

# **Revised Statement of Community Involvement in Planning**

**March 2013**

## Revised Statement of Community Involvement in Planning 2013

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## INTRODUCTION

### 1. What is the Statement of Community Involvement in Planning?

- 1.1 This draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement in Planning sets out how the Council intends to achieve continuous community involvement with local and statutory stakeholders in the preparation of development plan documents and in carrying out the development management function for the assessment of planning applications. The Council is required to produce a Statement of Community Involvement in order to meet the requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The preparation of the Statement of Community Involvement is a legal requirement and once adopted, the Council will comply with these requirements for community engagement on planning matters.
- 1.2 Effective and widespread involvement of communities in the planning process is a key objective of the planning system. Involvement of communities in the emerging Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 (formerly the Core Strategy) preparation process helps to ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the process, that they understand it, that they are able to contribute to it and that they can influence its content.
- 1.3 There are many benefits of community consultation for the Council, developers, landowners, organisations and individuals.

Benefits of community consultation for the Council are:

- more informed and involved communities
- less delays in the determination of planning applications
- a reduction in the number of objections to policies and plans
- the strengthening of the delivery of plans and proposals
- the greater sense of public ownership and support for the Council's activities

Benefits of community consultation for organisations and individuals are:

- the ability to influence the decision-making process
- greater public ownership and sense of democracy
- local services that meet local needs and priorities
- a better understanding of the planning system
- the ability for organisations and individuals to influence the concept and design of development schemes

Benefits of community consultation for developers and landowners are:

- the opportunity for the developers to explain their proposal
- less delays in determining applications
- more certainty about the outcome
- the creation of sustainable and acceptable developments
- a reduction in the number of objections for proposed developments

## **2. How the SCI links with other plans and strategies**

### **Local Strategic Partnership**

- 2.1. One Swindon Partnership formerly known as Swindon's Local Strategic Partnership was formed in 2003 and is made up of representatives from the public sector, voluntary groups, the community and local businesses. The Partnership aims to bring together the organisations and groups that are involved in making decisions that affect the future well-being of people in Swindon.
- 2.2. The One Swindon Partnership will be consulted upon the content of Swindon's Development Plan Documents (DPDs) whenever possible and the Council will ensure that development plans are closely integrated with the Community Strategy.

### **The Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2030**

- 2.3. The Sustainable Community Strategy: A Shared Vision for Swindon, 2008-2030 was prepared by Swindon's Local Strategic Partnership in 2008 and has a set of goals and actions which they, in representing the residential, business, statutory and voluntary interests of an area, wish to promote.
- 2.4. The Community Strategy has six major themes that are linked and are dependent on one another for successful delivery of the overall vision.

The six main themes are:

1. Swindon: A destination of choice
  2. All Swindon people are benefiting from our growing economy
  3. We have safeguarded our environment for future generations
  4. A healthy, caring supportive place
  5. A place where high aspirations are supported by superb education provision for all ages
  6. A place where local people can have real influence and where they feel safe
- 2.5. There is a requirement for development plans, in particular the emerging Local Plan to demonstrate how it is delivering the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **One Swindon**

- 2.6. One Swindon will guide the planning and budget decisions of the Council and other members of the One Swindon Partnership over the period 2011-2015. It sets out the priorities for Swindon and more importantly signals a shift in the way that the Council will need to work to make Swindon the best place it can be. The following priorities for One Swindon have been developed:

- I like where I live
- We can all benefit from a growing economy and better town centre
- Everyone is enjoying sports, leisure and cultural opportunities
- Living independently, protected from harm, leading healthy lives and making a positive contribution.

### **The Swindon Compact**

- 2.7. The Swindon Compact has been developed to establish collaborative working between the voluntary and community sector. The Compact sets out a framework which reinforces and enhances the working relationship between the voluntary and community sector based on shared values and mutual respect. All the organisations that have signed up to the Swindon Compact are committed to resolving any difficulties together and in an equitable manner.
- 2.8. The Swindon Compact has a series of agreements that all parties have agreed to abide by. The agreements which are relevant to planning and community consultation are:
- that the Council will consult with the voluntary and community sector on issues that affect it and take account of their views in any decisions. This will include allowing sufficient time for the Council to carry out consultation with the community
  - that the Council will involve the voluntary and community sector in developing policies and strategies that affect the sector or its services
  - all partners agree to promote and support the wide and active participation of all Swindon people in local democratic consultation and participation processes

## Section 1: Development Plan Documents

### 3. Consultation and Engagement

- 3.1. Swindon Council is committed to actively involving and consulting the local community and all other relevant stakeholders in the planning process from an early stage.
- 3.2. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) specifies three types of organisation that the Council should consult when preparing development plans. These organisations are the 'specific consultation bodies'<sup>1</sup>, the 'general consultation bodies' and the 'other consultation bodies'.
- 3.3. The specific consultation bodies are organisations responsible for services, utilities and infrastructure provision, Parish and Town Councils in and adjacent to the Borough and major land owners. The following specific consultation bodies will be consulted upon all development plans:
- The Environment Agency
  - English Heritage
  - Natural England
  - Network Rail
  - Highways Agency
  - any relevant authority, any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority such as:
    - a local planning authority
    - a county council
    - a parish or town council
    - a police authority
  - any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106 (3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003
  - any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local authority
  - any of the bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the local authority:
    - primary care trust
    - person to whom a license has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986
    - sewage undertaker (incl. Thames Water as the principle undertaker within the Borough)
    - water undertaker (incl. Thames Water as the principle undertaker within the Borough)
  - the Homes and Communities Agency

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<sup>1</sup> The specific consultation bodies, the general consultation bodies and the other consultation bodies are listed in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended, 2011).

- 3.4. The general consultation bodies are also listed in the regulations. The regulations identify five types of bodies as general consultation bodies that relate to voluntary organisations representing certain groups within the community. The general consultation bodies are:
- voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the council's area
  - bodies which represent the interests of:
    - different ethnic or national groups in the local authority's area
    - different religious groups in the local authority's area
    - disabled people in the local authority's area
    - people carrying on business in the local authority's area
- 3.5. Depending on the plan being produced, it may be appropriate to consult with other agencies and organisations in addition to those identified as specific or general consultation bodies. The following list provides some examples, but it is not exhaustive.
- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
  - Age UK
  - Environmental groups, for example Campaign to Protect Rural England and Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
  - Home Builders Federation
  - Sport England
  - Canal and River Trust (formerly British Waterways)
  - The Woodland Trust
  - Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service

### **Duty to Cooperate**

- 3.6. The Localism Act (2011) provides a new statutory duty for local planning authorities to co-operate with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies in the preparation of development plans.
- 3.7. In assessing the fulfilment of this Duty, a report has been prepared to set out how the Council has undertaken this duty with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies in relation to the Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026.

