

Revised North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement

SYNOPSIS

This report seeks Member’s approval for the adoption of the revised North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) by Corby Borough Council, which will guide the consultation of the Local Plan as well as on planning applications. The report also sets out the consultation arrangements for the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby.

1. Background

- 1.1 All planning authorities are required to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) setting out how they will consult and engage with people over the preparation of development plan documents as well as on planning applications. The original North Northamptonshire SCI was adopted by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee (JPC) in 2006; this was subsequently updated in 2013. Corby Borough Council adopted the updated SCI on 8 January 2014 in relation to its responsibilities.
- 1.2 Under the development plan regulations that were in force in 2006, SCIs were considered to be Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which were consequently required to be prepared in accordance with the regulations and subject to an independent examination. As a joint DPD the SCI was included in the North Northamptonshire Local Development Scheme, and was adopted by the JPC. Changes to the development plan regulations meant that SCIs are no longer considered as DPDs, and do not have to be submitted for examination, and there is no longer a prescribed process for preparation. As a consequence of these changes, the JPC no longer has the authority to adopt the SCI other than in so far as it relates to the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and other joint plans. The updated SCI will therefore, also need to be agreed and adopted by the partner Local Planning Authorities (LPAs), including Corby Borough Council. The preparation of a joint SCI covering North Northamptonshire does, however, alleviate the need for Corby Borough Council to prepare and consult on an individual borough wide document.

2. Revised SCI

- 2.1 The revised SCI has been prepared by the Joint Planning & Delivery Unit (JPDU) in consultation with officers of the partner local planning authorities. It has been updated to reflect key changes since the previous iteration in 2013. A summary of key changes since the previous SCI are detailed in table 1.

Table 1: Key Changes compared to the 2013 SCI

Additional text in Section 1 to explain that The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 introduced a new requirement to review local plans and Statements of Community Involvement at least every 5 years from adoption.

Guidance on the Neighbourhood Plan process is now set out in Chapter 5 of the revised SCI reflecting the requirement that authorities should set out in their SCIs their policies for giving advice or assistance to neighbourhood planning groups and their policies involving communities and other interested parties in the preliminary stages of plan making.

Following consultation on the draft SCI agreed to clarify in more detail the consultation requirements at different stages according to latest guidance at para. 4.19: “*The Planning Practice Guidance states that there is considerable flexibility for local planning authorities in how they carry out the initial stages of local plan production,*

<i>provided they comply with the specific requirements in regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012, on consultation. This includes notifying consultation bodies/persons of the subject of the proposed local plan and inviting them to make representations to the local planning authority about what a local plan with that subject ought to contain. However the latter stages are more formally guided in that local planning authorities must make available each of the proposed submission documents that they intend to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for examination to enable representations to come forward that can be considered at examination.”</i>
Following consultation on the draft SCI further text included in Section 5 to clarify at what stages of Neighbourhood Plan preparation consultation will take place and who should be consulted.
Councils now having to take into consideration bank holidays when considering consultation period lengths.
The need for Strategic Planning Authorities to produce a Statement of Common Ground as part of the Duty to Cooperate.
Change wording included to para 4.6 to ensure that early engagement with communities on local plan allocations is undertaken. Examples given e.g. site notices and social media.
The inclusion of General Data Protection Regulations compliancy in relation to consultation databases.
Other minor changes to reflect comments received during the SCI consultation.

- 2.2 The SCI does not prescribe consultation requirements beyond Local Plans and planning applications. This allows the Local Planning Authorities to be flexible in relation to consultations on other documents such as Supplementary Planning Documents.
- 2.3 The revised SCI is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. The National Planning Practice Guidance on Plan Making clarifies that the revised SCI does not have to be subject to public consultation before it can be adopted by the JPC and by the partner LPAs. However, following discussions with the partner authorities, it was considered to be beneficial to undertake focused consultation on the document to seek wider stakeholder input and ensure buy in. Therefore a consultation was undertaken by the JPDU for a 6 week period which closed 13 June 2019, with details of the consultation also available through Corby Borough Council’s website. All comments received have been collated by the JPDU and reported back to the JPC on 25 July, alongside the SCI where the elements relating to joint development plan documents were formally adopted. The partner LPAs will in turn need to adopt their elements of the SCI. Further revisions of the SCI may be needed subject to progress with the unitary authorities and to reflect further changes of national planning policy when they arise.

3. Part 2 Local Plan for Corby – Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Consultation

- 3.1 Public consultation on the Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Part 2 Local Plan for Corby has commenced in accordance with the 2013 SCI and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Consultation is also consistent with the revised SCI as demonstrated in paragraphs 3.2 – 3.33 below.

The Local Plan process

- 3.2 The SCI emphasises that it is particularly important to keep the public and other stakeholders informed about evidence gathering and survey work in support of the Local Plan. All supporting information relating to the Part 2 Local Plan has been made available on the council’s website (as described in paragraph 3.24) and, in line with the SCI, this has included the publication of documents forming part of the evidence base when they were completed rather than waiting for specific consultation stages. In addition, updates to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) have been regularly published on the council’s website to

keep stakeholders informed of the latest position in regard to the timings of the key stages of the Plan review.

- 3.3 In line with the SCI, the Council recognises that 'hard to reach groups' may not have access to a computer; in such cases hard copies of documents may be viewed at local inspection points (as described in paragraph 3.25) and can be made available on request and written representations will still be accepted. The use of press releases and posters has been used to seek local publicity for those not online. As the plan directly affects local communities, planning officers have taken the opportunity of offering to attend meetings of any Town and Parish Councils and/or Community Associations if requested to do so. Forums and combined meetings are encouraged where plans affect a number of communities in order to make the most efficient use of resources.
- 3.4 Specifically an officer from the Local Plans team attended meetings of the Rural Area Forum on 21 March and 18 July. At the March meeting the Group received a presentation on the Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) stage of the Part 2 Local Plan where a number of key changes to policy were outlined as compared to the previous (Emerging Draft Options) stage of the Plan. At the July meeting the timetable for the remainder of the process was outlined and hard copies of documents were distributed to each Parish representative, along with details of the local consultation events by way of posters to be displayed locally. An officer from the Local Plans team gave a similar presentation on the content of the Plan at the meeting of the Neighbourhood Association Chair's Group on 13 June. A follow-up pack was posted out to each chair, which included a copy of the Plan and details of how to respond to the consultation, along with posters detailing the consultation events to be displayed locally.

Who will be consulted on Local Plans?

- 3.5 The SCI notes that the Councils have a long history of engagement with local residents, Parish and Town councils, businesses, stakeholders, community groups, voluntary organisations and others in preparing Local Plans. These make up an extensive consultation database.
- 3.6 Corby Borough Council has a dedicated consultation database to which anyone can be added in order to receive information about consultation on the Part 2 Local Plan. Notification of those on the relevant consultation database is the main basis of communicating consultation information with interested parties (see paragraph 3.13). The use of the Council's website and other measures such as the local press to undertake consultation ensures the emphasis is on early engagement with communities. In this regard details of the Part 2 Local Plan Publication Draft consultation appeared in the Evening Telegraph on 1 August, prior to the start of the formal consultation period.
- 3.7 The SCI notes the importance of ensuring that the public are made aware of potential local plan allocation sites set out in draft plans. In addition to this information being available through the methods mentioned above, the Council has made specific provision for engaging with the specific communities that could be effected by such an allocation; this has been done through producing and displaying site notices for land allocated for housing, employment and town centre regeneration opportunity sites adjacent to each site proposed for allocation in the Part 2 Local Plan.

