use of properties or small infill developments.</p>	<p>Discussion of proposals with neighbours.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verbal</li> <li>▪ Letter</li> </ul>
Conservation/ listed building	<p>Any application that is listed or falls within a conservation area.</p>	<p>Consultation with Blackpool Civic Trust and the Council's Built Heritage Manager</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Verbal</li> <li>▪ Letter</li> </ul>

### Planning Application Consultation

5.6 This section sets out the way in which we will consult the community on planning applications.

5.7 There are minimum statutory requirements for public consultation on all planning applications received by the Council. These are set out in Figure 6. The Council supplements these minimum requirements for the following reasons:

- To identify disputes at an early stage and encourage refinements to be made to the proposals
- To provide a speedy and efficient service without compromising on quality
- To enable people to access the planning department on-line
- To keep objectors informed of progress and the subsequent decision.
- To allow greater accessibility to information and greater transparency of the process.

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5.8 Figure 6 sets out how we involve local communities in the applications process. We always strive to go beyond the minimum requirements for public consultation when consulting on planning applications.

5.9 In addition to the community, consultation is undertaken with various statutory and non-statutory consultees and, depending on what the application is, these will vary. For example, we would consult the Council's Highways team on an application for a new vehicular access.

5.10 For the case of applications for Prior Approval for house extensions (temporary permitted development rights<sup>2</sup> were introduced by the Government in May 2013 for single storey extensions to the rear of a dwellinghouse), the Council will notify the owners or occupiers of any adjoining properties by letter. The adjoining owners or occupiers are given 21 days to comment on the proposals and any objections have to be made in writing, online or by email.

5.11 The neighbour notification letter will include the following information:

- The address of the proposed development;
- The date the prior approval request was received and the date when the application expires;
- The dimensions of the proposed extension;
- The closing date for any comments.

5.12 For the case of applications for prior approval for changes of use of agricultural buildings to an alternative use (150-500sqm), the Council will consult the Council's Highways Team and the Environment Agency as appropriate

giving 21 days for comment. The Council will also notify the owners or occupiers of any adjoining *properties* by letter or will display a site notice on or near the land in question for no less than 21 days. The *notification letter and site notice* will include the following information:

- The address of the proposed development;
- Details of the proposed development;
- The closing date for any comments.

### How to comment

5.13 Comments may be made by anyone, regardless of whether they were consulted individually. We welcome any comments, whether in support of an application or objecting to it, although the Council can only take account of 'planning considerations'. These include matters like the impact on traffic or parking, appearance of the proposal, overlooking, environmental impacts etc. We cannot take into account matters such as devaluation of property, private disputes between neighbours, the impact of construction work and business competition.

5.14 Comments should be made in writing in the form of a letter, petition or email, or via the Council's planning applications page. The normal period allowed for making comments on planning applications is 21 days, however some consultees may be allowed a longer period in which to comment if appropriate. The results of any such consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by the Council.

5.15 Many decisions have been delegated to officers by elected members, but if the application is to be decided by the Planning Committee, any planning comments are drawn to their attention before a decision is made. The Committee agendas are published on the Council website in advance of the meeting. One objector and one supporter have the opportunity to

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<sup>2</sup> Temporary PD rights end 30<sup>th</sup> May 2016

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address the Councillors at the committee meeting. Requests need to be made by noon, one working day prior to the meeting.

### Letting people know the outcome

5.16 It is not possible to respond individually to all comments received. Once a decision is made, the decision notice can be viewed on the Council’s website. If it has been approved, the notice will show any conditions that may have been attached to the permission.

5.17 In terms of rights to appeal, only the applicant can appeal against refusal of planning permission. There is no third party right of appeal. If an appeal is made, neighbours will be notified and will have the opportunity to make further representations to the Planning Inspectorate dealing with the appeal.

5.18 Lists of decisions and appeals are available via the Council’s website.

Figure 6: Development Management Consultation Methods

	Statutory Minimum Requirements	Additional engagement over and above minimum requirements
Pre-application consultation	None required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer a formal pre-application service and encourage applicants to seek advice prior to submitting an application.</li> <li>Regular meeting of the planning agents group (architects and developers etc- who regularly submit applications)</li> <li>Guidance set out in Supplementary Planning Guidance and Supplementary Planning Documents</li> </ul>
Submission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Major, controversial applications in the public interest (e.g. conservation/ listed building): Site notice and neighbour notification, publication on the weekly list (website) and press notice.</li> <li>Other applications: Site notice or neighbour notification.</li> <li>Depending on the nature of the application, consult with appropriate statutory consultees.</li> <li>Re-notify neighbours if revisions will result in a significant change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All applications are published on the weekly list (website) and either neighbour notification letters are sent out or a site notice is posted</li> <li>Applicants will be informed of the case officer and how to contact them on submission of an application.</li> <li>Applications can be submitted and progress tracked on line. For those without access to the internet, paper applications and case officers available to advise</li> <li>View consultees on the website</li> <li>Submission of comment forms on line</li> <li>View entire application on Council website including the site plans and drawings</li> <li>It is possible for members of the public to register via the website to be notified electronically of all development proposals in their area</li> </ul>

## Statement of Community Involvement

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### Decision-making

- Planning Committee agendas and minutes available on website
- Objectors/applicants or agents can speak for 5 minutes at Planning Committee, subject to prior approval
- Decision notices available to view on the Council website
- View committee reports on the Council website
- View list of applications on forthcoming committee

## **6 Review of the SCI**

6.1 The SCI will be kept under review, and revised where necessary, in the event of changes to legislation; significant changes in terms of the types of groups we wish to engaged or different techniques of consultation are to be used.

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## **For more information...**

**For up-to-date information on progress and opportunities to get involved in consultation, please see the Council's website:**

**[www.blackpool.gov.uk/planning](http://www.blackpool.gov.uk/planning)**

**Information can also be obtained from:**

**Development Plans Team,**

**Blackpool Council**

**PO Box 17**

**Corporation Street**

**Blackpool**

**FY1 1LZ**

**Email: [development.plans@blackpool.gov.uk](mailto:development.plans@blackpool.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 01253 477477**

**To ensure services provided by Blackpool Council are accessible, this document is available upon request in alternative formats such as Braille, large print, audiocassette and other languages.**

**The Planning Aid service provided by the Royal Town Planning Institute also offers advice on planning matters and can be accessed through <http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk/>**