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

- 3.8. The Localism Act (2011) introduced new neighbourhood planning provisions for which the Regulations came into force on 6th April 2012. The Localism Act, together with these regulations, places various duties and responsibilities upon the Council in relation to neighbourhood planning.
- 3.9. The Council recognises the value of neighbourhood planning in identifying and articulating local community needs and priorities, improving service delivery and informing policy and strategy within Swindon. Thus, a draft Neighbourhood Planning Protocol for Swindon



has been prepared outlining the level of support that the Council can offer and was made available for consultation in October 2012.

- 3.10. The protocol will assist Parish/Town Councils and Neighbourhood Forums to prepare Neighbourhood Plans and to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. The Neighbourhood Plan should be in conformity with the strategic objectives of the emerging Local Plan.

### **Swindon Borough Councillors**

- 3.11. Swindon Borough Council Members are a vital link between local communities and the Council. As elected representatives they are often the first point of contact that residents have on local planning issues.
- 3.12. The Swindon Borough Council Members are essential to the Council's understanding of the views and issues raised by the community.
- 3.13. Officers of the Borough Council will keep the Swindon Borough Council Members informed of progress of development plans, especially during key consultation stages. The Council will publish information on consultation events in the 'Members Bulletin' and where necessary provide Member training.

### **Cabinet**

- 3.14. Any decision relating to the approval of or variation to the Council's development plans is considered by the Borough Council's Cabinet who will then make recommendations to the full Council of the Borough for final approval.
- 3.15. All Cabinet meetings are open to the press and public (subject to various legislative exclusions) and agendas and minutes are available on the Council's website. There is an opportunity for the public to ask questions of the Cabinet.

### **Parish and Town Councils**

- 3.16. Parish and Town Councils are an important part of the structure of local democracy and have a vital role in acting on behalf of the communities they represent. Parish and Town Councils are statutory consultation bodies and are to be informed of all planning applications in their area. Parish and Town Councils are able to make representations on development proposals, produce Parish or Town Plans, village design statements and similar documents.
- 3.17. Parish and Town Councils provide one of the main means of feeding information to local communities. The Borough Council provide training programmes for parish councillors and clerks to inform them of the

production of planning documents and the development management process. The Borough Council's Planning Officers regularly attend Parish Clerk Forums in order to disseminate relevant information.

- 3.18. The Parish and Town Councils and the Council have agreed on a Parish Charter that sets out how they aim to work together. This Charter is the result of discussions to establish a closer way of working and to confirm existing good practice. This is currently under review.

### **Locality Forums**

- 3.19. As part of the re-organisation of the Borough Council, seven localities have been created in the Borough. The Localities provide an opportunity for the Locality Leads to support the Elected Members, Parish and Town Councils, statutory public service partners, for example the police, and members of the community.
- 3.20. The Localities can provide a valuable way of engaging with the public. Every locality holds open meetings throughout the year, and the work of the locality leads also offers other opportunities for the planning team to engage with local residents.

### **Existing Community Groups**

- 3.21. Swindon has many existing community groups, such as residents associations, that will be ideal forums to debate key specific issues or area-based concerns. Chairs and members will be invited to get involved in the early stages of producing spatial planning policy documents and through inviting the community groups to make representations on development planning documents.

### **Community Planning Forum**

- 3.22. The Planning Community Forum was set up in December 2005 to provide an opportunity for a range of organisations and individuals to engage with the planning department. The Forum comprises of stakeholders representing both voluntary and community sectors active in Swindon.

### **Landowners, developers and businesses**

- 3.23. Landowners, developers and businesses include local, regional, national and international companies who are located or have an interest in the Borough. In order to secure continued economic growth it is important to understand the needs of the business community. The timely involvement of businesses is also crucial in helping to secure the infrastructure necessary for the delivery of the development plans, especially the emerging Local Plan. Therefore in addition to the general consultation programme, the Borough Council will seek to further engage through:

- The Swindon Development Delivery Panel which meets quarterly to discuss development issues and seek to overcome barriers to delivery
- Early engagement with developers and infrastructure providers to discuss potential development sites

### **Hard to reach**

- 3.24. The Council considers that there are a number of groups that may be hard to reach.<sup>2</sup> However the Council recognises that it is important to acknowledge that attitudinal aspects are a contributing factor to people being harder to reach. The Council accepts that it is these attitudes that can be even harder to overcome than demographic aspects.
- 3.25. The Council is keen to address this matter and to tap into a potentially valuable knowledge base of local people that would benefit the development plan process. Early identification of these hard to reach groups is very important if they are to be actively involved in a process where they are likely to be affected by the outcome. The Council also has to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.26. The groups that have been identified as being hard to reach within the planning process in Swindon includes the following:
- Black and ethnic minority communities
  - Children and young people
  - Parents
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual communities
  - Members of the transgender community
  - Those who do not speak English as their first language
  - Older residents of Swindon
  - Disabled people
  - Residents in Swindon's more deprived housing areas
  - People who live in rural communities
  - People who feel disconnected from the Council
- 3.27. Significant progress has already been made in the identification of hard to reach groups by liaising and sharing information with other service areas within the Council (where appropriate and under the restrictions placed on the Council by the Data Protection Act, 1998). Many of these groups are likely to have an interest in the development plan process. However, the identification of additional 'hard to reach groups is an evolutionary process and the Council is committed to its aim of making the planning system in Swindon Borough as inclusive and

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<sup>2</sup> The term 'Hard to reach' is used in this document. The Council is not implying that there is a similarity within the distinct groups. As a result a number of different approaches will be used.

representative as possible by being receptive to new sources of information and consultation techniques

### **The planning record of interested parties**

- 3.28. The Council has a 'planning record of interested parties' who will be the first point of reference that the Council will use when determining which groups should be consulted in relation to each development plan.
- 3.29. If you think that you are already on the planning record of interested parties' and would like to check or amend your details, or alternatively wish to be added or removed please contact us:

Planning Department  
Swindon Borough Council  
5th Floor, Wat Tyler House West  
Beckhampton Street  
Swindon  
SN1 2JH

Email: [forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk](mailto:forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01793 466513 (during normal office hours)

### **How Information about you will be used**

- 3.30. The information held on the 'planning record of interested parties' is only used for the purposes of the Development Plan Document consultation. The information will not be shared with any other departments of the council unless it is for the purpose of the consultation.