The Data Protection Act 2018

- 3.8 The SCI notes that the 2018 Data Protection Act¹ comprehensively updated legislations with regards to the handing and treatment of personal data. This, and associated secondary legislation (Data Protection Regulations 2018), have implications for public consultations, for both planning applications and the development plan. Future consultations and the management of consultee databases must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of this legislation.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

- 3.9 Those providing comments in response to previous versions of the Part 2 Local Plan have been added to the consultation database, unless they had requested not to be included. As of May 2018 it was made a lawful requirement through new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for councils to gain consent from those on consultation databases to continue holding their personal information. Corby Borough Council has a privacy notice which sets out how personal data will be held and used. This was included within the Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Part 2 Local Plan, the statutory press notice, along with the Part 2 Local Plan pages of the Council's website.
- 3.10 To comply with the requirements everyone on the Local Plans database was contacted in March 2018, just prior to the GDPR becoming law, seeking their consent to retain contact details for use for further consultations in relation to the Local Plan and related planning consultations.

Engagement with consultation bodies

- 3.11 Consultation with certain consultees is a statutory requirement, whereas others are discretionary. There are two main groups: specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies. Specific consultation bodies include government agencies, utility providers and other local authorities, which the Council are required to consult on Local Plans. General consultation bodies primarily relate to interest groups, which are considered for consultation as appropriate.
- 3.12 Table 1, taken from the SCI, sets out the consultees to be consulted on key stages of the Part 2 Local Plan in line with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations. The Council should engage with those listed as a minimum at each consultation stage. Interested parties or individuals can be added to the list of consultees if they wish to be notified of consultations and in turn can request to be removed from said list in light of new GDPR regulations (as described in paragraphs 3.10-3.11). At the time of writing Corby's consultation database contains details of over 800 consultees.
- 3.13 All 800 contacts on the Local Plan database, which includes the organisations listed in Table 2, have been kept informed at every stage in the process of reviewing the Part 2 Local Plan and invited to respond. On 12 July an email was sent out to each contact giving notice of the publication of the Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Part 2 Local Plan for Corby. The email included links to the consultation documents and details of how to respond.

Table 2: Engagement at Consultation Stage for Local Plans

Audience targeted	Who this means
Specific consultation bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency • Historic England • Natural England • Network Rail • Highways England • Local authorities, parish councils and policing body in or adjoining the planning authority area • Fire and Rescue • Communication operators/facility owners (e.g. mobile phones) • Electricity, gas, sewerage and water companies • Homes England • The National Health Service • South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership

	(SEMLEP) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Civil Aviation Authority
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General consultation bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary/community/local charitable bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area • Bodies which represent the interests of the elderly in the authority's area • Local schools in the authority's area • Bodies representing racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area • Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area • Bodies representing disabled persons in the authority's area • Gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the authority's area • Bodies representing business in the area- i.e. Local Enterprise Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce • Landowners and developers with interests in the authority's area as well as agents that may represent these • Residents groups in the local authority area • Neighbourhood Planning Groups/Forums
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Duty to Cooperate

- 3.14 The SCI reflects the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 which introduced the 'duty to cooperate', whereby LPAs are required to work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies in preparing the development plan for their area. A number of issues, such as transportation, housing provision, strategic infrastructure projects, flood risk and waste management, have implications across Council boundaries and local councils and other public bodies are required to work jointly on strategic matters of this nature. These bodies are identified in table 2 below.
- 3.15 The duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree. But LPAs should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination. In order to demonstrate on-going joint working strategic plan making authorities are required to prepare and maintain statements of common ground documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These need to be produced using an approach set out in national guidance and will be made publicly available.
- 3.16 The Part 2 Local Plan for Corby is not a strategic planning document. As such the Council is not obliged to produce Statement(s) of Common Ground, which are instead produced as part of the process for reviewing the JCS (the Part 1 Local Plan). The Council must however produce a Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate, which outlines how the authority has engaged with the bodies listed in Table 3. This can be found at: https://www.corby.gov.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Duty%20to%20Cooperate%20Statement%20of%20Compliance_0.pdf and will be used to support targeted consultation with the Duty to Cooperate bodies during the consultation period.

Table 3 *The Statutory bodies for Duty to Cooperate*

The Environment Agency
Historic England
Natural England
The Civil Aviation Authority

Homes England
The National Health Service
The Office of Rail Regulations
Transport Authority
Highways England
South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership
Northamptonshire County Council
Adjoining local authorities
Adjoining County Councils

Reaching everyone

- 3.17 In line with the SCI Corby Borough Council appreciates that there are some groups who have been traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises. Corby Borough Council is attempting to directly liaise with these 'hard to reach' groups through targeted engagement.
- 3.18 The Council will be holding drop-in events where anyone can come and discuss the proposals in more detail with the Local Plan team, and find out how to submit representations. These will be held on:
- Saturday 10 August at Corby Cube Reception Area, from 11am to 3pm
 - Wednesday 14 August at Oakley Vale Community Centre, from 1pm to 5pm
 - Friday 16 August at Gretton Village Hall, from 3pm to 8pm
 - Monday 19 August at Corby Cube Reception Area, from 1pm to 5pm
 - Tuesday 20 August at Weldon Village Hall, from 3pm to 8pm
 - Thursday 22 August at Cottingham and Middleton Village Hall Annex, from 3pm to 8pm
- 3.19 Prior to the exhibitions, posters detailing the consultation and including details of each event were distributed to all Parish Councils/Community Associations in the Borough, who have been encouraged to display these at prominent points to generate local publicity and encourage attendance at the drop-in sessions.
- 3.20 In line with the SCI Corby Borough Council is committed to eliminating any forms of discrimination, ensuring that the impacts of the services provided and policies produced are minimised. Some plans or planning documents may affect certain communities differently and more significantly than others. Such impacts may need to be subjected to an equality impact assessment to identify any negative or differential impacts. These should be mitigated if they cannot be avoided. All planning policy documents will be screened to establish if an equality impact assessment is required.
- 3.21 Equality questionnaires have been completed for each topic section within the Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Part 2 Local Plan. This is an iterative process in that it feeds into the development of the planning policies in the Local Plan and this is then reflected in updated versions of the Equality Questionnaire. The Questionnaires concluded that no negative impacts were identified that would result from any of the policies within the Plan and as a result a full impact assessment was not required. The Equalities Questionnaires can be downloaded at <https://www.corby.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/plan-making/part-2-local-plan-corby>

Consultation periods

- 3.22 The SCI advises that all consultation will be for a minimum of six weeks, unless legislation states otherwise. Where possible advance notice will be given ahead of statutory consultation periods to allow additional time, including over key holiday periods.
- 3.23 Therefore, the period for submission of representations on the Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Part 2 Local Plan will run for six weeks in accordance with the SCI and national regulations between Monday 5 August 2019 and Monday 16 September 2019 at 5pm.

