

CABINET

30 SEPTEMBER 2014

MEDWAY STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jane Chitty, Strategic Development and Economic Growth

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Summary

This report seeks authority to approve an updated version of the Medway Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

The purpose of the SCI is to explain how the Council will involve the community in the preparation of local planning policy documents and how it consults on planning applications, including the standards expected from developers with major proposals.

1. Budget and Policy Framework

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is a statutory requirement to support development planning policy and is a key document needed in order to progress through the stages to an adopted Local Plan. The Development Plan forms part of the Council's policy framework and is currently provided by the Medway Local Plan 2003, with supporting supplementary planning documents that provide additional guidance to the Local Plan policies. The Council has commenced work on a replacement Local Plan and has reviewed the SCI to support the plan preparation process.
- 1.2 The costs of the preparation of the SCI and the consultation and engagement activities that are promoted for the plan making process are met through the Planning Service budget.

2. Background

- 2.1 Planning has an important role in influencing the development of towns and villages, and the effective engagement of local people in helping to shape these plans is central to the planning process. This is recognised by government and there are statutory requirements on local planning authorities to consult on planning proposals and plans. The Council must produce a SCI

outlining how and when it will engage people in the planning process. Medway Council wants to improve the way the community can become involved in plan-making and in the Development Management process.

- 2.2 The Council first adopted a SCI in 2006. The current SCI was adopted in January 2012, however since then there have been a number of changes to national planning guidelines and significant changes within the Medway planning service and the wider context of local organisations, businesses and networks. As a guide to the planning service on engagement requirements as well as for establishing stakeholder understanding, the current SCI adopted in 2012 needs revising. This is to ensure that Medway has a 'fit-for-purpose' approach to reflect the requirements of a new Local Plan, as well as to consider changes to improve the way the Planning Service interacts with the general public and key stakeholders to aid effectiveness.
- 2.3 The Council consulted on a revised draft SCI during summer 2014 and sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders. Officers have considered the comments raised during the consultation process and have prepared an updated version of the SCI. This document is set out at Appendix 1. The key changes have resulted in a more streamlined document with an updated policy context and clearer guidance on the principles and methods of consultation to be used. A flexible approach is suggested to reflect the needs and circumstances of different groups in order that all sections of the community have an opportunity to be involved in planning for Medway. The document will be used to ensure effective and consistent approaches to community engagement in planning.

3. Options

- 3.1 The Council could consider the retention of the current SCI and choose not to revise the version adopted in January 2012. However this document is dated, and not does reflect the current legislative context following the introduction of the NPPF and the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies. It is therefore viewed as inappropriate not to update the current document. The commencement of work on a replacement Medway Local Plan presented an opportune time at which to publish the updated SCI.
- 3.2 A number of comments were received on the consultation draft SCI. These are set out at Appendix 2. Officers have considered the responses and made a number of changes to the draft document to improve clarity and address specific issues. However it was not viewed appropriate to accept all the amendments sought. The Council's proposed response to the comments submitted is set out at Appendix 2.

4. Advice and analysis

- 4.1 The current SCI has become outdated; the start of replacement Local Plan process is an appropriate time to review the adopted SCI so that sound principles of engagement can be built into the process.
- 4.2 The purpose of planning is to enable sustainable development, meeting social, economic and environmental needs. The SCI supports this process through consideration of effective communications, information collation and involvement.

4.3 A Diversity Impact Assessment screening has been completed for the revised SCI and is attached at Appendix 3. This assessment concludes that there are no disproportionate impacts on particular sectors of the community. The purpose of the SCI is to make explicit considerations of the diverse needs of the communities across Medway. It is therefore a helpful tool in contributing to the awareness of equalities issues to be addressed through the plan making process. Contact was made during the consultation process with a number of interest groups representing people with 'protected characteristics', in order to seek the views of stakeholders with disabilities, from BME groups and younger residents, amongst other groups

5. Risk management

5.1 The proposed SCI is an updated version of a document that has been in place for a number of years. The limited risks associated with this work are set out below.

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Not adopting an updated SCI	Is a prerequisite of an adopted Local Plan guiding consultation through the key stages.	Production of revised SCI in line with current legislation, used to inform consultation activities in the plan preparation process.	E3

6. Consultation

6.1 The council consulted on the draft SCI from 20 June to 4 August 2014. The revised draft SCI was publicised broadly, with all documentation being made available on the Council's Planning web pages, with printed copies available at Gun Wharf reception and Medway libraries. The Local Plan database was used to seek the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders. The database includes contacts for over 1000 organisations, community groups, businesses and residents with an interest in planning for Medway. Fifteen responses were received to the consultation, from local forums, national statutory bodies, other local authorities and local residents. Although the number of replies was low, this was an increase from the level of responses received to the previous round of consultation on the 2012 version of the SCI.

6.2 A full consideration of the consultation process and the responses received is set out at Appendix 2. Overall the majority of respondents were in agreement with the processes and methods suggested for community engagement and found the document to generally be clear and understandable. A number of useful suggestions were made to improve sections of the document and make the context of the document clearer.

6.3 The consultation draft SCI and feedback on the comments received during the consultation process were considered by the Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 August 2014. The Committee discussed the report and suggested that the section on publicity

on planning applications be amended to include consultation with Councillors and Town Centre Forums and Town Centre Managers. Further details of the Committee's consideration is set out in Appendix 4.

- 6.4 A revised version of the SCI, as attached at Appendix 1, has been produced following consideration of the comments made during the consultation process.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The costs of the preparation of the revised SCI and associated consultation work will be met through existing Planning Service budgets.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 Section 18 (1) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 states that a local planning authority must prepare a Statement of Community Involvement. More recently there have been changes to the Planning system, notably the introduction of the Localism Act in 2011 and the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework in 2012. These changes need to be reflected in the Statement of Community of Involvement.

- 8.2 Due consideration is to be given to the responses received during the consultation process. An updated SCI is needed to progress the adoption of a new development plan, and will be required to be submitted with the draft Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate for independent Examination.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1 That Cabinet approve the adoption of the revised Medway Statement of Community Involvement as set out at Appendix 1 as an updated version of the document.

10. Suggested reasons for decision(s)

- 10.1 This is to provide the Council with an appropriate updated SCI in line with legislative requirements that can be used to inform the process for the preparation of a new Local Plan.