## **4. Methods of Consultation**

- 4.1. The Council must undertake a minimum level of community involvement as laid down by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended). The Council intends to meet and exceed these minimum requirements to effectively involve the community and to encourage effective participation in the planning system where possible.
- 4.2. The Council is required to do the following minimum levels of community consultation on development plans:
- provide copies of all planning documents and the supporting evidence base on the Council's website
  - make development plans available for inspection, at the Council Office and at such other places within their area as the local

planning authority consider appropriate, during normal office hours, and

- advertise the consultation in local newspapers, stating when and where the relevant material can be inspected, how copies of the relevant material may be obtained, the closing date for any comments and where the comments should be sent

### **Methods**

- 4.3. The Council will use a wide range of methods to engage with the community. The techniques will be described and the strengths and weakness of each consultation methods assessed and displayed in a table is in Appendix 3. Appendix 4 provides further information on engaging with 'hard to reach' communities.

### **Resources**

- 4.4. Effective community involvement requires time and resources for undertaking the consultation activities, making good use of 'the collected information' and feeding the results back into the community. Moreover community consultation is an integral part of the planning process. It is essential that, throughout the preparation of development plans and planning applications, the views of the community and/or individuals are taken into consideration.
- 4.5. The Council will coordinate consultation efforts with other departments within the Council where practical, and will phase consultation on various planning documents to run at the same time to limit 'consultation fatigue' and to maximise the Council's resources.

### **Proportionality**

- 4.6. The Council has to be realistic as to what it can do if development plans are to be prepared in a cost effective and speedy manner. Community consultation must be proportionate to the nature of the plans being prepared, the stage reached in plan making and the impact on the wider community.

### **Timeliness**

- 4.7. Consultation will be encouraged at times when it can make a difference to the shaping of a development plan or a planning decision. Adequate time will be provided for response to both formal and informal consultation. Whenever possible we will aim to exceed the minimum statutory consultation period of six weeks. The Council regularly allows a minimum of eight weeks for development plan documents and advance notice will be given on the Council's website of forthcoming consultation events.

### **Local Press**

- 4.8. Advertisements will be placed in newspapers on the day the consultation period commences. The Council will use the Swindon Advertiser as its principal newspaper for advertisements, although other newspapers such as the Wiltshire Gazette and Herald may also be used when a wider circulation is necessary, for example during minerals and waste consultation.

#### **Hard copy documents**

- 4.9. Printed copies of development plans will be available for inspection at Council Offices, public libraries and at the Council's One Stop Shop. The Council will make the document available to purchase for a fee and a postage charge.
- 4.10. The Council will provide information on CD for Parish and Town Councils and for community groups where appropriate. The information can be viewed and distributed as necessary to the wider community.

#### **Letter and email**

- 4.11. Every individual, organisation and business on the 'planning register of interested parties' will receive either a letter or an email informing them of the consultation period. If you currently receive information by post and would prefer information by email, please contact the Council.

#### **Council website**

- 4.12. The Council will provide information on the planning pages of the Borough Council's website ([www.swindon.gov.uk](http://www.swindon.gov.uk)). The website allows direct access to up to date information on the Development Plan Documents. The Council's website will provide access to representation forms during the consultation period. The Council will also make use of community-based websites to publicise planning documents.

#### **Pre-arranged meetings**

- 4.13. The Council will endeavour to attend Parish Council, Town Council and community group meetings to discuss development plan documents during consultation periods. The use of interpreters may be appropriate, when engaging with hard to reach groups, to ensure that more people can get involved.

#### **Public exhibitions**

- 4.14. The Council will aim to provide, where required, non-staffed public displays for the public to view. Public exhibitions will be advertised in advance to provide local residents and communities with the opportunity to attend.

### **Drop-in coffee mornings**

- 4.15. Drop in coffee mornings are an effective way to encourage people to get involved in informed one to ones, where appropriate. The location and scale of coffee mornings will depend on the type and stage of the development plan.

### **Summary leaflets**

- 4.16. The Council will produce a summary leaflet of the main points of the development plan document where appropriate.

### **Questionnaires and surveys**

- 4.17. The Council may use questionnaires in the earlier stages of development plan preparation to gather the communities' views during the issues and options stages and the preferred options stages.

### **Engagement with Hard to Reach Groups**

#### Black and ethnic minority communities

- 4.18. The planning department will work collaboratively with the Council's Community and Engagement Officers and through attending pre-arranged community events in more diverse areas. Due consideration will be given to religious festivals that are held throughout the year.

#### Young People

- 4.19. Where opportunities arise, the Council will attend Youth Partnership Meetings and engage with schools and colleges.

#### Parents

- 4.20. The Council will seek to hold coffee mornings in different locations, for example, church or village halls and to use the toy library to engage parents with younger children to attend.

#### People who do not speak English as their first language

- 4.21. The Council may use Engagement Officers and Council translators whenever possible to engage with more members of the community.

#### Older people

- 4.22. Workshops and events will be arranged during daylight hours and in accessible locations close to transport routes.

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- 4.23. The Council will provide information on all development plans on the Council's website along with clear signposting which will identify who to contact for information.

### Disabled people and Carers

- 4.24. The Council will hold consultation events in locations with good disabled access, disabled facilities and close to public transport networks.
- 4.25. The Council will use the facilities offered by existing charities, for example, the local Royal National Institute of Blind People who provide the STAN talking newspaper for people with no vision or limited vision. The Council will provide copies of consultation materials in large print, Braille, and audio format on request.
- 4.26. The Council will hold meetings at suitable hours to ensure carers have time to prepare themselves and the person they care for ready.

### Residents in Swindon's more deprived housing areas

- 4.27. Established community forums and community newsletters will be used to inform the residents of forthcoming development plan documents. The Council will work collaboratively with the Community Engagement Officers to attend pre-arranged events where higher numbers are guaranteed, for example, 'Family days' or community fairs.

### Residents in the Borough's Rural Areas

- 4.28. Use of parish magazines, local shops, village halls and faith communities to publicise planning related matters. Meetings in parish/village halls as appropriate.

### Other

- 4.29. Other means of making people aware of planning related issues may include the display of posters and leaflets at post offices, doctors' surgeries, large supermarkets, large and key employers and leisure centres within the Borough.