Availability of documents

- 3.24 The SCI advises that all consultation documents and supporting material will be made available in electronic format and online representations should be encouraged. Prior to the commencement of the statutory consultation period all documents relating to Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Part 2 Local Plan have been made available on borough council's website at <https://www.corby.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/plan-making/part-2-local-plan-corby> from 12 July and can also be emailed on request. This advanced notification of the consultation was provided during July to allow additional time during the summer holidays in accordance with the SCI. Previous stages of consultation and background work are available from the same page for clarity and ease of access. A link is provided to the Council's consultation portal which is the preferred method of receiving representations: <https://consult.corby.gov.uk>
- 3.25 Hard copies of all relevant statutory documents have been made available within the local inspection points; they may be viewed during normal opening times at the Central and Danesholme libraries and in the reception areas of the borough council. The hard copy documents include the Part 2 Local Plan Publication Draft, and A1 size copies of the Policies Map. Hard copies of consultation documents can be sent on request to specific and general consultation bodies or hard to reach groups who do not have access to a computer. A charge to cover costs may be made for other requests.
- 3.26 Two news articles promoted the consultation on the Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Part 2 Local Plan. The first was issued on 18 July giving advanced notice of the consultation period and details of how to inspect the documents for the reasons outlined in paragraph 3.24 above. A second press release was issued at the start of the formal consultation period on 5 August. A statutory notice was published in the Evening Telegraph on 1 August. Site notices were posted in the Borough two weeks prior to the commencement of the consultation. A large poster giving details of the consultation and the drop-in events is being displayed outside the Cube from 1 August throughout the duration of the consultation.
- 3.27 The SCI notes the increased usage of social media to inform the public about each stage of the consultation process. Corby Borough Council's twitter account will be used to alert residents to the Local Plan consultation as it commences and will give details of each public consultation event on the day. Parish and Neighbourhood Groups are encouraged to use any local presence on Twitter and Facebook to increase awareness of the consultation in general and local drop-in events in particular.

Consultation stages

- 3.28 Planning Practice Guidance formally guides LPAs in how they should carry out the production of a local plan, particularly in its latter stages. LPAs must make available each of the proposed submission documents that they intend to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for examination to enable representations to come forward that can be considered at examination.
- 3.29 The SCI notes that when preparing local plans, the local authorities may carry out more extensive consultation than required by the regulations to ensure that on-going feedback can be obtained during the development of the Local Plan.
- 3.30 In preparing the Part 2 Local Plan the Council has strived to go beyond the minimum required by legislation to ensure buy in from key stakeholders, particularly where they share responsibility for implementing the policies it contains. For example, the Council kept in close

contact with statutory agencies who were again asked for their views between the Emerging and Publication Draft versions of the Plan. Regular meetings were also held with neighbouring authorities and the JPDU throughout the process, particularly on matters relating to housing land supply and design. Further details can be found in the Statement of Compliance with the Duty to Cooperate at <https://www.corby.gov.uk/home/planning-and-building-control/planning-policy/plan-making/part-2-local-plan-corby>

Dealing with the conclusions from the consultation

- 3.31 The revised SCI states that once a consultation period is over, all representations will be collated and a report prepared summarising the main issues raised and recommending how these should be addressed. This will include identifying if and how the “emerging” plan should be amended in the light of the representations.
- 3.32 In line with this requirement a Statement of publicity and consultation has been prepared to accompany the Publication Draft Local Plan. This sets out the consultation undertaken for the previous (Emerging Draft) iteration of the Plan, the nature of each response received and how the main issues have been addressed in the Publication Draft Plan.
- 3.33 A similar Statement will be prepared following the close of the current consultation regarding the responses received on the Publication Draft Plan. This report will be considered by the Local Plan Committee towards the end of the calendar year. Members of the public can speak for a set time provided they request to do so in advance of the meeting.

4. Options to be considered (if any)

- 4.1 The alternative would be not to adopt the SCI. However, this would leave the Council open to challenge that the legal requirements have not been met in the preparation of the Part 2 Local Plan, specifically the requirement to consult on the Plan in accordance with the SCI and obligations set out in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017, the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

5. Issues to be taken into account:-

Policy Priorities

The SCI supports the development of the Local Plan and other planning policy documents and the processing of planning applications. The successful application of planning policies helps to deliver the Council’s Corporate Plan themes, objective and priorities in particular Healthier, Safer and Stronger Communities, Regeneration and Economic Growth and Environment and Climate Change.

Financial

There are not expected to be any significant additional costs relating to the adoption of the revised SCI.

Any additional requirements relating to the consultation on the Publication Draft (Pre-Submission) Part 2 Local Plan for Corby will be carried out by Local Plan officers and delivered within previously agreed approved budget allocations and existing resources.

Legal

The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 introduced a new requirement to review local plans and SCIs at least every 5 years from adoption. It also required authorities to set out in their SCIs their policies for giving advice or assistance to neighbourhood planning groups and their policies involving communities and other interested parties in the preliminary stages of plan making: specifically in the exercise of their functions under sections 13 (survey) and 15 (Local Development Scheme) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Additionally we need to reduce expenditure and use the resources available to us as efficiently as possible. Therefore, we are increasingly reliant on electronic communications,

such as websites, the use of email/email alerts and/or social media for publicising documents and information, as recognised by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Human Rights, Community Safety, Equalities and Sustainability

None directly linked to this report.

Performance Information

None directly linked to this report.

Best Value

None directly linked to this report.

Risk Management

There are no risks associated with this report.

6. Recommendation

6.1 It is recommended that Members:

- i) Adopt the revised North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement.
- ii) Note the consultation arrangements for the Part 2 Local Plan for Corby.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement (July 2019)

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Appendix 1



North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement July 2019

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1. What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.1 The planning system touches the lives of everyone in the districts of Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough. However, many of us only come into contact with it when we find out about a nearby planning application. What is often not known is that planning applications should fit in with the wider statutory development plan for an area. It is important that we consult and engage with people and organisations at an early stage (i.e. when plans are being produced), as well as at the point that planning applications are submitted for determination.
- 1.2 To help set out how we will consult people in the preparation of plans and planning applications the North Northamptonshire planning authorities have prepared a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The Statement was originally adopted in 2006 and was subsequently updated in 2013 as part of the preparation of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy (JCS), the Local Plan Part 1. This current Statement now replaces the 2013 version as part of national guidelines which require SCIs to be updated every 5 years as part of Plan reviews.
- 1.3 The Statement of Community Involvement is prepared on behalf of the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee and the four district/borough councils in North Northamptonshire (Corby Borough Council, Kettering Borough Council, Borough Council of Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire Council). All the partners agree that plans and decisions on planning applications should be shaped by the whole community.
- 1.4 This Statement deals with all the consultations that will be undertaken in relation to Local Plans produced in North Northamptonshire. This means it covers all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) prepared either by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning and Delivery Unit or individually by the local planning authorities. It also sets out the advice and assistance that the local planning authorities will provide to communities preparing neighbourhood plans or neighbourhood development orders.
- 1.5 Consultation arrangements in relation to minerals and waste development plan documents prepared by and planning applications submitted to Northamptonshire County Council are set out in a separate Statement of Community Involvement prepared by the County Council and adopted in 2012.

2. Why is the adopted 2013 Statement of Community Involvement being revised?

- 2.1 Since the 2013 SCI was adopted there have been a number of changes to national legislation and regulations, which mean that parts of it are now out of date.

