

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI - Planning)

Overview Version

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This is the overview version of your Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). It briefly summarises the main issues to be found in the full version of the SCI which was revised in May 2018 and will hopefully act as a useful 'taster' to introduce citizens to the future role of Planning and your potential involvement with it across our District. For more detailed information on how to become involved, please refer to the main SCI document.

1.2 The purpose of the Planning system is to secure the orderly and consistent development of land with the objective of furthering sustainable development and improving well-being. The Council appreciates that planning can appear to some to be a complicated and bureaucratic process, potentially long and full of technical talk. To ensure that this document is as easy to understand as possible, we have written it in plain English and with the minimum of Planning jargon. Where appropriate, we will adopt a similar approach for future published planning documents.

2.0 What is the SCI?

2.1 The SCI describes how and when Council will involve the community in the planning process. This includes:

- **The Local Development Plan (LDP) process** which sets out the strategic development vision for the District from 2015 – 2032;
- **The Development Management process** through which planning applications are considered;
- **The Enforcement process** which deals with breaches of planning control.

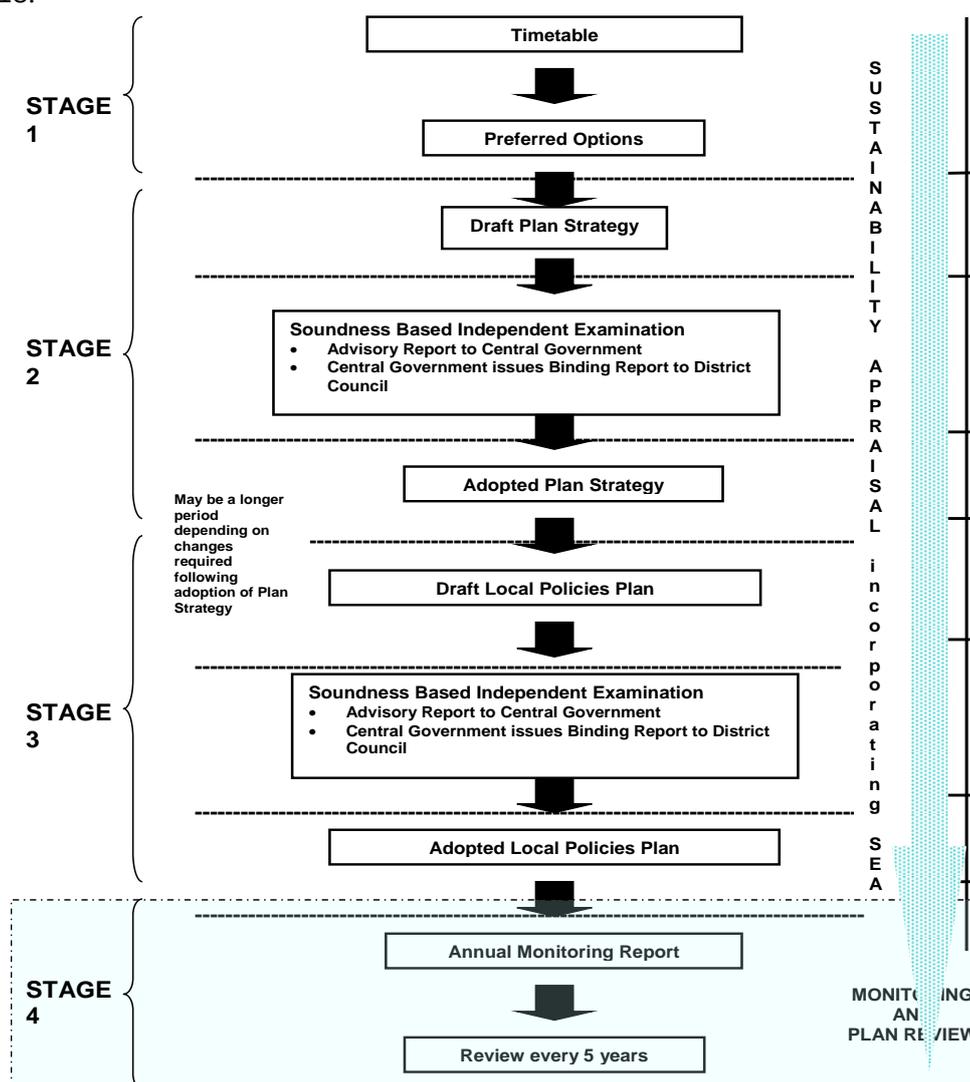
2.2 The Council is keen to ensure that by actively involving the public in early and meaningful dialogue, we will create a culture of effective and worthwhile participation within an open and transparent planning process. The SCI is for 'interested persons' – these include individuals, stakeholder groups and larger organisations and aims to ensure that:

- Everyone has an early and informed opportunity to express their views about planning;
- All groups in our community, regardless of religious belief, political opinion, racial group, age, sex, marital status, physical ability, sexual orientation, and those with and without dependants are enabled and empowered to participate in all aspects of the planning process.