## **5.0. Community Involvement**

### **What are Development Plan Documents?**

- 5.1. The Planning Act 2004 (as amended) requires that local planning authorities to prepare Development Plan Documents that will guide future planning of development within the Borough.
- 5.2. The emerging Local Plan is an important development plan that sets out the overall long-term strategic vision for the future of Swindon. It will set out how the Council will respond to local priorities, meet the challenges of the future and identify the broad locations, scale and types of development needed with the supporting infrastructure.
- 5.3. The production of the Local Plan should follow the principles of community involvement and should be:
  - appropriate to the level of planning
  - from the outset, leading to a sense of ownership of local policy decisions
  - continuous and part of an on-going programme, not a one off event, with clearly articulated opportunities for continuing involvement
  - transparent and accessible, whilst using methods appropriate to the communities concerned; and
  - planned as an integral part of the process for making plans

### **Pre-production**

- 5.4. The first stage in the process is to gather factual evidence. The Council will gather baseline evidence on key aspects of the social, economic and environmental characteristics of Swindon. This is to ensure that all planning documents are founded on a 'sound' evidence base.
- 5.5. The Council will undertake surveys and seek informal discussions with consultation bodies to develop and keep up to date the evidence base and to ensure that it remains robust.

### **Production stage**

- 5.6. The evidence collected during the pre-production stage will be used by the Council to develop a number of options along with the strengths and weakness. The Council will produce a document that will be used to gather views and ideas on specific issues and to explore a range of realistic options for development in the Borough.
- 5.7. The Council will undertake a round of formal consultation on its 'Issues and Options' report (please note, a number of reports could be produced to encourage debate and discussion) to inform the next stage of the planning document preparation process for a minimum of six weeks.

## **Publication**

- 5.8. The Council will use the evidence base and the comments received at the first two stages to produce a 'publication document'. The Borough Council has to publish its pre- submission development plan and invite comments on it for a minimum of six weeks before submission of the document to the Secretary of State for examination. Only representations made at this stage will be considered at the independent examination.
- 5.9. This minimum six week period will allow organisations and individuals the opportunity to make representations. The representations should comment on the justification of the document, the effectiveness of the document, the consistency of the document and if the document is legally compliant.
- 5.10. After the consultation period has closed, the Council will consider the representations made and if issues are raised at this stage that suggests the development plan is unsound, the Council will consider making changes to the proposed submission document. Depending upon the scale of the changes the Council may re-consult on the changes for a minimum of six weeks.

## **Submission**

- 5.11. After the Council has reviewed the representations and made any necessary changes to the document, it will be submitted to the Secretary of State for formal examination. The Council will be required to submit a summary of the main issues raised during the consultation period and how the Council has taken these representations into account.
- 5.12. The Council must make the development plan available during the examination period in the same way that the proposed submission document was made available to statutory consultation bodies and general consultation bodies. Everybody who made representations will be notified that the development plan is going to the Secretary of State for examination.
- 5.13. The independent Inspector will consider the representations made on the development plan. The Inspector may invite people to make oral representations. At the proposed submission stage there is an opportunity for individuals and organisations to make a case to speak at the examination period at the discretion of the Planning Inspector.
- 5.14. The Inspector will consider the 'soundness' of the planning document in terms of its evidence base, its Sustainability Appraisal and its conformity with the SCI. The Inspector will consider the representations received and the Council's response to the representations.

- 5.15. On receipt of the Inspector's report, if found sound by the inspector, the Council will adopt the document, (with amendments if necessary), as soon as possible, unless directed by the Secretary of State to the contrary.
- 5.16. The Council will e-mail or write to everyone who made representations and inform them of the formal adoption of the DPD. The Council will also display the adoption letter on its website and a notice will be displayed in the local newspaper.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents**

- 5.17. Supplementary Planning Documents expand upon and give greater detail to the policies in the main development plans. They can provide greater detail on specific topics such as affordable housing or provide detail on design for a particular area.
- 5.18. Supplementary Planning Documents are not examined by an independent Planning Inspector however they are still subject to a process of consultation and engagement with relevant parties.

### **Pre-production**

- 5.19. The first stage in this process is to gather factual evidence, including undertaking surveys and initiating informal discussions with relevant bodies.

### **Production Stage**

- 5.20. Formal consultation will take place on the proposed format and content of the Supplementary Planning Document. The Council will produce a draft document for public participation and will allow a period of consultation of no less than four weeks and up to the maximum permitted six weeks for this stage to give people the opportunity to comment on the draft document.

### **Adoption**

- 5.21. Before a local planning authority formally adopts an Supplementary Planning Documents, the Council must:
- make copies of the Supplementary Planning Document available for people to view
  - provide details of when and how representations must be made
  - prepare a separate statement which sets out, a summary of the main issues raised by the consultation and how those issues have been addressed in the Supplementary Planning Document
  - send a copy to the specific consultation bodies and to the general consultation bodies

- send out a copy of the consultation statement and any supporting documents
- provide details of how the Council believes the Supplementary Planning Document affects each specific consultation body

5.22. The Council will email or write to everyone who has made representations and inform them of the formal adoption of the Supplementary Planning Document. The Council will display a copy of the adoption notice on the Council website and a notice will be displayed in the local newspaper.

### **Waste and Minerals Development Framework**

- 5.23. Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council jointly prepare Minerals and Waste Development Framework, which cover the geographical areas of Wiltshire County and Swindon Borough. The Framework consists of three respective documents; Core Strategy, Development Control Policies and Site Allocations as well as a Proposals Map.
- 5.24. Swindon Borough Council liaises with Wiltshire Council at the earliest opportunity to identify the key planning issues and decide upon likely consultation techniques. Consideration will also be given to Wiltshire Council's SCI when consulting on these documents.
- 5.25. Minerals such as sharp sand, gravel working and soft sands are recognised as an important national resource. The waste produced by households, industry and commerce all needs to be dealt with safely, through recycling, composting, treating and depositing it in landfill sites. The Minerals and Waste Plans will determine the best approach or mix of approaches to identify potential sites. The period of consultation for planning documents will be between 6-8 weeks, depending on the size, timing and nature of the document.
- 5.26. The mineral extraction and waste development site specific allocations consultation will be different from other DPD consultation as it is important to ensure a balance between town and county needs and local interest.
- 5.27. For this reason, while the wider community of organisations and individuals will kept updated by the Council's website and by email, an equal focus of effort will be put into involving the individual communities affected by site allocation proposals. The following particular procedures are proposed:
- initial letters to organisations and individuals with a special interest could be followed up with community meetings if appropriate
  - the Council will work closely with Wiltshire Council, the Parish and Town Councils and community groups to disperse information to reach the widest cross section of the community possible

- the Council will update the website accordingly
- the Council will ensure that all stakeholders who express an interest are kept informed by email and are able to take an active part in decision making
- the Council will provide feedback on the progress of the document by updating the Councils website