What has changed?

- 2.2 The government has placed even greater emphasis on the early engagement of communities in the planning process. The intention is to enable local people to influence and make changes to plan and development proposals while there is still genuine scope to influence and participate in evaluating the different options.
- 2.3 The Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 introduced a new requirement to review local plans and Statements of Community Involvement at least every 5 years from adoption. It also required authorities to set out in their SCIs their policies for giving advice or assistance to neighbourhood planning groups and their policies involving communities and other interested parties in the preliminary stages of plan making: specifically in the exercise of their functions under sections 13 (survey) and 15 (Local Development Scheme) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

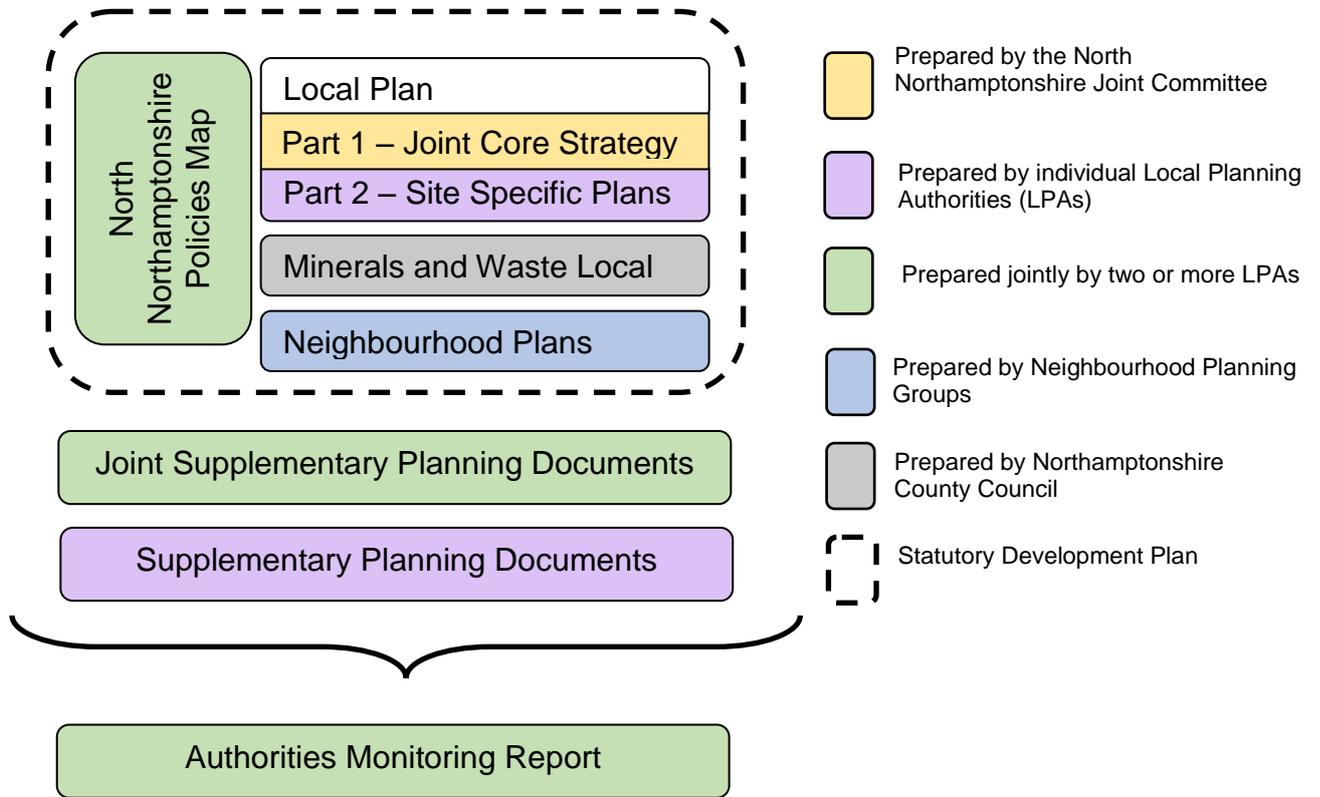
More emphasis on electronic communication

- 2.4 Technological advances including the increased use and availability of electronic communication such as email and the internet have changed the way public consultation is carried out. Electronic communication provides a way to disseminate large amounts of information, this is especially important for rural areas, where it can be difficult for residents to access Council offices. The Councils and JPDU are committed to make the most appropriate use of electronic communication when undertaking consultation, however reliance on electronic communication will not always be appropriate and we will still rely on site notices and letters where these are necessary to ensure effective communication.
- 2.5 Additionally we need to reduce expenditure and use the resources available to us as efficiently as possible. Therefore, we are increasingly reliant on electronic communications, such as websites, the use of email/email alerts and/or social media for publicising documents and information, as recognised by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.
- 2.6 Alongside the full electronic documents, where possible, contents pages and executive summaries will be included to make online navigation easier. This will often take the form of web page text, which accompanies the link(s) to a downloadable version of the document. Documents will also be divided, if appropriate, for easier management and to facilitate downloading. In addition the use of colour will be minimised, where this does not affect the readability of the document, to enable printing in black and white. Furthermore most council offices now offer drop-in ICT services for those that do not have access to the internet at home and want to view planning documents.

3. The Local Plan for North Northamptonshire

- 3.1 The Planning framework for North Northamptonshire is set through the North Northamptonshire Local Plan. The North Northamptonshire Local Plan is the collection of development plan documents that set out the spatial strategy for North Northamptonshire.
- 3.2 The Joint Core Strategy (JCS) is the overarching/principal element of the Local Plan for North Northamptonshire and provides the 'big picture' on issues that need to be tackled across the four districts. It forms part 1 of the Local Plan.
- 3.3 The first Local Plan for North Northamptonshire was the Core Spatial Strategy (CSS) and this was adopted in June 2008; this was then superseded by the JCS in July 2016 which sets the framework for long term change and development in North Northamptonshire, including housing, the economy, infrastructure and the environment. The JCS, which covers the period 2011-31, sets out how the area should change and amongst other things has targets for the number of new houses and jobs required for the area. It also has policies to guide how change will be managed, such as where development should be located, guidelines about its design and controls over the impact of developments on their surroundings, together with necessary infrastructure.
- 3.4 The JCS was prepared by the North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Unit (JPU). Decisions on the JCS and related matters are taken by the Joint Planning Committee, made up of councillors from Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough Councils, and Northamptonshire County Council. The JPU has now merged with the Joint Delivery Unit (JDU) to create the JPDU. The JDU however reports to a separate committee known as the Joint Delivery Committee, made up of councillors from the same authorities mentioned above.
- 3.5 All of the boroughs and districts are preparing part 2 Local Plans which provide local non-strategic policies. These add additional detail to the strategy in the JCS.
- 3.6 As well as the Local Plan, there is the Minerals and Waste Local Plan and a number of Neighbourhood Plans which collectively form the development plan. These are supported by a number of Supplementary Planning Documents that provide detailed guidance on various planning matters which explain and amplify the policies in DPDs. Consultation on these documents is governed by separate regulations, but will be undertaken consistent with the methods set out in this SCI.