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Background papers

Medway Statement of Community Involvement January 2012
(<http://www.medway.gov.uk/pdf/Statement%20of%20Community%20Involvement%202012.pdf>)

Cabinet report and decisions – Medway Statement of Community Involvement –
Consultation Draft – 10 June 2014
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/mglIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IId=12788>

Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Medway
Statement of Community Involvement – 21 August 2014
<http://democracy.medway.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=132&MId=3057&Ver=4>

Medway Statement of Community Involvement

September 2014



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Introduction

Planning shapes the neighbourhoods in which we all live and work; it is important that people have the opportunity to be involved and influence decision-making in their local areas. Planning seeks to achieve the most sustainable use of land to promote a thriving economy, a valued natural and historic environment and healthy communities with access to the housing, services, facilities and other infrastructure needed to support a good quality of life. The planning system involves preparing policy documents to guide development over many years, such as the Medway Local Plan. There is also a development management process that considers specific proposals through making decisions on planning applications.

Planning in Medway involves considering how a significant scale of change can be most effectively addressed. Medway's population is predicted to grow by one fifth to 2035. In order to accommodate the needs of a larger population and grow in a positive way, a clear, coordinated, well planned approach is required. The Local Plan is the principle means of setting the policy framework to guide development. The Local Plan lays out the plans for housing, employment, retail and other needs of the area. It details proposals of where new housing is likely to be located, based on current and future need, where new opportunities lie for businesses to locate to create jobs for an expanding population in a growth area. Policy covers the detailed aspects of design and development to help secure quality buildings that make a positive contribution to the area. As Medway is a unitary council, it also needs to plan for the adequate supply of minerals and make appropriate provision for waste management.

Medway Council wants to improve the way the community can become involved in plan-making and in its decisions on planning applications. It wants to encourage more people to contribute and to make involvement as easy as possible. Local knowledge and aspirations will help to make sure that development in Medway benefits everyone, whilst protecting those special qualities of the area. The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how the Council will engage with the local community in the development of planning policy and the determination of planning applications in Medway. In doing this, the council is following government guidance.

The National Planning Policy Framework, 2012, places importance on community engagement in the development of Local Plans:

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

National Planning Policy Framework

The Council seeks the community's involvement in order to develop and implement a shared vision for Medway.

Why Medway is revising its Statement of Community Involvement

A Statement of Community Involvement explains how the Council will involve the community in the preparation of local planning policy documents and how it consults on planning applications, including the standards expected from developers with major proposals. Councils are required by government to produce SCIs as part of their commitment to inclusion in planning.

The requirement to produce a SCI was introduced in the 2004 Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. More recently there have been changes to the Planning system, notably the introduction of the Localism Act in 2011, the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in 2012 and the National Planning Practice Guidance in 2014.

Medway Council adopted its first SCI in 2006 and the current SCI in January 2012. As highlighted above, since then there have been a number of changes to national planning guidelines and also significant changes within the council's planning service. In 2014 the Council commenced preparation work on a new Local Plan and wanted this work to be informed by a refreshed and updated SCI.

This therefore led to this review of the SCI to reflect the requirements of new legislation, the development of a Local Plan and changes to the way the Planning Service interacts with the general public and key stakeholders.

The Council has followed the principles set out in the SCI in the review of this document.

Part One

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLAN MAKING

HOW WE WILL CONSULT TO FIT THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT METHODS

WHO WE WILL CONSULT

ROLE OF ELECTED COUNCILLORS

DUTY TO COOPERATE

KEY STAGES IN PREPARING OUR LOCAL PLAN

DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

SPD CONSULTATION AND INVOLVEMENT

HOW INFORMATION IS USED AND REPORTED

How we will consult to fit the needs of the community

- 1.1 Planning policy sets out a strategy to guide the development of a local area over a number of years. This frequently involves long timescales and consideration of strategic issues in lengthy documents. Plan making requires a broad ranging and detailed evidence base, often concerning complex technical matters. For these reasons, it can sometimes be difficult to effectively engage people in policy planning. The Council will make concerted efforts to ensure that consultation is relevant to local communities. It will provide summary documents setting out key information, the issues being addressed through the plan, and proposals in the plan. Community involvement in planning is not a 'one off' activity, but is ongoing throughout the plan preparation process, and appropriate to the specific stages and scope of the work.
- 1.2 A variety of methods will be used for consultations taking into consideration the issues being consulted on, the needs of the audience, as well as the available resources to manage the process. These methods are detailed in the next section.
- 1.3 It is extremely important that all sections of the community can become involved in planning for their local area. Techniques used therefore need to be tailored with different groups in mind. This will include the use of appropriate locations and the use of particular presentation media according to the target audiences. Venues for exhibitions and public meetings on planning matters will be accessible for different groups, and the Council will make printed copies of planning documents available at public libraries across Medway.
- 1.4 Producing clear, straight forward planning documents can assist those with little or limited knowledge of planning issues, as well as for example aiding those residents whose first language is not English. The Council will seek to provide information in other languages on request where people have difficulty in reading documents in English.
- 1.5 Often referred to as 'seldom heard groups', some sectors of the community that may be more difficult to engage in planning matters include some smaller minority ethnic communities, gypsies and travellers as well as disabled people, elderly and young people. The Council must be particularly mindful of the needs of these groups, if necessary making allowances where there may be obstacles in the participation process. It will use the local networks and contacts that the Council is currently involved with as a means to ensure that these groups have the opportunity to contribute.

Case Study: Engaging young people in Planning issues

In 2014, Medway produced a planning guidance note for new hot food takeaways. This was in response to concerns raised about health conditions in the local community. Part of the guidance considered potential restrictions on new takeaways close to schools. The views of young people were particularly relevant to this planning matter. The Council's Planning and Public Health teams worked with Children Services colleagues to make use of the Medway Young Inspectors to carry out research with young people. The Young Inspectors designed a short questionnaire and visited local parks and town centres to ask other children and young people what they felt about the issue and the proposals in the planning guidance. They reached c 150 young people and analysed the results and reported back to officers. The findings formed part of the report on consultation that supported the decision to adopt the new guidance. This was a successful means of reaching young people, who would not have responded to standard consultation methods.