### **Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 5.28. The Council must carry out a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on each submitted development plan. Supplementary Planning Documents are not subject to sustainability appraisal except in cases where the appraisal of the main document has not covered all the issues.
- 5.29. The purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal serves to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a development plan or a SPD from the start of evidence gathering to ensure that the document is 'sound'.
- 5.30. The Sustainability Appraisal report should:
- take a long term view of the expected social, economic and environmental effects of a Plan
  - ensure that sustainability objectives are turned into sustainable planning policies
  - reflect global, national, regional and local concerns
  - form an integral part of the development plan and Supplementary Planning Document (where appropriate)
- 5.31. The Sustainability Appraisal is used to identify any adverse effects of the proposals as early as possible. These can then be addressed by modifying the proposals, through developing mitigation measures or by considering an entirely different option. It should be noted that the SA is not necessarily intended to be achievable, and may only be aspirational.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)**

- 5.32. A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is intended to increase the consideration of environmental issues during decision making related to strategic documents such as development plan documents. The Assessment identifies the significant environmental effects that are likely to result from the implementation of the plan.
- 5.33. The findings of the assessment will be published in a report that is consulted upon. Any issues that are raised must be considered and resolved before planning permission will be granted

## **6.0 How to make representations**

- 6.0. This section will explain how you can make representations on development plans and supplementary planning documents during the formal public consultation periods and how the Council will feed back information.
- 6.1. The Council encourages individuals and organisations to make any comments on development plans in writing. Any comments made over the telephone or to an officer cannot be submitted as representations on the document.
- 6.2. The Council's preferred method of submitting representations is by using the online representation form. The form will be on the Council's website along with a link to the document being consulted on and guidance notes on how to fill in the form. Representations and comments can also be made by email or by letter.
- 6.3. The Council will accept petitions, standardised letters and 'flyers' however they should seek to address specific points in the documents being consulted upon.

### **Consultation Report**

- 6.4. Following consultation, a paper copy of all the consultation responses will be made available to view in the Council's reception at Wat Tyler House. To allow for due consideration, a summary of consultation responses will be made available on the website at the next stage in the consultation.

## **Section 2: The Development Management Process**

### **7.0 Community involvement in planning applications**

- 7.0. Community involvement regarding the processing of planning applications includes notifying and engaging both the individual and the wider community. The Borough Council expects and understands that decisions on planning applications should be made with the involvement of the community. Finding out what members of the public think about new development is a fundamental part of the Council's planning service. Consequently, the Council's aim is to, 'involve the community throughout the planning application process.'

#### **What are planning applications?**

- 7.1. The local planning authority has adopted and publicised procedures to be followed to ensure publicity of applications for planning permission. These meet and exceed the statutory requirements and are proportionate to the development proposed. The planning authority deals with a huge range of proposals, from a small conservatory to a major town expansion. Adopted protocols cover all types of planning applications and can be found on the Council's website at <http://www.swindon.gov.uk/developmentmanagement>.
- 7.2. This document however will deal with the consultation, notification, and community involvement in respect of planning applications; exceeding the statutory requirements.

#### **Pre-application discussions**

- 7.3. Swindon Borough Council welcomes and encourages discussions before an individual, developer or a landowner submits a planning application to the planning department.
- 7.4. To ensure that the Council is able to sustain and improve current levels of service, the Council has decided to charge for some pre-planning application advice, in addition to the fees payable for the submission of applications.
- 7.5. There are considerable benefits in seeking advice before making an application, for example:
- it gives the developer an opportunity to understand how the Council's policies will be applied to a development
  - it can identify at an early stage where there is a need for specialist input, for example applications involving listed buildings, trees, protected landscapes
  - it may lead to a reduction in time spent by professional advisors in working up proposals

- it may indicate that a proposal is unacceptable, saving the developer the cost of pursuing a formal application
- it can ensure that an application is complete and comprehensive and to a satisfactory standard, avoiding rejection at the validation stage or early refusal of permission because of inadequate or insufficient information

### **Pre-application consultation**

- 7.6. The Council encourages all applicants, developers and land owners to discuss their proposals with the local community before submitting planning applications. Pre-application consultation could be undertaken with any or all of the following: neighbours, local residents, elected members, schools and colleges, local parish or Town Councils and other interested groups.
- 7.7. Any pre-application consultations undertaken by a developer are in addition to the actions taken by the Council upon receipt of a planning application.
- 7.8. Proposals that have an impact with its immediate neighbours will be subject to a more exclusive consultation regime, appropriate to the scheme and its impact. In general, the more significant the proposal, the more extensive the consultation that would be expected.
- 7.9. The Localism Act introduced the requirement for developers to consult with communities before submitting large scale planning applications. The Localism Act requires developers to:
- consult with communities and make arrangements for publicity before submitting certain types of planning application and having regard to any advice given by the Council
  - consider any responses that they have received from the community before finalising the application and submitting the proposals
  - provide evidence of how they have consulted the local community, what comments they have received and how they have taken these comments into account

### **Record of community involvement**

- 7.10. A developer has to provide a 'Record of Community Involvement' to the Council when submitting any large scale application, setting out those steps taken to engage the local community. The Record should indicate:
- the types of community involvement undertaken
  - a summary of responses received from the community



- minutes of public meetings
- the main points of objections raised by the community
- details of how the developer has addressed the issues raised by the community
- details of the amendments made to the proposed development as a result of the communities responses

7.11. When considering development proposals that are of a large scale, or are likely to be of some controversy there are, potentially, more Council service areas, more external organisations and community groups and more members of the public who need to be involved. Consequently, the greater the involvement, the more complex and lengthy the planning application process can become and, therefore, emphasis will be placed on resolving any issues at the pre-application stage.

### **Masterplans, framework plans and design codes**

7.12. For large development proposals, the Council encourages the use of masterplans, framework plans and design codes. These documents are often written after outline planning permission is granted but before the details of exactly what will be built are decided; they are usually in response to a condition of an outline planning application. In order to engage the community effectively, the Council will undertake public consultation when discharging such planning conditions. The nature of the public consultation will be appropriate to the scale of the development concerned and Council resources available.

### **Publication of planning applications**

7.13. The Council carries out consultations and publicises planning applications in accordance with at least the minimum statutory requirements, including those set out in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2010, and in some cases in excess of the minimum requirements. The methods of publicity undertaken when the Council receives a planning application are set out below.