Figure 1: Plan Making in North Northamptonshire

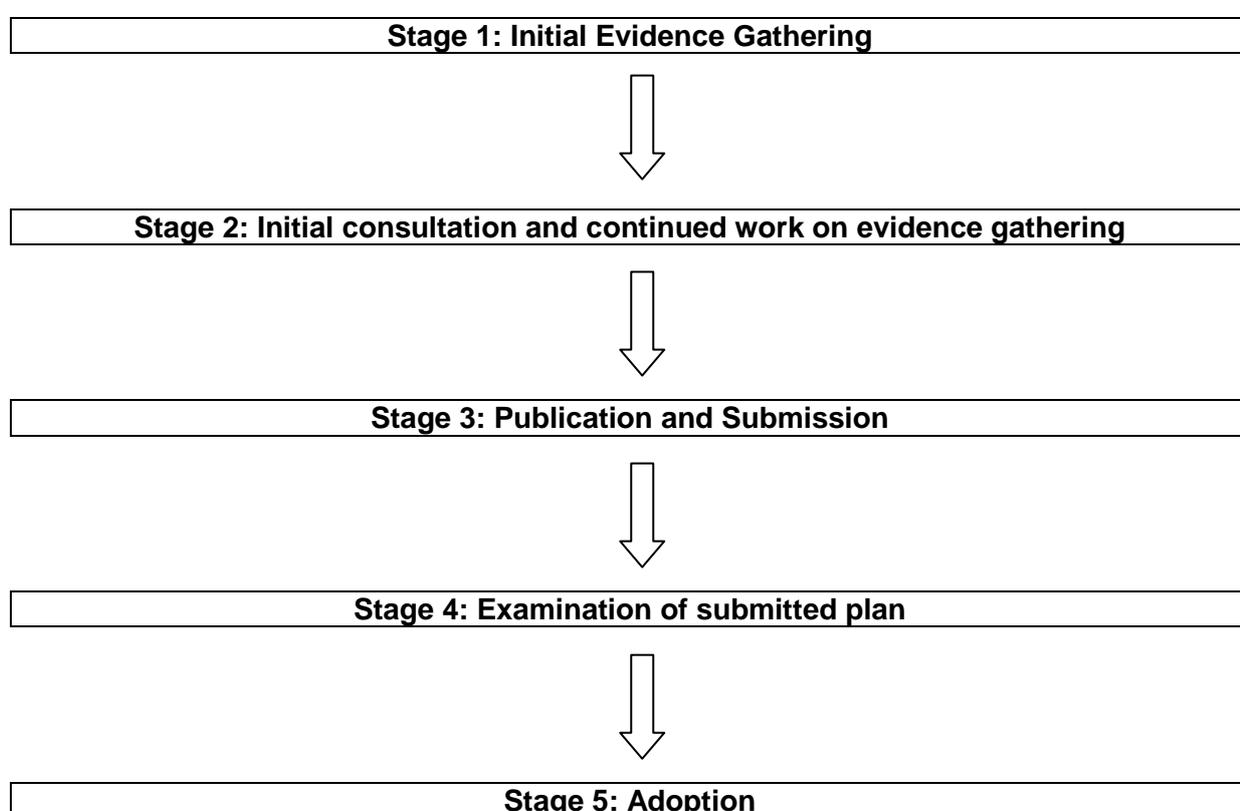


4. Consultation: Local Plan

The Local Plan process

- 4.1 This SCI is intended to set out consultation processes for local plan preparation which will be carried out by the JPDU or the partner LPAs. This will cover the review of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS), and will apply to other part 2 Local Plans that are prepared by the partner LPAs which identify and allocate sites for development and provide more detailed local policies.
- 4.2 Local Plans are prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. A summary is included as follows:

Figure 2: Process of Local Plan preparation and consultation



- 4.3 A key aim of consultation and engagement is to attempt to build consensus for the way forward in relation to development and to conform to government requirements on the duty to co-operate. Whilst it is accepted that full consensus may not be possible, greater understanding may help minimise conflict in plan preparation and in the determination of planning applications.
- 4.4 The most appropriate method of consultation will be used for the different stages of the plan-making process. Electronic communication and online representations will be used as widely as possible as well as increased usage of social media to inform the public about each stage of the consultation process. It will be particularly

important to keep the public and other stakeholders informed about the initial stages of the Local Plan process including evidence gathering and survey work. As much information as possible will be made available on the councils and JPDU websites, including seeking to publish documents forming part of the evidence base when they are completed rather than waiting for specific consultation stages. The Local Development Schemes (LDS's) will be regularly updated and published on the council and JPDU websites. It is recognised that 'hard to reach groups' may not have access to a computer; in such cases a hard copy of the documents can be made available, and letters will be sent to inform on consultation stages and that written representations will still be accepted. Where appropriate, press releases will be issued to seek local publicity. Where a plan directly affects a particular community planning officers may attend meetings of the relevant Town and Parish Councils. Due to limited resources forums and combined meetings will be preferred where plans affect a number of communities.

Who will be consulted on Local Plans?

- 4.5 The Councils have a long history of engagement with local residents, Parish and Town councils, businesses, stakeholders, community groups, voluntary organisations and others in preparing Local Plans. These make up an extensive consultation database.
- 4.6 The JPDU and constituent authorities each have consultation databases. Anyone can be added to these in order to receive information about consultation documents. Notification of those on the relevant consultation database will form the main basis of communicating consultation information with interested parties in relation to relevant Local Plans that are being prepared. Councils will also use their websites and other measures such as the local press to undertake consultation. With regard to emphasis on early engagement with communities, it is increasingly important to ensure that the public are made aware of issues that can arise within the early stages of the plan making process, such as potential local plan allocation sites. In addition to information being made available through the methods mentioned above, the LPAs and JPDU will make provision for engaging with the specific communities that could be affected by such an allocation. This could be done through a variety of methods which will be tailored to specific circumstances. Other than this unless you are included on consultation databases, you will not be notified or consulted directly, and will need to refer to the local authority's web sites and the local press for information about plan consultations. To request inclusion on the JPDU's database, please email info@nnjpu.org.uk or contact the Local Councils using the details set out in Appendix 1 to be included in their planning consultation database.

The Data Protection Act 2018

- 4.7 The 2018 Data Protection Act² comprehensively updated legislations with regards to the handing and treatment of personal data. This, and associated secondary legislation (Data Protection Regulations 2018), have implications for public

² <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>

consultations, for both planning applications and the development plan. Future consultations and the management of consultee databases must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of this legislation.

- 4.8 If you have provided comments in response to a plan consultation you will normally be added to the relevant consultation database, unless you have requested not to be included. From time to time the local authorities will review their databases and contact you by email or post to find out if you would like to remain on the database. As of May 2018 it was made a lawful requirement through new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for councils to gain consent from those on consultation databases to continue holding their personal information. Each local authority has a privacy statement which sets out how personal data will be held and used.
- 4.9 Consultation with certain consultees is a statutory requirement, whereas others are discretionary. There are two main groups: specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies. Specific consultation bodies include government agencies, utility providers and other local authorities, which we are required to consult on Local Plans. General consultation bodies primarily relate to interest groups, which are considered for consultation as appropriate.
- 4.10 Table 1 provides information on who we should engage with at each consultation stage. Interested parties or individuals can be added to our list of consultees if they wish to be notified of consultations and in turn can request to be removed from said list in light of new GDPR regulations.