- 1.6 Different types of policy documents require different levels of involvement depending on numerous factors, such as the number of people that would be affected by a proposed policy and the type of impact this may have.
- 1.7 Involvement can range from keeping stakeholders informed, through to deciding and acting together. The following sections in this document will set out expectations and standards for how and what level of involvement at the various stages of plan making and within the planning application process are anticipated to be necessary to truly involve the wider community.

Consultation and Engagement Methods

- 1.8 The Council recognises that the choice of consultation methods need to reflect the audience that it is seeking to reach and the scope of the work on which it is consulting. There are various ways in which the council and others can best inform and involve people in planning issues. The table below sets out a range of methods. The Council will consider what format and activities would be most effective and appropriate to use in its consultations. This is likely to involve a number of methods to reach the broadest audience, but clearly needs to be targeted to the specific scope of the policy or development proposal.

Method	Approach
Email/Letter	Every individual, organisation and business on the Local Plan consultation database will receive a letter or an email informing them of the consultation period. <i>For additions and updates to the database, including requests for information by email, please contact the Council using details in the appendix.</i>
Leaflets	Leaflets and summaries of documents will be made available at libraries and via the Local Plan web pages during the course of the consultation. Leaflets could be used to publicise proposed policy documents, provide details about opportunities to contribute views or participate in meetings, discussion groups etc.
Social Media	Use of Twitter, Facebook and other social media may be used to engage the public in consultation events and to encourage topical debate and submission of comments in an informal environment. Social media are an approach to make contact with some 'hard-to-reach' groups or encourage comments and ideas from people who would be unlikely to submit formal comments or partake in face-to-face events.
Website	All planning documents and details of planning applications are available on the Medway Council website: http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningpolicy
Public Exhibitions	By making documents available in a variety of locations and where appropriate, having exhibition stands and public engagement events throughout Medway, we can reach those residents who may not have easy

	online access, as well as reaching those on town peripheries and those in rural areas. Public exhibitions may be appropriate for consultation events and will be advertised in advance to provide local residents and communities with the opportunity to attend.
Public Meetings	An open meeting where the Local Authority or developer presents information and proposals, which enables immediate discussion and feedback. This method is used to get a feel for public opinion on a particular topic/issue and to inform the public on proposals.
Pre-arranged meetings	The Council will consider attending Parish Council, Stakeholders and community groups meetings to discuss development plan documents during consultation periods to reach key groups.
Local Media	In some circumstances, particularly in relation to Medway wide issues it may be appropriate to use local media such as newspapers, community magazines, television and radio. In particular, opportunities could be used to utilise local radio and newspapers to ensure communications with a broad range of the community.

Who we will consult

- 1.9 There are statutory requirements for consultation in the planning process, that cover both the specific stages of the plan making process and planning applications, and the organisations that need to be consulted. Government requires local planning authorities to consult with a number of specified statutory bodies. The statutory consultees are defined in legislation (*see links in Appendix*). Government also directs Councils to consult with a range of bodies and groups with the interests of specific groups in the local area, and/or who work for the benefit of the area.
- 1.10 Statutory consultees are organisations responsible for the management or delivery of different resources within Medway; these responsibilities will often be set out in law. The wider general consultees are organisations who represent the interests of different groups or groups whose activities benefit Medway. They are defined by government as:
- Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area i.e. Community groups, residents associations,
 - Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic, religious and national groups in the local planning authority's area
 - Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local planning authority's area,
 - Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area.
- 1.11 The Council has built up extensive links with organisations, communities and businesses, developers and their agents on planning matters over a number of years. Contact details are held, with consent, on a local plan database of people and organisations who are kept informed by the Council about development of planning policy. This is regularly updated

and is a useful mechanism for reaching a wide range of stakeholders. Any residents, business or interested party can add their details to the database by contacting Planning Policy via email at planning.policy@medway.gov.uk or telephone 01634 331629.

- 1.12 The Local Plan database includes both statutory and 'general' consultees. It should be noted that the wider stakeholders who make up the list of consultees are very diverse, and offer a range of specialist technical and professional knowledge, such as environmental groups, like Kent Wildlife Trust; and detailed local information, such as Parish Councils, community and amenity groups; or represent the interests of particular sectors of the community. There is a broad definition of community, and engagement with businesses is important. A key business sector for Planning issues is the development industry, including developers, their agents, and housing bodies. As a minerals and waste planning authorities, contacts with businesses in these sectors are also important. The council also seeks the views of local businesses in preparing planning policy, both on an individual company basis and through business groups like Town Centre Forums and Chambers of Commerce.
- 1.13 Please note that, as legislation and regulations are updated, consultees may change over time.
- 1.14 The Council works to ensure that it meets the statutory consultation requirements. However it also considers additional steps to achieve meaningful engagement in planning that can be used to inform policy and shape the development of Medway. This is highlighted in the case study example given above in working with the Medway Young Inspectors.

Role of Elected Councillors

- 1.15 The elected members of the council are responsible to their electorate as representatives of a particular ward area, decision makers for the whole council area, policy makers for future activities of the council, auditors of the work of the council, regulators of planning, licensing and other matters required by government and as community leaders. Councillors provide the formal decision making process that underpins the planning policy process. In addition, members are involved in a number of internal and external meetings, workshops and exhibitions that inform the preparation of planning policy documents.
- 1.16 Members will be included at all key stages in the plan making process. The cross party Development Plans Advisory Group considers reports throughout the plan preparation process. Briefings are organised for members on key policy matters.
- 1.17 Elected members are a good means to reach the local population; the residents that members represent. These links will be used to help promote wider input to planning policy. Members will abide with the Council's Code of Conduct when participating in consultation on planning matters.

Duty to cooperate

- 1.18 The government introduced a ‘Duty to Cooperate’ in the Localism Act 2011; many of the consultees required under the Duty to Cooperate are already included in the list of specific statutory consultees.
- 1.19 This ‘Duty to Cooperate’ is not defined as consultation, but ensures that the Council works with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies to address strategic issues that affect local plans and cross local authority boundaries. The Council will produce a protocol to guide its work on Duty to Cooperate and report on its activities to meet Duty to Cooperate in its annual Authority Monitoring Report.