### **Methods of consultation**

#### **Parish and Town Councils**

- 7.14. If a proposal is located within a parished area of the Borough, Parish and Town Councils receive notification and details of any planning applications submitted in their boundaries. The Parish and Town Councils will be given twenty one days to make comments.
- 7.15. Most Parish and Town Councils have some form of “planning committee” who will consider the applications and make comments to

the Borough Council. Where an application is located on the boundary with another Parish or Town Council, we will consult the adjoining Council as well.

### **Online planning register**

- 7.16. The Council offers public access to an online planning register, where the progress of planning applications can be monitored. The online planning register allows individuals to view schemes and to make comments online.
- 7.17. The Council publishes a weekly planning list on a Wednesday of each week which is available online and is emailed to Ward Councillors, Parish and Town Councils, various consultation bodies, certain local civic and amenity groups and the local newspaper.

### **Neighbourhood notification cards**

- 7.18. Swindon Council has a neighbourhood notification system in place to ensure that all adjacent neighbours to a proposed development have the opportunity to have their say. The Council will send out a notification card within three days of the Council validating the application.
- 7.19. The notification cards will set out the details of the proposal, the timescale, contact details for the case officer (including a direct dial telephone number), the place where the plans can be inspected and an indication of planning considerations. It also explains how to make comments on the application and time scales for making comments (normally 21 days from the date on the card).
- 7.20. There will be occasions when, at the discretion of the case officer, wider neighbour notification will be carried out. This will be particularly appropriate in those cases where the proposed development is of interest to adjacent neighbours in the vicinity of the application site.
- 7.21. If other than minor amendments are made to the application, neighbours will be re-notified and allowed a further 7 days for comment, although this will depend on Committee meeting dates and the circumstances of the particular case.

### **Site notices and newspaper articles**

- 7.22. Site notices and notices published in the local newspaper are, in certain circumstances, required by law. For example, planning applications in a Conservation Area, works to a listed building, significant applications and any 'departures' from the development plan. In such circumstances a newspaper advertisement will be displayed in the Swindon Advertiser.

### **Other Key Consultation bodies**

- 7.23. The following specific consultation bodies will be consulted upon as appropriate:
- The Environment Agency
  - English Heritage
  - Natural England
  - Network Rail
  - Highways Agency
  - any relevant authority, any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority such as:
    - a local planning authority
    - a county council
    - a parish or town council
    - a police authority
  - any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106 (3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003
  - any person who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the area of the local authority
  - any of the bodies from the following list who are exercising functions in any part of the area of the local authority:
    - primary care trust
    - person to whom a license has been granted under Section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986
    - sewage undertaker (incl. Thames Water as the principle undertaker within the Borough)
    - water undertaker (incl. Thames Water as the principle undertaker within the Borough)
  - the Homes and Communities Agency
  - the Woodland Trust (where ancient woodlands may be impacted upon)
  - Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership
  - Ministry of Defence
  - DEFRA
  - Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service (incl. Their Planning Gain Team)

### **How can I comment on planning applications?**

- 7.24. The Council welcomes the views of the public, which must be in writing and can be made sent by post or by e-mail. Anonymous representations cannot be taken into consideration. It should be noted that 'abusive' comments or comments with inappropriate language will not be accepted.
- 7.25. The Council will take all written comments into consideration when determining the application. The Council does not acknowledge or enter into individual correspondence on specific applications. However it does acknowledge that there may be instances when it is

reasonable to do so, particularly with Parish/Town Councils and the main consultation bodies. The Council has a duty to make timely decisions and cannot reasonably delay doing so when sufficient information is available to enable proposals to be determined.

- 7.26. The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 allows all comments to be seen by the public, including the applicant(s). Letters of comment will be displayed on the Council website during the determination of the application. Before publishing on the website the Council will take all reasonable steps to remove personal data. The Council can only take into account 'material planning considerations' when considering comments.

### **Planning Committee**

- 7.27. The Planning Committee is responsible for making decisions on applications that will have a significant effect on the Borough, for example, large housing schemes or retail development. The Planning Committee is responsible for making decisions on applications:
- that have been made by the Borough Council, for example, to redevelop a building that the Council own
  - that an Elected Member, Parish/Town Council or Planning Officer has requested to be considered by committee
  - employee or when the applicant is related to an Elected Member or Council employee
  - that have had a large number of objections
  - mineral extraction or waste disposal unless in respect of small-scale works which are ancillary to an existing mineral working or waste disposal facility
  - that have been submitted with an Environmental Impact Statement
  - which represent a significant departure from the Local Plan
  - which, by their scale, nature or location, have implications which extend beyond the limits of the area in which they are situated
- 7.28. There is an opportunity for interested persons to address the Planning Committee before the decision is made. This can include supporters or objectors to a planning application including third parties, applicants, agents, Parish or Town Councils, local residents and representatives of local organisations.
- 7.29. The agenda for the Planning Committee is published 5 working days before the meeting and is available, for a small charge, from the Council. It is also available on the Council's website, along with the contact details of the relevant Elected Members. Each Parish Council in the area receives a copy of the Planning Committee agenda.
- 7.30. The minutes of a Planning Committee meeting are public documents which are available on the Council's website. Similarly, the planning application file is also a public document and any member of the

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public or any organisation can view the contents of the file on demand or on the Council's website.

## Appendix 1: Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Development Plan Documents (DPD)	DPDs will be spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination. They will have 'development plan' status.
Local Plan	The emerging Swindon Borough Local Plan 2026 is the main planning policy document for shaping the development and growth of the Borough over the next fifteen years, and provides the policy framework to deliver sustainable growth. The Local Plan is often referred to as the 'development plan'.
Planning Inspectorate (PINS)	A Government agency responsible for scheduling independent examinations. The planning inspectors who sit on independent examinations are appointed and employed by PINS.
Site Specific Allocations	This document is one of the Local development Framework documents and contains policies that apply to specific sites, locations or areas.
Stakeholder	A stakeholder is anyone who is interested in, or may be affected by the planning proposals that have been presented for consideration.
Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	Local planning authorities are bound by legislation to appraise the degree to which their plans and policies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The process of a Sustainability Appraisal is similar to Strategic Environmental Assessment but is broader in context, examining the effects of plans and policies on a range of social, economic and environmental factors. To comply with Government policy, the Borough Council will produce a Sustainability Appraisal that incorporates a Strategic Environmental Assessment of its Local Development Documents.