Table 1: Engagement at Consultation Stage for Local Plans

Audience targeted	Who this means
Specific consultation bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environment Agency • Historic England • Natural England • Network Rail • Highways England • Local authorities, parish councils and policing body in or adjoining the planning authority area • Fire and Rescue • Communication operators/facility owners (e.g. mobile phones) • Electricity, gas, sewerage and water companies • Homes England • The National Health Service • South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) • Civil Aviation Authority
General consultation bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary/community/local charitable bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area • Bodies which represent the interests of the elderly in the authority's area • Local schools in the authority's area

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bodies representing racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area • Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area • Bodies representing disabled persons in the authority's area • Gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the authority's area • Bodies representing business in the area- i.e. Local Enterprise Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce • Landowners and developers with interests in the authority's area as well as agents that may represent these • Residents groups in the local authority area • Neighbourhood Planning Groups/Forums
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Duty to Cooperate

4.11 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the 'duty to cooperate', whereby local planning authorities are required to work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies in preparing the development plan for their area. A number of issues, such as transportation, housing provision, strategic infrastructure projects, flood risk and waste management, have implications across Council boundaries and local councils and other public bodies are required to work jointly on strategic matters of this nature. These bodies are identified in table 2 below

4.12 The duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree. But local planning authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination. In order to demonstrate on-going joint working strategic plan making authorities are required to prepare and maintain statements of common ground documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These need to be produced using an approach set out in national guidance and will be made publicly available, most likely on the JPDU website.

Table 2 The Statutory bodies for Duty to Cooperate

The Environment Agency
Historic England
Natural England
The Civil Aviation Authority
Homes England
The National Health Service
The Office of Rail Regulations
Transport Authority
Highways England
South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership
Northamptonshire Local Nature Partnership
Northamptonshire County Council

Adjoining local authorities
Adjoining County Councils

Reaching everyone

- 4.13 We appreciate that there are some groups who have been traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises. The JPDU and councils will try to directly liaise with these 'hard to reach' groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that takes account of their particular needs.
- 4.14 As organisations the JPDU and Councils are committed to eliminating any forms of discrimination, ensuring that the impacts of the services provided and policies produced are minimised. Some plans or planning documents may affect certain communities differently and more significantly than others. Such impacts may need to be subjected to an equality impact assessment to identify any negative or differential impacts. These should be mitigated if they cannot be avoided. All planning policy documents will be screened to establish if an equality impact assessment is required.

Consultation periods

- 4.15 All consultation will be for a minimum of six weeks, unless legislation states otherwise. Where possible advance notice will be given ahead of statutory consultation periods to allow additional time, including over key holiday periods.

Availability of documents

- 4.16 All consultation documents and supporting material will be made available in electronic format. Hard copies of all relevant statutory documents will be made available for viewing at all libraries in the plan area and in the reception areas of the relevant district and borough councils. Press releases will also be issued.
- 4.17 Hard copies of consultation documents will be sent on request to specific and general consultation bodies or hard to reach groups who do not have access to a computer. A charge to cover costs may be made for other requests.
- 4.18 All documents relating to the JCS will be available on the JPDU's website and in relation to other Local Plans, on the relevant district and borough council websites and can also be emailed on request.

Consultation stages

- 4.19 The Planning Practice Guidance states that there is considerable flexibility for local planning authorities in how they carry out the initial stages of local plan production, provided they comply with the specific requirements in [regulation 18 of the Town and](#)

[Country Planning Regulations 2012](#), on consultation. This includes notifying consultation bodies/persons of the subject of the proposed local plan and inviting them to make representations to the local planning authority about what the local plan should contain. However the latter stages are more formally guided by regulations in that local planning authorities must make available each of the proposed submission documents that they intend to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for examination to enable representations to come forward that can be considered at examination. Figure 2 shows key stages in the preparation of Local Plans.

- 4.20 When preparing local plans, the local authorities may carry out more extensive consultation than required by the regulations to ensure that on-going feedback can be obtained during the development of the Local Plan.

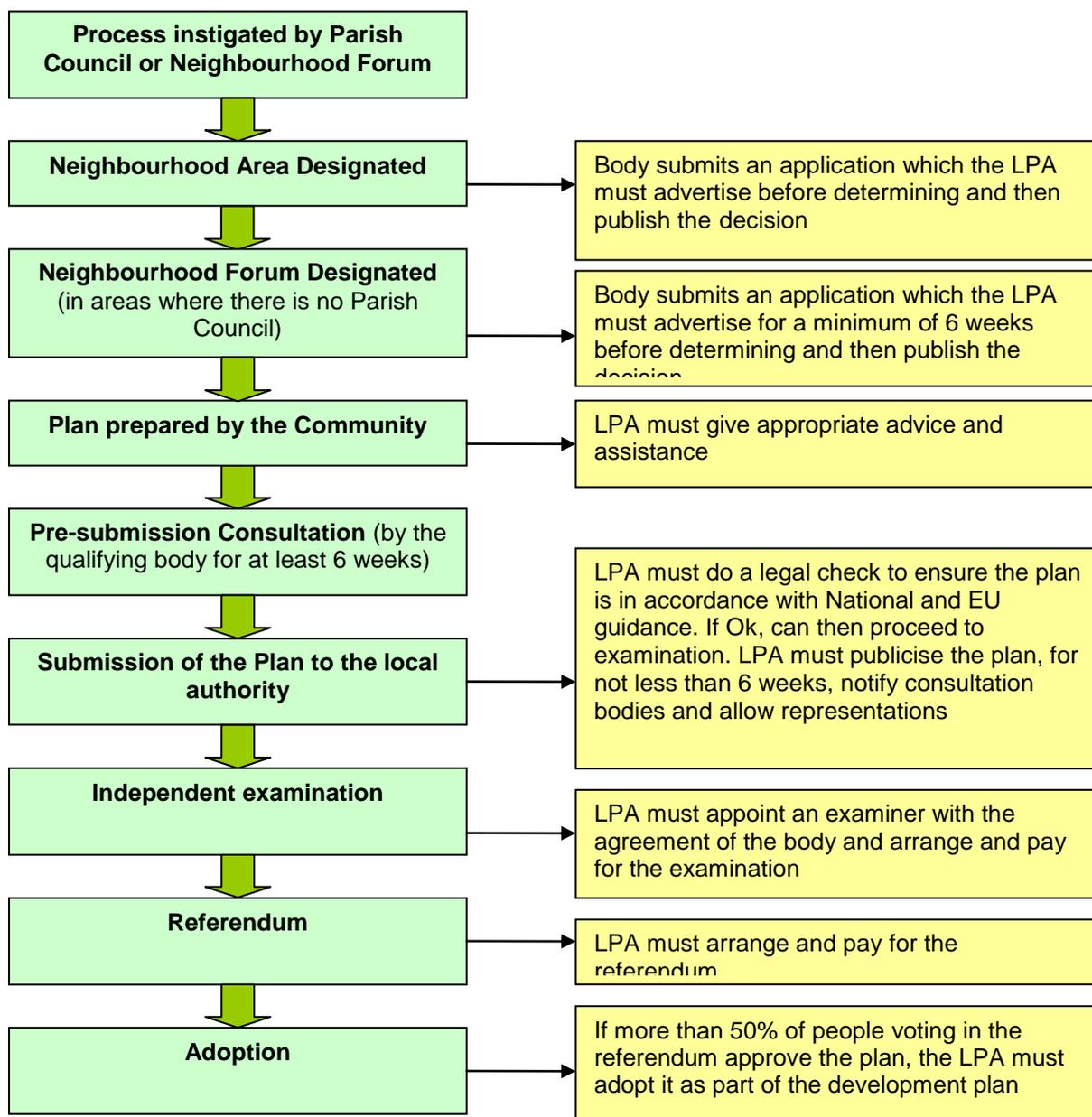
Dealing with the conclusions from the consultation