Key stages in preparing our Local Plan

Development Plan Document (DPD)

- 1.18 Development Plan Documents are statutory documents that contain land use planning policies which planning applications will be considered against. The focus of planning policy work in Medway is the production of a new Local Plan. Set out below are the key stages of document preparation, as defined by the 2012 Local Planning regulations, and associated requirements for community involvement and engagement. Further details on the plan making process are available on the Planning Advisory Service website at: www.pas.gov.uk

Key Stages	Regulation	Consultation details
Plan Preparation	<i>Regulation 18</i>	At least one formal consultation period during plan preparation stage – minimum of 6 weeks.
Plan Publication	<i>Regulation 19</i>	Statutory period of 6 weeks of consultation on the draft plan.
Submission of Plan to Secretary of State	<i>Regulation 22</i>	Not a consultation stage
Independent Examination	<i>Regulation 24</i>	Notification – at least 6 weeks before the examination. Parties who made representations at Publication stage may be invited to participate in Hearing Sessions. Main modifications to plan - 6 weeks
Publication of Inspector’s recommendation	<i>Regulation 25</i>	Not a consultation stage

<p style="text-align: center;">Adoption of Local Plan Document</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Regulation 26</i></p>	<p>Not a consultation stage 6 week period for legal challenge – made on a point of law only</p>
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- 1.20 Consideration of the Council’s resources available to support the preparation of the Local Plan and associated consultation is set out in the Local Development Scheme, 2014. The Council follows the 6 week period set for consultation in the regulations. It will consider extending this period where appropriate, for example, if the consultation covers a holiday period. The 6 week period is considered a balance between supporting engagement and needing to make timely progress with plan making. Where possible, the Council will give forward notice of consultation events, so groups and individuals can plan their involvement.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

- 1.21 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) are used to support policies and proposals as contained within the Local Plan. They provide additional information/guidance to support the implementation of a policy or proposal, help applicants make successful applications or aid infrastructure delivery but they are not subject to an independent examination. An example of a SPD in Medway includes the Rochester Riverside Development Brief and Masterplan.
- 1.22 The Council follows similar principles for engagement as for local plan documents. It will publish draft versions of the documents for consultation for a six-week period. The Council will then publish the key issues that have been made during consultation, explain how it has considered the issues raised, and set out amendments to the document, as required, before it considers the adoption of a final version.

Neighbourhood Plans

- 1.23 Neighbourhood Plans are prepared by communities to inform the planning of their local areas. Should Parish Councils or Neighbourhood Forums come forward to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan, they will need to work with Medway Council to ensure that consultation is carried out in line with statutory requirements, and is effective in involving local people in the production of the plan.

How information is used and reported

- 1.24 The Council acknowledges that an important part of community involvement is to report back to those who have taken the time to be involved in a consultation, to let them know how their comments and suggestions have been considered.
- 1.25 The Council has a duty to balance individual comments made against other comments received, existing evidence, legal requirements, other local and national policies and general needs and interests. Consequently, there will be circumstances where the council

considers that it is not appropriate to alter the plan or document to accommodate the views of a respondent.

- 1.26 If a representation has been made at any formal consultation stage of plan making, feedback will be provided in accordance with the regulations in place at the time. For the Local Plan process, the comments made in the formal consultation stages are recorded as representations. These are published and reported to Medway Council's Cabinet, together with a statement of how the Council has responded to the key issues raised and any amendments that have been made to emerging policy. These representations are a formal stage of the Local Plan process and will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate with the draft plan for independent Examination. Comments and feedback will be published via the website www.medway.gov.uk/planningpolicy.
- 1.28 A detailed list of all the consultations carried out on the Local Plan/s and SPD's, including workshops and exhibitions, are recorded annually in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR), which is publicly available on the Planning Policy pages of the Council's website. This is published each December.
- 1.29 The Council will comply with the data protection principles in dealing with consultation responses and in retaining personal information.

Part Two

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING APPLICATIONS

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

ENCOURAGING EARLY INVOLVEMENT WITH NEIGHBOURS IN SMALL-SCALE PROPOSALS

PRE-APPLICATION

WORKING WITH DEVELOPERS

PLANNING APPLICATION CONSULTATION

WEBSITE

PUBLICITY ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

HOW TO MAKE A COMMENT

MATERIAL PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

DECISION

POST-DECISION

APPEAL

Development Management

- 2.1 Much new development and some changes of use require planning permission. This is known as the development management process, that reaches a decision on a planning application after consideration of the impacts of the proposal and seeking the views of consultees and local residents. The submission of a planning application can often be the first time that many people come into contact with the planning system, either as applicants or as affected parties.
- 2.2 Consultation is intrinsic to the development management process. The statutory requirement for consultation on planning applications is set out in legislation. Requirements vary according to the type of application and may include notification to specified bodies and general publicity. The Council considers a broad range of applications and seeks the views of expert bodies and groups in technical matters, such as ecology, heritage and hazardous installations. When development involves householder applications, the Council will contact all neighbours with a common boundary with the application site.

Pre Application

- 2.3 The Council, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), places a strong emphasis on early engagement and aims to work with applicants in a positive and pro-active manner.
- 2.4 Therefore the Council welcomes and encourages pre-application discussions with applicants, their agents, developers or interested parties. The pre-application service for applications is subject to a fee, which will vary in scale, depending on the type of application and officer time required. Details are available on the Council's Planning pages on the website: <http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/applyforplanningpermission/pre-applicationadvice.aspx>

Working with Developers

- 2.5 Where developers are proposing major or sensitive developments, the Council expects pre-application consultation and ongoing engagement. This should be carried out by developers or their agents to the standards set out in this SCI. Applicants of major developments are expected to submit a separate Statement of Community Involvement to explain how they have built engagement into the development proposal process. The Council encourages developers to present development proposals to Councillors at early stages in the planning process, before submitting an application. These are successful in briefing members about the proposals and raising key issues. The Council also encourages the use of models and materials to help communicate the scope and impact of developments. These can be

particularly helpful at exhibitions. Design Review Panels, run in Medway by Design South East, have a particular use with larger or more sensitive proposals.

Encouraging early involvement with neighbours in small-scale proposals

- 2.6 The Council encourages applicants to talk to their neighbours informally before finalising their plans and submitting their application.
- 2.7 There are added benefits to both local people and applicants in involving neighbours at an early stage. For applicants, it can inform them of issues that they can address prior to a planning application being submitted saving time and avoiding conflict. For neighbours, it allows them to have an input before proposals reach an advanced stage.