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Strategic Environmental Assessment	Local planning authorities must comply with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC which requires a high level, strategic assessment of Development Plan Documents and, where appropriate, Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other programmes (for example, the Local Transport Plan) that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.
Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	Whilst not having 'development plan' status, Supplementary Planning Documents can form an important part of the Local Development Framework of an area. They can be used to expand policy or provide further detail to policies in Development Plan Documents. Community involvement will be important in preparing Supplementary Planning Documents, but they will not be subject to independent examination.
Sustainable Community Strategy	The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is prepared by local strategic partnerships (LSPs) as a set of goals and actions which they, in representing the residential, business, statutory and voluntary interests of an area, wish to promote. The Strategy should inform the Local Plan and act as an umbrella for all other strategies devised for the area.
Swindon Compact	A partnership agreement between statutory agencies and membership organisations from the voluntary and community sector. It sets out a number of principles within which the members of the Compact agree to work.

**Appendix 2: Contacts for further information**

Contact	Type of Contact	Description	Email/Address	Telephone no.
<b>Planning Policy</b>	Swindon Borough Council	The Officers in this team are responsible for preparing Development Plan Documents (DPDs) for Swindon. This team drafts the planning documents that are then subject to public consultation. The consultation must follow the guidance set out within this SCI document.	Forward Planning inbox:  Planning Policy <a href="mailto:www.forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk">www.forwardplanning@swindon.gov.uk</a>	01793 466513 (during normal office hours)
			DPD Webpage on the Council's website:  <a href="http://www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/ep-planning/ep-planning-localdev/Pages/ep-planning-localdev.aspx">www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/ep-planning/ep-planning-localdev/Pages/ep-planning-localdev.aspx</a>	
<b>Development Management</b>	Swindon Borough Council	Officers in this team process and assess planning applications in accordance with the Councils' adopted planning policy documents as well as National policy documents, site-specific issues, relevant consultation responses and other material planning	Development Management pages on the Council's website:  <a href="http://www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/epplanning/Pages/ep-planning-developmentcontrol.aspx">www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/epplanning/Pages/ep-planning-developmentcontrol.aspx</a>	01793 445500 (during normal office hours)  Please note that Swindon Borough Council



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Contact	Type of Contact	Description	Email/Address	Telephone no.
		considerations. The planning officers are also available to discuss planning applications with the public.		charges for pre-application advice. Further information on the charges can be viewed on the Council's website.
<b>Master Planning and Design</b>	Swindon Borough Council	The officers in this team are responsible for assisting the delivery of very large developments through the planning system, providing planning advice to the Borough Council on major strategic developments and negotiating and resolving potential issues raised by planning officers or the community. The team also contributes towards the preparation of planning policy documents.		
<b>Conservation (Part of Master Planning)</b>	Swindon Borough Council	The Conservation Officers are responsible for ensuring that local character is strengthened and is	Conservation pages on the Council's website:	

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Contact	Type of Contact	Description	Email/Address	Telephone no.
		not diminished by change. This team will assist the Council on making decisions on applications, providing pre-application advice and producing planning guidance and design guidance.	<a href="http://www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/epplanning/Pages/ep-planning-conservationareas.aspx">www.swindon.gov.uk/ep/epplanning/Pages/ep-planning-conservationareas.aspx</a>	
<b>Design (Part of Master Planning)</b>	Swindon Borough Council	The Design Officers consider the arrangement, appearance and functionality of towns and cities, and in particular the shaping and uses of urban public space. The officers provide guidance on planning applications on new developments and change of uses.		
<b>Department for Communities and Local Government</b>	Government Website	The Department for Communities and Local Government provides information on the following categories: National Planning Policy Frameworks, Development Plan Documents, the English Planning System, planning policy information and information on emerging legislation.	<a href="http://www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/">www.communities.gov.uk/corporate/</a>	

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Contact	Type of Contact	Description	Email/Address	Telephone no.
<b>The Planning Inspectorate</b>	Government Website	The Planning Inspectorate is responsible for processing planning and enforcement appeals and holding examinations into development plan documents. The Inspectorate deal with a wide variety of other planning related casework including listed building consent appeals, advertisement appeals, and reporting on planning applications called in for decision by the Department for Communities and Local Government.	<a href="http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/planninginspectorate">www.planningportal.gov.uk/planning/appeals/planninginspectorate</a>	
			Address: Temple Quay House 2 The Square Temple Quay Bristol BS1 6PN	
<b>Planning Aid</b>	Independent Charity	<p>Planning Aid provides two main services to individuals and community groups, these are:</p> <p>A Planning Advice Line where all callers can receive 15 minutes of free, independent and professional advice. In addition some callers may</p>	<p>Website:</p> <p><a href="http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice/pa-paid.html">www.rtpi.org.uk/planning-advice/pa-paid.html</a></p>	<p>National Planning Advice Line:</p> <p>0330 1239244</p>

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Contact	Type of Contact	Description	Email/Address	Telephone no.
		<p>be eligible for further assistance from a professional volunteer.</p> <p>A neighbourhood planning service will be provided to support individuals and communities in gaining knowledge about the planning system and how they can be involved and how they can prepare neighbourhood plans (RTPI, 2011).</p>		
<b>The Planning Portal</b>	Government Website	<p>The Department for Communities and Local Government has provided the Planning Portal for anyone, individuals, communities or professionals, wanting to find out about the planning system in England and Wales.</p> <p>The website provides details on submitting planning applications, your local planning authority, Development Plan Documents and emerging guidance from the Government.</p>	<p>Website:</p> <p><a href="http://www.planningportal.gov.uk">www.planningportal.gov.uk</a></p>	

**Appendix 3: Methods of community consultation during the preparation of Development Planning Documents and in assessing planning applications and the strengths and weaknesses of each approach**

<b>Consultation Method</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Cost and Staffing resources</b>	<b>When we may use it</b>
<b>Documents available at the Council Office and libraries.</b>  <b>Documents available to purchase.</b>	Hard copies of documents will be made available for inspection at the Council Offices and libraries.	This method is effective for those people who do not have access to the internet.	<p>The documents are only available to view during open hours.</p> <p>People with mobility issues might find it hard to access the documents.</p>	There is a cost associated with printing documents.	<p>Development Plan Documents</p> <p>Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Documents</p>
<b>Letters to statutory bodies and non-statutory bodies</b>	Statutory and non-statutory bodies, with no email address, will receive a letter.	Letters ensure that information is received by statutory consultation bodies.	The information is restricted to those bodies that have their contact and address information on the consultation database.	There is a cost associated with posting letters and documents.	<p>Development Plan Documents</p> <p>Statement of Community Involvement</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Documents</p>