3.0 The LDP process

3.1 The purpose of the LDP is to inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within our District up to 2032. It will be prepared within the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and the Community Plan. The LDP will be produced in two stages; a Plan Strategy and a Local Policies Plan – each with

their own Independent Examination. A revised LDP Timetable was published in May 2018.



3.2 How and when you can get involved in the preparation of your LDP:

You can get involved at the following stages:

Preferred Options; Draft Plan Strategy (PS); Public Inspection of Representations for the draft PS; Independent Examination (PS); Local Policies Plan (LPP); Public Inspection of Representations for the LPP; Independent Examination (LPP). The plan is also accompanied by a Sustainability Assessment process which ensures the plan is soundly balanced in terms of social, economic and environmental considerations. Other assessments including Rural Proofing and an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken and similar opportunities exist to get involved in these processes.

3.3 We will inform you of your opportunities to get involved in all of these stages via our Council LDP website, local press and social media. Our interactive on-line LDP feedback tool (EU - IMPROVE Project) also enables you to get your message on relevant planning issues straight into the LDP decision making process.

4.0 The Development Management process

4.1 Development Management is the process through which applications are considered. The Council is now responsible for making decisions on the majority of planning applications in the District. We also deal with Listed Building applications, consent for works in a Conservation Area, Tree Preservation Orders, works to protected trees and advertising consent.

How and when you can be involved:

For those making a planning application:

4.1 You can contact planning officials before you submit your application by way of a Pre Application Discussion (PAD). PADs are encouraged for a range of applications, to consider whether the principle of development is acceptable and to clarify the level of detail required to determine an application. For major applications, there will be discussions as to how the community should be involved in the decision-making process.

4.3 Legislation now exists requiring applicants to inform and involve the wider community in discussion prior to submitting a formal planning application for a major application. This is done through a Pre Application Community Consultation (PACC). Applicants must undertake a PACC 12 weeks before submitting their application.

For those wanting to comment on a planning application:

4.4 When a planning application is submitted, you will have the opportunity to express your opinion in regard to how you may be affected by a proposal. We will inform the public of all planning applications when required through:

- Advertising in the local newspapers & on Council's Planning website; and
- Neighbour Notification letters

4.5 Individuals, groups and organisations can comment on a planning application even if they have not been neighbour notified by the Council. Only 'material planning considerations' are taken into account. All comments will be fully considered within the Planning Officer's report.

4.6 Certain applications may require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) under European legislation due to their nature, scale or location. For such applications, we will engage with the community as set out in the EIA regulations.

4.7 Weekly lists of planning applications received within the Council area are available on the Council website and the Northern Ireland Planning Portal. Planning applications can be viewed online and at the Council offices. In the Council offices in Derry, Planning officers will be available should you wish to obtain general planning advice; however you are advised to make an appointment if you wish to speak to a particular officer about a specific application. A Planning Clinic takes place every Wednesday in the Council's Strabane office, where a Duty Planner is available to give advice, by appointment.

Planning Committee Stage:

- 4.8 All major applications and those called in with the agreement of the Chair of the Planning Committee will be considered and decided by the Council's Planning Committee. Applicants and those wishing to make representations about a planning application can apply in advance to the Planning office to speak at the Planning Committee prior to a decision being made on an application.

Planning Committee Decision:

- 4.10 The decision is recorded on the Council's website and in the statutory Planning Register. The reasoning will be set out in the Planning Officer's report which is available on the Planning Portal or upon request. Where the Planning Committee makes a decision contrary to a Planning Officer's recommendation, the justification for this can be viewed in the minutes, published on our website.

Planning Appeals

- 4.11 Where an applicant is unhappy with the Council's decision or a condition attached to a permission, they may appeal to the Planning Appeals Commission (PAC). There are no third party rights of appeal. An applicant may also appeal to the PAC where the Council has not determined an application within the relevant period. Further guidance can be found on the PAC website.

5.0 The Enforcement Process

- 5.1 Your Council encourages the community to report cases where they believe there has been a breach of planning control. Enforcement is a discretionary power and there may be cases where it is not expedient to pursue such action. All enforcement related complaints are treated confidentially. If the complaint results in a planning application being submitted, this will be publicised as normal and adjoining neighbours will be notified. The Council will acknowledge all complaints received and will write to advise the complainant on the action taken, at the conclusion of the case. Only those upon whom an enforcement notice has been served have the right of appeal.
- 5.2 The Council's priorities for enforcement action are contained within the Enforcement Strategy, which is subject to regular review which may involve public consultation as part of this review process.

6.0 Conservation Areas

- 6.1 Our District has 5 Conservation Areas, which are areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character of which it is desirable to preserve and enhance. The Council will involve the community in the designation, variation or cancellation of a Conservation Area, and any significant works proposed, such as public realm schemes.
- 6.2 The Council will formally consult with the Historic Buildings Council and DfC / DAERA, advertise in the local press and hold public meetings to discuss and present proposals. Upon formal designation, the Council will publish a public notice in the local press and hold a public launch and exhibition.