Role of Elected Councillors

- 2.8 Members receive a weekly list of planning applications that have been submitted to the Council and are invited to make representations. The Council encourages members to attend developer presentations outlining potential schemes. The key role of elected councillors is through the Council's Planning Committee. The Planning Committee determines major, complex or controversial planning applications. Ward members may raise issues of local concern to their constituents.

Planning Application Consultation

- 2.9 Once an application has been submitted, validated and entered in the planning register, consultation will begin and representations will be invited in accordance with the timetable set out in legislation. Most applications are subject to a minimum 21 day consultation period, set out under Section 13 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedures) (England) Order 2010.
- 2.10 The Council will carry out further consultation/publicity when amended plans and/or additional information is received. The length of time for further consultation above and beyond statutory requirements will be at the Council's discretion.
- 2.11 Most applications, but not all necessarily, require a site notice. Site Notices are used to advertise the fact that a planning application has been submitted by the Council for a property close to the location of the notice, explaining how one can become involved. All planning applications are advertised by letters of notification to owners or occupiers of land adjoining the site. In certain circumstances, planning applications are advertised by 'press notice' in the Medway Messenger.
- 2.12 The Council's adopted practices state that notification will occur where the neighbours share a common boundary. It will not necessarily ensure that all owners and occupiers who might reasonably consider themselves to be directly affected will be notified. It will consider sending additional notifications in some cases, for example, to property on the opposite side of the road from a front extension to a house or using additional site notices where a development may affect a wider area.

2.13 The Council publishes a weekly list of planning applications. This is available on request in printed form and at local libraries, or can be viewed on the Council's website at <http://www.medway.gov.uk/planningandbuilding.aspx>. The list is distributed widely to statutory bodies, local and interest groups, and individuals who have advised the Council of their interest in being kept informed about Planning matters.

2.14 The Council recognises the interest and input in the development management process from a range of local and wider bodies and groups. These include residents associations, amenity and heritage groups. These groups are regularly consulted on planning applications in their areas of interest. They can provide specialist knowledge, such as Kent Wildlife Trust on ecology, the Local Access Forum on development impacting on a Public Right of Way, or information on a particular area, such as the Town Centre Forums.

Website

2.15 People can view the details of all planning applications, including supporting documents, plans and elevation drawings by using 'Planning Online' web facility.

Publicity on Planning Applications

Type of Planning Application	Stakeholders	What the government regulations say we must do	What additional publicity we do, where appropriate
<p>Major Applications: Housing 10 or more dwellings or 0.5 hectares</p> <p>Other development: 1000m2 floorspace or 1.0 hectares</p> <p>Application that has an environment impact assessment and or affects public rights of way.</p>	<p>Neighbours, general public and wider community</p> <p>Government and Statutory consultees</p>	<p>Press Notice Site Notice</p>	<p>Notifying neighbouring properties</p>
<p>Development affecting the setting of a listed building</p>	<p>Neighbours, general public and wider community English Heritage</p>	<p>Press Notice Site Notice</p>	<p>Notifying neighbouring properties</p>

Development affecting the character of a Conservation Area	Neighbours, general public and wider community English Heritage	Press Notice Site Notice	Notifying neighbouring properties
Other Applications	Neighbours and general public	Site Notice or Notify neighbours	Notifying neighbouring Properties
Advertisement Application	General public	No statutory requirements	Site Notice Notify neighbouring properties
Listed Building Consent	General public English Heritage	Press Notice Site Notice	Heritage groups may be consulted Notifying neighbouring Properties

How to make a Comment

2.16 The Council receives and assesses comments on planning applications by post, fax and email or using the online comments form on the Council's website. Making comments online is the quickest and easiest method and allows the Council to protect personal data more easily. Comments must be received within the consultation deadline to be certain of being taken into account; however, the Local Planning Authority may use discretion to accept comments received outside of the statutory consultation period.

2.17 The Council does not have the necessary resources to respond to each comment made, due to the large number it receives. Nevertheless, all are summarised in the Planning Officer's report and will become public information.

Material Planning Considerations

2.18 In the process of assessing an application the planning officer must have regard to material planning considerations. Some examples of material and non-material considerations can be found below (*please note, this list is not exhaustive*). For example, the loss of property value is not a material planning consideration and will not be taken into account in the assessment of an application.

Material Considerations 	Non-material Considerations 
National Policy	Issues considered under Building Regulations
Local Policies	Land and Boundary Disputes
Relevant Case Law	Opposition to the principle of a development if permission has been granted by an outline application or appeal decision.
Impact on sunlight, outlook, daylight and privacy	Loss of view (does not preclude the loss of outlook)
Highway Issues	Loss of Property Value
Impact on a Listed Building or Conservation Area	Opposition to business competition

Decision

- 2.19 Officer decisions are made daily under “delegated powers”, whilst the Planning Committee takes place approximately every four weeks.
- 2.20 The Committee is attended by elected Members who determine major, complex or controversial planning applications. The committee agendas are available on the Council’s website <http://democracy.medway.gov.uk>, which include reports on the individual planning applications under consideration. Additional written representations on planning applications may be considered by the Planning Committee if received by midday on the day prior to the Committee date.
- 2.21 When a decision has been made on a planning application, all members of the public who made comments are informed of the decision. If planning permission is refused the applicant has the right of appeal to the Secretary of State. There is however no third party right of appeal. If a member of the public has any complaint about the process of decision making the Council has a complaints procedure.

Post-Decision

- 2.22 Neighbours and other interested parties are also informed of the decision where comments/objections have been received, but consultees are not advised of the outcome unless they ask the Council to do so. All the decisions are posted on the Council website.

Appeal

- 2.23 If an applicant is granted planning permission conditionally, or refused planning permission, the planning system allows the applicant to appeal against the decision. The appeal is handled by the Planning Inspectorate on behalf of the Secretary of State and can be dealt with by an Inquiry, Hearing or Written Representations.
- 2.24 All of those people who made written representations on the original planning application will be advised by letter of the appeal procedure and how they can submit further comments. There is no need to resubmit previous representations, as this information is copied and sent directly to the Planning Inspectorate.