- 4.21 Once a consultation period is over, all representations will be collated and a report prepared summarising the main issues raised and recommending how these should be addressed. This will include identifying if and how the emerging plan should be amended in the light of the representations.
- 4.22 This report will be considered by the appropriate Committee of the Council or, in the case of joint plans, the Joint Planning Committee. Members of the public can speak for a set time provided they request to do so in advance of the meeting.
- 4.23 A Statement of publicity and consultation will be prepared to accompany a pre-submission Local Plan. This will set out the consultation undertaken, the nature of the response and how the main issues have been addressed in the plan.

5. Consultation: Neighbourhood Plans

- 5.1 Neighbourhood Plans were introduced under the Localism Act 2011 to give communities rights and powers to shape growth and development in their area by taking a more active role in the preparation of planning policies at a local level. Under this act the Local Planning Authority has a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to those communities choosing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan.
- 5.2 Neighbourhood Plans are normally led and financed by the Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum in the local area. Neighbourhood Plans can be used for many reasons for example they can; identify new housing and employment land, and set out preferences for the design of buildings. Other legislation introduced by the Localism Act can be used to grant planning permission for development that the community wants.
- 5.3 Despite some variances, the responsibilities that local planning authorities (LPAs) have for Neighbourhood Plans are similar in nature. The general consensus is that LPAs will designate neighbourhood areas (and forums if required), advise/assist communities in the preparation of a plan, check a submitted plan meets legal requirements, arrange the independent examination of the plan as well as bring the plan into force. In addition to this LPAs can supply other forms of support, such as give advice on funding streams and provide assistance with mapping. Figure 3 sets out the general Neighbourhood Plan Process that should be followed.
- 5.4 LPAs will publicise and consult on neighbourhood area applications, where there is a requirement to do so. Once the neighbourhood area is designated this will be published on the LPA's website. Consultation will then take place on draft plans and subsequently pre-submission plans in a similar way to the Local Plan process. The appropriate consultation are bodies are set out in Schedule 1 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 5.5 The level of advice and assistance that the LPAs will provide for preparing Neighbourhood Plans is set out in Appendix 2.

Figure 3: Neighbourhood Plan Process



6. Consultation: Development Proposals and Planning Applications

What planning applications are covered by this SCI?

- 6.1 This statement sets out how the community can become involved with planning applications ranging from minor development such as house extensions to major housing, employment and shopping schemes.
- 6.2 Northamptonshire County Council is responsible for determining minerals and waste applications. Community involvement in helping to determine these proposals is set out in a separate Statement of Community Involvement prepared by the County Council.
- 6.3 Development can be either “permitted development” where a formal planning permission is not required, or development requiring the submission of a planning application. Other types of applications include applications for advertisement consent and listed building consent as well as prior notification and permission in principle. It must be noted that there are some types of permitted development rights where consultation is not necessarily undertaken.
- 6.4 The Councils will be responsible for administering “light touch” neighbourhood consultation as part of the Government’s changes to grant permitted development rights for larger house extensions for a period of three years. Under these proposals, homeowners wishing to build extensions have to notify, in advance, their local Council with the details. The Council will then inform the adjoining neighbours. If no objections are made to the Council by the neighbours within 21 days then the development can proceed. If objections are raised by neighbours, the Council will consider whether the development would have an unacceptable impact on neighbour’s amenity.
- 6.5 If you are unsure whether or not you need planning permission, or other planning related consents, for the development you are considering you can obtain advice from the relevant Council (see Appendix 1). Up-to-date information on how to make planning applications is also available on the Council and [Planning Portal](#) websites.

How will you be informed and can get involved in the Planning Applications Process?

Publicising Planning applications

- 6.6 Development management (also known as “development control”) is the submission and processing of planning applications. It is largely a reactive process, responding to proposals submitted by developers and individuals and therefore consultation and engagement cannot normally be scheduled in advance. Consultation will take place once a planning application is submitted. For very large scale developments, earlier publicity initiated by the developer may be used.
- 6.7 We will listen to what people have to say but will make clear in publicity that only representations relating to material planning considerations will be taken into account

in reaching a decision. Matters such as loss of a private view, or the character or motivations of the applicant (as examples) are **not** material planning considerations and, consequently, cannot be considered in determining an application. The Council will not normally reply to any representations received.

- 6.8 The minimum scale and type of consultation required on planning applications will relate to impact of the proposal, and is set by regulation. The majority of planning applications received are for small developments such as house extensions. It is recommended that applicants discuss such proposals with occupiers and owners of neighbouring land and properties before submitting an application. This can provide an early opportunity to address any concerns expressed by neighbours and may help to reduce delay in determining the planning application once received.
- 6.9 When an application has been submitted, consultation can take many forms, including letters or e-mails to neighbours, businesses, agencies or residents groups, site notices and advertisements in newspapers. It is important to respond within the specified time period on any consultation letter or notice to ensure comments are taken into account. Comments received help the councils to be responsive to the needs of stakeholders and improve the quality of development.
- 6.10 The normal initial period for consultation is 21 days, but legislation now dictates that councils must take into account bank/public holidays when going out for consultation. This can be alleviated in two ways, by either extending all consultations to accommodate this or just vary them from time to time to reflect upcoming public holidays. The precise period will be defined in the notice/notification/advertisement. Any comments will be placed on the planning application file and will be available for public inspection. If a response is not received within the time period specified it might be too late to bring it to the attention of the Committee of Councillors, or the officer responsible for determining the application. Statutory bodies are also consulted and usually given 21 days to respond. Any subsequent consultations on changes to the application may be shorter than the 21 days, and are at the discretion of the local authority.
- 6.11 The period of community involvement undertaken by the local authority on all planning applications will be of a length that gives an appropriate time for a response to be made, but which also acknowledges that planning applications have to be determined by the local authority within 8 weeks, or 13 weeks for a major application* unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant.

** This is defined in this context by the Government as a proposal for residential development of 10 or more dwellings or a site area of 0.5 hectares or greater where the number of dwellings is not known. In respect of other land uses the definition includes proposals where the sum of the floor area within the building is 1,000 meters square or greater*

'Significant' developments

- 6.12 Where a proposal/application is deemed to be significant by the planning authority by virtue of being large in scale or otherwise locally significant (see below), developers/applicants will be expected to undertake community engagement and

involvement in drawing up their proposals. This will include town and parish councils and any neighbourhood planning group. Developers/applicants will need to submit a 'Statement of Local Engagement' showing how they have engaged the community in their proposals and how it has changed as a consequence. Planning applications deemed significant that are not accompanied by a Statement of Local Engagement when submitted may not be registered as a valid application by the planning authority. If in doubt applicants should discuss, if they are unclear, with the local authority if the proposal is significant. Developers and applicants should consider the benefits of involving the community in developing proposals and preparing schemes even when the proposal is not deemed to be 'significant'.