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<b>Emails to statutory bodies and non-statutory bodies</b>	Statutory and non-statutory bodies with an email address will receive an email, where requested.	Emails ensure that information is received by statutory consultation bodies.	The information is restricted to those bodies that have their contact and address information on the consultation database.	There is a low cost associated with the distribution of emails.	Development Plan Documents  Statement of Community Involvement  Supplementary Planning Documents
<b>Informal consultation with Councillors</b>	Councillors can hold surgeries and feed back to the Council about issues that the community have raised.	This provides an opportunity to understand issues at the community level.	Local residents may not be able to attend a surgery.	There is a low cost associated with surgeries.	Development Plan Documents  Statement of Community Involvement  Supplementary Planning Documents
<b>Questionnaires</b>	The Council may use questionnaires to obtain views during the early stages of preparing planning policy documents	The community has the opportunity to get involved.	Response rates vary	There is a cost associated with preparing and posting questionnaires.	Development Plan Documents  Supplementary Planning Documents

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<b>CDs</b>	The Council may provide information on CD for the benefit of communities.	This allows for easy distribution of information which is relevant to communities.	Access to computers varies amongst communities.	There is a cost associated with producing CDs.	Development Plan Documents
<b>Website</b>	The Council will provide information on the planning pages of the Borough Council's website.	The website allows instant access to up to date information on all planning related documents.	Access to computers varies amongst communities.	There is a low cost associated with maintaining information on the website.	All documents
<b>Existing public, open or community meetings</b>	Where opportunities arise and where appropriate, the Council will endeavour to disseminate information at public/community meetings	Useful for informing communities and provides an opportunity for feedback.	Local residents may not be able to attend.	There are low level costs associated with meetings; however there is a time and resource implication for staff.	Development Plan Documents
<b>Public exhibits and displays</b>	The Council will aim to provide, where required, non-staffed public displays for the	Allows a broad range of people to view the information.	The information should be clear and succinct and provide contact details for Planning,	There is a cost associated with producing display boards.	Development Plan Documents

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	public to view.		where appropriate.		
<b>Summary leaflets</b>	The Council will aim to produce a summary leaflet to accompany consultation on development plan documents, where appropriate.	The summary leaflet can provide an introduction to the main issues and be used to inform a large number of people.  They can target specific groups	The summary leaflet only provides a limited amount of information.  Non English speakers or blind and partially sighted people can be excluded.	There is a cost associated with designing and printing summary leaflets.	Development Plan Documents
<b>Written responses and representations</b>	The Council will use its website to allow people to make representations online.	This provides an opportunity to make comment upon planning documents.	There are members of the community who find the representation forms hard to understand.  Too much planning jargon can put people off responding.	There is an associated time and cost implication with summarising and responding to representations received as part of the development plan process.	Development Plan Documents  Supplementary Planning Documents  Statement of Community Involvement  Planning applications
<b>Public Access (online planning</b>	The Council will display planning applications on the	The online planning register can be viewed twenty four	Not everyone has internet access.	The associated time and cost implications are	Planning applications.



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<b>register)</b>	Council's online planning register	hours a day and comments can be made online.		low.	
<b>Local media</b>	The Council will, where required, publicise in the local newspaper planning and related applications and consultation on development plan documents	This will serve to notify a wide range of people. This provides the opportunity for communities to get involved in the planning process.	Communities do not necessarily purchase the local newspaper or read public notices.  Non-English speakers and partially sighted people may be excluded.	There is a cost implication with advertising in the local newspaper.	Development Plan Documents  Planning applications
<b>Site notices</b>	Planning applications may also be publicised by a site notice which is on or close to the site.	Local residents will be made aware of proposals in their areas.	Site notices are not always read by local residents.	The associated time and cost implications are low.	Planning applications.
<b>Notification cards</b>	The Council aims to send out a notification card within three days of the Council validating a planning application.	Local residents will be made aware of proposals in their areas.	Only the neighbouring properties receive notification cards	The associated time and cost implications are low.	Planning applications

#### **Appendix 4: Guidance on engaging with Hard to Reach Groups**

There are many groups in society that are difficult to engage with and whose views are often underrepresented. There are many barriers such as age, culture, geographical isolation and language. The Council has identified a number of groups that are 'hard to reach' or 'seldom heard' during community consultation events. Please note that this group is neither inclusive nor exclusive, however reflects commonly recognised groups within the community, these groups are:

- The Black and Ethnic Minority communities
- Children and young people
- Parents
- Lesbian, gay and bisexual communities
- Members of the transgender community
- Those who do not speak English as their first language
- Older residents of Swindon
- Disabled people
- Residents in Swindon's more deprived housing areas
- People who live in rural communities
- People who feel disconnected from the Council

Significant progress has already been made in the identification of hard to reach groups by liaising and sharing information with other service areas within the Council (where appropriate, under the restrictions placed on the Council by the Data Protection Act, 1998). Many of these groups are likely to have an interest in the DPD process. However, the identification of additional 'hard to reach groups' is an evolutionary process and the Council is committed to its aim of making the planning system in Swindon Borough as inclusive and representative as possible. We will monitor the extent to which we are succeeding in involving the groups identified above and review our methods on a regular basis.

There are many reasons why these groups are hard to reach or seldom heard there are many issues including:

- people having less spare time or other demands on their time
- people who have difficulty understanding written or spoken English
- people who have mobility issues
- people or groups who are socially or culturally isolated from society
- groups or people who feel suspicious of the organisation that is consulting them
- people who are geographically isolated
- people with long term illnesses

The Council has limited resources available for consultation however the Council will attempt to engage and facilitate participation with hard to reach communities by using different techniques whenever appropriate:

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- ensuring that meetings are not held during major religious festivals whenever this is possible
- ensuring that Officers do not use stereotypes, assumptions or appear patronising or discriminatory
- collaborative working with the Swindon Equality Advisory Forum and Swindon Equality Task Group
- providing information on forthcoming consultations on the Council's website
- going into schools and colleges to get the ideas of young people, whenever this is possible
- holding coffee mornings or meetings at the schools , nurseries or libraries
- holding meetings during the day, in the evening and at weekends
- using a sans serif typeface for example, Arial , on posters and consultation documents
- writing documents in plain English
- avoiding the use of italicised fonts
- production of easily understood summary leaflets
- avoiding using text over a background image in publicity material
- holding community events in venues close to public transport links
- Venues with disability facilities
- producing consultation documents in large print, audio tape and braille upon request
- keeping costs of attending down to encourage more people to attend
- attending Parish or Town meetings
- advertising information on Parish or Town Council websites or noticeboards
- send publicity materials to places of worship, community meeting places and in places where other local communities meet
- engaging with people in situations and environments that they are familiar with. This can help to break down barriers and establish relationships between officers and communities