Appendices

List of Consultees

These are defined in legislation:

[Town and Country Planning \(Local Planning\) \(England\) Regulations in 2012](#)

Planning Services contact details

Planning Policy

Tel: 01634 331629

planning.policy@medway.gov.uk

Development Management

Tel: 01634 331700 / fax: 01634 331195

planning.representations@medway.gov.uk

Write to: Planning Service

Medway Council

Gun Wharf

Dock Road

Chatham

Kent ME4 4TR.

Glossary

Authority Monitoring Report (AMR): The Council is required to produce an AMR each year to assess the performance and effectiveness of the adopted Local Plan and progress against the Local Development Scheme. The document also includes performance indicators and an update on the plan-making process, as well as statistical data about the borough.

Local Plan (LP): The new Local Plan to 2035 will be the principle development plan for Medway, once it has been completed and will supersede the Local Plan 2003. The Medway Local Plan 2003 still has policies that remain active (saved).

Development Plan Document (DPD): A local development document that forms part of the Local Plan. DPDs can set out the spatial planning strategy, policies and/or allocations of land in the local authority area.

Duty to Co-operate: The 'Duty to Co-operate' is set out in the Localism Act 2011 and the NPPF and ensures that local planning authorities work with neighbouring authorities and other public bodies to address strategic issues that affect local plans and cross-administrative boundaries, through the plan preparation process.

Localism Act: The Localism Act came into force in November 2011. The Act decentralises power away from Government back into the hands of local councils, communities and individuals, enabling them to shape their own locality.

Material planning considerations: Matters that are deemed relevant to the assessment of an application.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): The NPPF sets out the Government's key economic, social and environmental objectives and the planning policies needed to deliver them. It came into force in March 2012 and focused primarily on streamlining a suite of national planning policy documents into a consolidated document.

Neighbourhood plans: (*or Neighbourhood Development Plans*) establishes general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood such as where new homes and offices should be built and what they should look like.

Non-material considerations: An issue of concern to the person commenting which cannot be taken into account when assessing a planning application.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Additional guidance produced by Medway Council to explain how policies should be interpreted and assessed.

Medway Statement of Community Involvement revision 2014

Report on Consultation

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Council officers identified the need to update the Medway Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) as part of work on a new Local Plan. The review process was designed to encourage input from a range of services, organisations, businesses and residents with an interest in Planning.
- 1.2 The Planning Service made use of links with corporate services to share best practice in community engagement and consultation. An initial internal stakeholders ideas/discussion session was held in March 2014, with colleagues from Development Management, the Corporate Intelligence hub, Children's Services and the Health team sharing ideas about the initial draft. The approach being taken in updating the SCI was explained and ideas were gathered from these colleagues who had experience of consultation. This work helped to inform the consultation draft of the revised SCI document.
- 1.3 The SCI consultation ran from 16th June to 4th August 2014. A copy of the document was made available on the Council's Planning web pages, with printed copies available at Gun Wharf reception and Medway libraries. The consultation was publicised through a Public Notice in the Medway Messenger at the start of the consultation process, and posters placed in libraries. The council also directly contacted organisations and individuals on the Planning Policy database, who had expressed an interest in being kept informed on policy developments.
- 1.4 This database was used to seek the views of statutory consultees and wider stakeholders. The database includes over 1000 contacts of organisations, community groups, businesses and residents with an interest in planning for Medway. A combination of postal and email contact was made, notifying stakeholders of the forthcoming consultation, as well as work starting on the preparation of a new Local Plan.
- 1.5 Planning officers met with major developers and their agents in early June 2014 and notified them of the proposed consultation on the revised SCI. They were encouraged to respond to the consultation and were invited to attend a focus group that was to be set up for further discussion of the issues in the SCI.

- 1.6 All contacts on the Planning Policy database were alerted to the focus group meeting, and a follow up invite was sent to those with email addresses. At the end of July 2014 the focus group was organised at Gun Wharf encouraging views from a wide cross section of stakeholders, from the development industry, local businesses and representatives of the wider community.

2. Responses to consultation

- 2.1 Consultees were provided with an online response form that was also available as a printed copy. The form set out the following questions:

Q1. Does this document in your view explain the process and methods for community involvement in planning issues in a clear, understandable way?

Q2. Do you agree with the general principles and methods identified to guide community involvement in our plan making activities (Part One of SCI)?

Q3. Do you agree with the general principles and methods identified to guide community involvement in our planning application process (Part Two of SCI)?

Q4. Are there any other aspects of consultation and engagement that you feel the SCI should address that are not currently covered in the draft document?

Q5. Do you have any further comments on the consultation draft of the revised SCI document?

- 2.2 Fifteen responses were received to the consultation from local forums, national Statutory Bodies, other Local Authorities and local residents. Nine respondents completed the consultation response form. The broad findings are shown in Table 1 below. Although the numbers of replies was low, this was an increase from the level of responses received to the previous round of consultation on the existing version of the SCI.

- 2.3 Overall the majority of respondents were in agreement with the processes and methods suggested for community engagement and found the document to generally be clear and understandable. A number of useful suggestions were made to improve sections of the document and make the context of the document clearer. Details are listed in the responses table (Table 2) towards the end of this document.

- 2.4 Additional information was gathered through the use of the focus group. In total, seventeen consultees attended and feedback from the session has been collated in Table 2 towards the end of this document.

Table 1: Responses received to Consultation on revised SCI

Consultation response form questions and answers (Total of nine form responses)			
Q1. Does this document in your view explain the process and methods for community Involvement in planning issues in a clear, understandable way?			
Agree	Disagree	Neither	No answer
7		2	
Q2. Do you agree with the general principles and methods identified to guide community involvement in our plan making activities (Part One of SCI)?			
Yes	No	Neither	No answer
8			1
Q3. Do you agree with the general principles and methods identified to guide community involvement in our planning application process (Part Two of SCI)?			
Yes	No	Neither	No answer
7		1	1
Q4. Are there any other aspects of consultation and engagement that you feel the SCI should address that are not currently covered in the draft document?			
Yes	No	Neither	No answer
4	4	1	
Q5. Do you have any further comments on the consultation draft of the revised SCI document?			
<i>See response table for comments to this question and other comments</i>			

Feedback from Focus Group

- 2.5 This meeting was conducted at the end of July 2014 and was well attended with a cross section of stakeholders, including Parish Councils, planning consultants, various interest groups/forums, notably the Local Access Forum, Medway Countryside Forum and Medway Urban Parks and Green Spaces Forum, as well as members of the public. Feedback was generally positive, with suggestions made for improving the content and clarity of the draft SCI. The group welcomed steps to encourage and facilitate better engagement in Planning and understanding of the Local Plan. There was general support for information being made available on the Council’s website. However issues were noted in the use of the online search functionality, occasional delays in uploading planning documents, and large files caused difficulties for users with poor broadband speeds and older computers. There was mixed experience of the use of online

consultation software, creating difficulties in sharing information submitted on behalf of a community group.