- **Large-scale developments.** *For the purposes of this SCI a large-scale development includes proposals for residential development of 100 or more dwellings, or a site area of 3 hectares or greater where the number of dwellings is not known. In respect of other land the definition includes proposals where the sum of the floor area within the building is 1000 m² or the site area is 1 hectare or greater. Large-scale development applications are likely to require additional community involvement if the proposal will have a significant impact on the area, or create significant public interest or controversy.*
- **Locally significant developments.** *Some proposals that are not of sufficient scale to be defined as large-scale development may have a wider impact beyond neighbouring owners and occupiers. This category includes any proposal that, in the opinion of the local planning authority, would alter the overall character of the locality by reason of its scale, use or visual appearance. It also includes development on sites that are sensitive to development pressures such as proposals for substantial demolition in a conservation area, or proposals for development next to a listed building.*

6.13 The type and extent of community involvement will need to be related to the scale and likely impact of the development and to the target audiences. It will also be appropriate to take account of whether or not the proposal has already been consulted on through the development plan process and the extent of community involvement undertaken by the applicants at the pre-application stage. The Councils will offer advice on pre-application consultation on a site-by-site basis and applicants are therefore invited to contact the relevant council before undertaking community involvement in order to agree the method(s) that should be used, the scale of the consultation and any special or community groups that ought to be involved.

Dealing with the conclusions of engagement

6.14 Some planning application decisions are determined by officers using delegated powers given by the Council, more significant planning applications are usually determined at a planning committee. The exact distinction between the two varies between Councils.

6.15 For each planning application to be determined by a Committee, a report will be drafted setting out the key issues, highlighting responses from the consultation on the

application and containing a recommendation from the planning officer as to whether or not planning permission should be granted. People who have responded to the consultation may attend meetings and will have the opportunity to address the committee, however they will not necessarily be personally informed of the date of the meeting just based on the fact they have responded to the consultation (depending on the council) and should approach the council should they wish to make a representation. Notwithstanding this all committee dates are published on the respective council's websites and people can attend without specific invitation if they just wish to observe. Each authority has its own policies and procedures to manage committee meetings.

- 6.16 Comments made on a planning application by statutory consultees will be published on the council's websites as will any comments made by members of the public with personal details redacted for data protection purposes. Any anonymous comments or comments made via social media will not be taken into account. Comments will be available on the website until a decision on the application has been made.

Appendix 1 LPA Contact Details:

Corby Borough Council

Appointments can be arranged with Planning Services during office hours.

Planning and Environmental Services
Corby Borough Council
Deene House
New Post Office Square
Corby
NN17 1GD
Tel: 01536 464158
email: planning.services@corby.gov.uk

Kettering Borough Council

Municipal Offices,
Bowling Green Rd,
Kettering,
NN15 7QX

Monday to Friday: 8:30am to 5.30pm; Saturdays: 9am to 1pm

A duty planner is available to assist in helping to understand plans between 9am and 5pm: Monday – Thursday and 9am and 4pm on Friday

Tel: 01536 534316

email: planning@kettering.gov.uk

www.kettering.gov.uk

East Northamptonshire Council

If you need further help with commenting on a planning application please contact the Duty Planning Officer who is available Monday to Friday between 9am and 1pm on 01832 742225 or by emailing: planning@east-northamptonshire.gov.uk

East Northamptonshire Council
Cedar Drive
Thrapston
Northants
NN14 4LZ

Borough Council of Wellingborough

Contact 01933 231906 for more details or email: planning@wellingborough.gov.uk

Borough Council of Wellingborough
Swanspool House
Doddington Road
Wellingborough
Northants
NN8 1BP

Appendix 2 Advice and Assistance that the Local Planning Authorities will provide to Neighbourhood Plans:

Determining the need for a Neighbourhood Plan

- Advice on the role of Neighbourhood Plans and what they can, cannot and must achieve.
- Advice on issues that are ‘neighbourhood planning matters’ and can adequately be dealt with within your plan.
- An outline of the alternatives to Neighbourhood Planning that exist to communities, including Parish Plans, Village Design Statements, input into the Local Plan consultation process etc.
- An outline of the first steps involved in the delivery of your Neighbourhood Plan.

Identifying the scope of your plan

- Advice on the first steps your community will need to undertake to ensure that the organisational structure is in place locally to successfully deliver a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Advice on consultation techniques and the best way to engage your community.
- Advice on the requirement of your plan to conform with the adopted development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and what this may mean for your community.
- An overview of the other legislative requirements of your plan, including the need to comply with EU Directives.

Designating Neighbourhood Areas / Business Areas and Forums

- Publicity of the application for a Neighbourhood Area or Business Area, when required, in such a manner that is considered likely to bring the application to the attention of people who work or carry out business in the area to which the application relates for a minimum of six weeks. This includes through Council and Parish Council’s web pages, local and/or parish newspapers, local notice boards and libraries where relevant.
- The statutory consultation and approval of the boundary of the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Area or Business Area.
- The publication of the area and/or forum’s adoption on the council’s website, in local and parish newspapers and newsletters where relevant as soon as practical after formal designation.
- Mapping of Neighbourhood Area boundaries required for the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area or Business Area.

Supporting Neighbourhood Plan making

- Sharing existing information and pre-existing evidence base work held by the local planning authority, as appropriate and subject to any data protection or confidentiality issues.
- Contact details of local partners and/or organisations to help community liaison subject to any data protection or confidentiality issues.
- Providing comments on the emerging plan and other supporting documents (e.g. basic condition statement) prior to formal submission.
- Advice and support for the screening of any Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) required and liaison with the relevant statutory consultees.

Independent Examination

- The validation of a Neighbourhood Plan on receipt, checking that all of the necessary supporting documents have been produced and that all of the correct procedures have been undertaken. A review of the plan will also be undertaken to ensure that it stands a reasonable chance of success at examination (with or without amendments to be suggested by the examiner).
- Publication of the Neighbourhood Plans on the council website for a minimum of six weeks and give details of how to respond to it in advance of the Independent Examination (in line with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations).
- The appointment of and funding for the Independent Examiner, who will check the plan meets the 'basic conditions' (note: the examiner to be appointed will firstly have to be agreed on by the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum).
- An examination venue, if a hearing is required, and if no other suitable town/village venue can be provided.
- Written confirmation of the council's position following the recommendation of the examiner, relating to any amendments that may need to be made to the plan before it proceeds to referendum, any enlargement of the referendum area, whether the plan may proceed to directly to referendum or whether its passage should be refused.

Referendum

- The organisation of, and funding for, the public referendum (it must be noted that two referendums will be required for Business Areas – one for residents and one for businesses).

'Making' the plan

- If the Neighbourhood Plan receives support from more than 50% of those that vote in the public referendum then the local planning authority will formally make the Neighbourhood Plan. Once made, the plan will form part of the Development Plan and will be a primary consideration in determining planning applications within the Neighbourhood or Business Area.