- 2.6 The group requested that summaries be produced for all key planning documents to reach a wider audience. The cost of hard copies of documents such as the Local Plan could be a concern for some community groups. The fixed length of the formal consultation periods was often too short to accommodate discussion at group meetings that were held quarterly. The group welcomed the use of exhibitions to provide information on planning proposals to the wider public. The focus group members were not active users of social media, and did not favour this medium for communications on planning matters. There was support for the role of elected members in helping to promote and involve residents in Planning. There was discussion of the Planning Committee process and some members of the focus group sought opportunities for public speaking in this venue.

3. Diversity Considerations

- 3.1 The Planning Policy consultation database includes the contact details of a number of disability groups, religious groups, age specific groups and BME groups, representing characteristics protected under Equalities legislation. A follow up exercise was considered noting that responses had not been received from those groups following the main consultation mail out and the further invitation to the focus group.
- 3.2 Contact was made separately with the Medway Disabled Workers Forum, The Medway Ethnic Minority Forum and the Youth Parliament. Following discussions, it was agreed that it would be more appropriate to coordinate further work with these groups to coincide with the directorate and Council wide consultation process being developed. This would avoid such groups having unnecessary and untimely contact that have been raised as concerns.

Table 2: Statement of Community Involvement Consultation Responses with replies

Respondent	Comment	Medway Council response
Medway Towns Footpath Group	Q5. Concern that section 2.15 in SCI regarding an application that has environmental impact or affects a public right of way does not recognise the appropriate importance of notification of relevant organisations.	Confusion in document layout addressed to clarify that notification applies to all types of applications.
Medway Countryside Forum	Q1.Do not find the text of par.1.9 to be helpful. Still confused about definitions of 'statutory', 'specific' and 'general' (consultees).	Section reviewed to improve the clarity of understanding.
	Q2 Formal request to consider allowing objectors to an application (especially residents) to speak briefly to elected members at Planning Meetings.	This has been previously considered by the Planning Committee and it is the Council's view that it is not appropriate to introduce such changes to the committee process.
	Trouble completing response form on-line. Trouble searching on Planning web-pages. IT systems need to be user friendly.	Noted – after hearing of this difficulty with the on-line form, officers updated the website instructions explaining how to save and open with Adobe reader software as there appeared to be incompatibility issues with some web browsers. Further consideration to be made of IT/website improvements.
(RH) Medway Local Access Forum	Q1 [SCI] only reaches a few residents	Steps made to reach broad range of stakeholders. Awareness of need to publicise Local Plan work to wider population, eg through use of Medway Matters.
	Q2 Ward Councillors should be more active in representing local views.	Noted in strengthened sections 1.15 and 1.16.

	Q3 Consultation is always 'too little, too late'.	Statement of Community Involvement seeks to address these concerns. The new Local Plan process will involve consultation at key stages.
	Q5 Page 13 2.15 is confusing I am concerned that applications that have an environmental impact or affect public rights of way seem to have no comments beside them concerning publicity. I assume the layout means to state all three items in the box are covered by the comments?	Confusion in document layout addressed to clarify that notification applies to all types of applications.
	Local Access Forum are not satisfied with the length of time given to consultation as groups such as the LAF who only meet quarterly cannot be expected to consult with members in such a short time.	The Council will endeavour to notify stakeholders as early as possible about consultations. However the Council is unable to extend consultation periods beyond the periods stated in the SCI without delaying the Local Plan and Planning Application process.
(SO) Medway Local Access Forum	Use 'key search terms' rather than links that can become out of date quickly.	To be considered in updates.
(GJ) Medway Ramblers	Q1 ...the drafting of the document could be tightened to make actions even clearer and commitments firmer.	Text reviewed to strengthen the application of SCI principles.
	Q4 Par 2.15 does not include any obligation to inform relevant groups about planning applications which impact on public rights of way – this seems like a significant omission for the minority of such applications which have such an impact.	Confusion in document layout addressed to clarify that notification applies to all types of applications.
	Q5 There are a number of places where the draft ways 'may' or 'can be' when it should be much more definite.	Detailed comments considered for text revision to improve clarity and text reviewed to strengthen the application of SCI principles

	Q5 Lack of precise wording occurs in 2.16. I assume that Council Officers and/or Council members would be involved in pre-application discussions but this isn't actually said.	Text reviewed.
	Q5 Other presentational issues: Member sometimes has a capital sometimes not. LPA abbreviation is not defined.	Addressed in revision.
Mineral and Waste Planning Central Bedfordshire Council	Q3 It may be helpful to note that other major applications include mineral extraction and waste management, which should be publicised by – displaying a site notice for not less than 21 days. Serving notice on any adjoining owner of occupier and a local newspaper advert.	Noted. Text reviewed.
	Q5 It would be useful if the definition for Local Plan (LP) provided in the glossary stated whether the Plan includes Minerals and Waste policies and strategic sites, or if Minerals and Waste matters will be included in a separate Local Plan.	Noted. Text reviewed.
	Q5 It may be useful to residents of Medway who do not speak English if a short paragraph was included at the start of the document which explains the purpose of the SCI and how the individual can contact Medway if he/she requires help with interpretation of the document.	Noted. Text reviewed.
Resident - Rochester	Q1 Could be more context at the outset eg what is a local plan? What is a Statement of Community Involvement? This would help 'lay people'.	Revision has expanded the Introduction to include a fuller explanation of the context of the document.
	Q2 I would not use social media but younger stakeholders I am sure would find this form of communication very helpful as a 'hard to reach group.	Noted.
	Q3 Very clear	Noted

	Q4 The document is comprehensive yet generally concise.	Noted
	Q5 The section of p.6 1.9-1.12 could be clearer.	Noted. Text reviewed.
Francis Iles Gallery	Q3 In the case of business 'change of use' – these should be notified to a wider area and to town centre forums, well in advance.	Noted. Text revised to outline range of stakeholders, including town centre forums.
Kent Wildlife Trust	Q5 I would like to see the wording in the table on page 16 clarified, "Publicity on Planning Applications". This relates in particular to the row for major applications (10 or more dwellings) or those requiring an environmental impact assessment. Here it states that you will contact government and statutory consultees. However, here there needs to be an acknowledgement of the wider consultation with non-statutory consultees (or "general consultation bodies" in the words of the T & C Planning Regs 2012), such as Kent Wildlife Trust. Although we are not statutory consultees we really do need to be consulted on this type of development proposal and therefore I would appreciate this being acknowledged in your SCI.	Noted. Text reviewed.
Equalities and Human Rights Commission	Requested future contact to be via email only	Noted – database details amended
Highways Agency	Thank you for consulting the HA on the above document. I can confirm we have no comments	Noted
Natural England	We regret we are unable to comment, in detail, on individual Statements of Community Involvement. We now ask that all planning consultations are sent electronically to the central hub for our planning and development advisory service	Noted

Appendix 3: Diversity Impact Assessment: Screening Form

Directorate RCC	Revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)		
Officer responsible for assessment Catherine Smith	Date of assessment 9 September 2014	New or existing? New	
Defining what is being assessed			
1. Briefly describe the purpose and objectives	<p>The Statement of Community Involvement is a guide to the planning service on engagement requirements as well as for establishing stakeholder understanding.</p> <p>The current SCI adopted in 2012 needs revising in order that it is that it is 'fit-for-purpose'.</p>		
2. Who is intended to benefit, and in what way?	<p>All of Medway's population as this guide is intended to be more inclusive and clearer in explaining how residents can become involved with the activities of the Planning Service.</p>		
3. What outcomes are wanted?	<p>Broader stakeholder involvement in Planning Service activities, across all community sectors.</p>		
4. What factors/forces could contribute/detract from the outcomes?	Contribute Use of SCI by planning staff and stakeholders.	Detract Stakeholder consultation fatigue.	
5. Who are the main stakeholders?	<p>Whole community of Medway, statutory and voluntary organisations, businesses and all with an interest in development of Medway.</p>		
6. Who implements this and who is responsible?	<p>Medway Planning services will use this as a guide for its consultation activities, make it widely available to assist stakeholders in their understanding of planning activities as a key document under the new Local Plan.</p>		

Assessing impact		
7. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>racial/ethnic groups</i>?	YES	The Council will seek to engage all sectors of the community in information gathering and consultation throughout the planning process.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	
8. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>disability</i>?	YES	The Council will seek to engage all sectors of the community in information gathering and consultation throughout the planning process.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	
9. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>gender</i>?	YES	The Council will seek to engage all sectors of the community in information gathering and consultation throughout the planning process.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	
10. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to <i>sexual orientation</i>?	YES	The Council will seek to engage all sectors of the community in information gathering and consultation throughout the planning process.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	
11. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>religion or belief</i>?	YES	The Council will seek to engage all sectors of the community in information gathering and consultation throughout the planning process.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	
12. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a differential impact due to people's <i>age</i>?	YES	The Council will seek to engage all sectors of the community in information gathering and consultation throughout the planning process.
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	
13. Are there concerns that there <u>could</u> be a differential	YES	The Council will seek to engage all sectors of the community in information gathering

impact due to <i>being transgendered or transsexual</i> ?	NO	and consultation throughout the planning process.
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	
14. Are there any <i>other</i> groups that would find it difficult to access/make use of the function (e.g. speakers of other languages; people with caring responsibilities or dependants; those with an offending past; or people living in rural areas)?	YES	If yes, which group(s)?
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	
15. Are there concerns there <u>could</u> be a have a differential impact due to <i>multiple discriminations</i> (e.g. disability <u>and</u> age)?	YES	
	NO	
What evidence exists for this?	Statutory basis for planning policy requirements. The Medway SCI sets out principles for engagement to reach a wide range of sectors of the community.	

Conclusions & recommendation		
16. Could the differential impacts identified in questions 7-15 amount to there being the potential for adverse impact?	YES	
	NO	
Recommendation to proceed to a full impact assessment?		
NO	This function/ policy/ service change complies with the requirements of the legislation and there is evidence to show this is the case.	

Planning ahead: Reminders for the next review		
Date of next review	On review of the Medway Statement of Community Involvement	
Areas to check at next review (e.g. new census information, new legislation due)	Local Plan preparation will take account of comprehensive range of demographic and other information in assessing development needs in Medway.	
Is there <i>another</i> group (e.g. new communities) that is relevant and ought to be considered next time?	No	
Signed (completing officer/service manager)	Date	9 September 2014
Signed (service manager/Assistant Director)	Date	9 September 2014

**Regeneration, Community and Culture Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – 21 August 2014**

Discussion:

The Committee received a report outlining the review of the Medway Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) and the associated consultation process.

It was noted that the production of a SCI was a statutory requirement to support development policy and was a key document needed in order to progress through the stages to an adopted Local Plan.

The purpose of a SCI was to lay out concisely and clearly how the Council would engage with stakeholders in matters relating to the Local Plan and the principles to be considered in consulting on planning applications.

Appended to the report was the updated consultation draft of the SCI 2014. The Committee was advised that between 20 June – 4 August 2014 a full consultation process had been undertaken on the draft SCI. A schedule of comments received arising from the consultation process was appended to the report along with the Council's suggested response.

The Committee was requested to consider the draft SCI and refer any comments to the Cabinet.

The Committee discussed the report and suggested that the section on publicity on planning applications be amended to include consultation with Councillors and Town Centre Forums and Town Centre Managers.

Decision:

The Committee expressed its appreciation to officers for the comprehensive report on the draft revision of the Statement of Community Involvement and requested that Councillors, Town Centre Forums and Town Centre Managers be included within the stakeholders to be consulted upon planning applications.