



**Stockton-on-Tees Local Plan
Statement of
Community Involvement
Adopted Version
November 2016**



Stockton-on-Tees
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Economic Regeneration and Transport

Big plans for an outstanding Borough

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement sets out Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's policies for involving interested parties in matters relating to development in their area. It applies to:
 - The preparation and revision of the Council's Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents, which are also known as Local Development Documents.
 - The Authority's development management function, which involves the determination of planning applications.
- 1.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 set out most of the requirements for involving interested parties in the preparation of Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents. This includes the individuals and organisations who must be consulted, how they should be consulted, and at what stages during the plan preparation process.
- 1.3 The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 includes the requirements for how planning applications should be publicised.
- 1.4 Effective consultation is at the heart of our commitment to the community. With this in mind, Stockton Council has produced a number of documents relating to consultation and community engagement. These include a Consultation Strategy, a Community Engagement Strategy and a Communications Strategy for Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council.
- 1.5 Community involvement in undertaking the Council's planning functions will accord with the principles and best practice set out in these documents, in particular the key principles of frontloading and place shaping.
- 1.6 Encouraging key stakeholders and the community to have an active role in shaping the place they live leads to better planning decisions and a sense of local pride and community.
- 1.7 Frontloading means engaging with the community at the earliest stages of document preparation. This provides opportunities to influence the content and focus of policies, allowing any conflicts to be identified, explored and where possible, resolved.

2 Community Involvement in Local Plan Preparation

When will we consult?

- 2.1 National planning policy requires the Council to produce a Local Plan with early and meaningful engagement with a wide selection of the community. This allows Local Plans to reflect a collective vision and agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area.
- 2.2 The minimum statutory requirements for consultation and public participation in Local Plan preparation are set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. In order to be considered a legally compliant and sound plan for the Borough, an LDD must be prepared in accordance with these regulations. There are also legal requirements for consultation in relation to Strategic Environmental Assessments and Habitats Regulations Assessments – these are incorporated into the consultations undertaken in relation to the Local Planning Regulations.
- 2.3 The Local Planning Regulations state that there must be at least two consultation periods for LDDs – one to determine the issues the LDD should address and a second prior to the submission of the LDD to the Secretary of State. Further consultations will be undertaken where it is considered that there is scope to influence emerging Local Plan policies and participants will be able to contribute meaningfully to plan preparation.
- 2.4 Information on the Council's programme for preparing or revising its Local Plan is contained in its Local Development Scheme (LDS), which is published on the Council's website. The timetable for preparation will also be provided on the website and updated regularly.
- 2.5 Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) provide clarification on the policies contained within the Local Plan and guidance on how they will be implemented. SPDs will normally undergo a single period of consultation, which will be for a minimum period of four weeks, prior to its adoption by the Council.

Who will we consult?

- 2.6 In accordance with the Local Plan regulations, we will consult with 'general consultation bodies', which the Council considers appropriate, and 'specific' consultation bodies including:
 - Relevant telecommunications companies
 - Relevant electricity and gas companies
 - Relevant sewerage and water undertakers
 - Network Rail
 - Government agencies including Historic England, Natural England, Environment Agency, and the Homes and Communities Agency
 - Adjacent Local Authorities
 - Parish and Town Councils within and adjacent to the Borough
 - Other authorities operating within the Borough, including the Health and Fire Authorities and Police and Crime Commissioners for Cleveland, Durham and North Yorkshire
 - Community and residents groups
 - Any residents, businesses and other organisations representing the interests of various groups who have expressed an interest in Stockton's Local Plan

- 2.7 Whilst most consultations will be open to the very broadest audience, a minority will be targeted towards particular organisations. This may be because an issue relates to a particular area of the Borough or a small number of people. Similarly, some of the background documents we produce require specialist knowledge and understanding of a topic area in order to make comments. We will focus these consultations on the individuals and organisations that are most able to respond effectively.
- 2.8 The details of any individuals or groups who have expressed an interest in the Local Plan are held in a database so they can be kept informed of its progress and any opportunities to participate in consultations. If you or your organisation would like to be included on the database, please contact the Economic Strategy and Spatial Planning Team using the contact details at the end of this document.

What will we do?

- 2.9 We will use a wide variety of consultation methods to ensure that the local community and other relevant stakeholders are able to engage and participate in the production of the Local Plan. These take a variety of forms, from letting people know that a consultation is taking place to involvement in the detail of policy writing. We will select the methods we use with reference to the regulations, the resources available and the scope for participants to influence outcomes.
- 2.10 Whether we are undertaking a specific consultation period or not, the Council welcomes your views and input:
- We are available by telephone from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm Friday. We aim to answer your call within five rings and use voicemail when we are unavailable.
 - If you email us you will receive an acknowledgement within one working day. We will aim to send you a full response within 10 working days.
 - If you write to us we will aim to send you a full response within 10 working days.
 - If you have difficulty communicating with us, we will make information available in other formats such as braille, large print and audio, on request. We will provide you with an interpreter if you need one and can arrange to have information translated into different language. Our translation and interpretation service is provided free of charge.
- 2.11 Before beginning a consultation period, we will produce a consultation plan setting out how, who and when we will consult. We will use a range of communication methods to inform individuals and organisations that a consultation is taking place, what the major issues are and how they can get involved. These will include:
- Publishing information and relevant documents on the Economic Strategy and Spatial Planning web pages and any relevant areas of the Council's website.
 - Making information and relevant documents available in the Council's principal offices and in all libraries in the Borough.
 - Writing letters and emails to those on our consultation database (including both individuals and organisations).
 - Writing and distributing press releases to the local media, including community and parish newsletters.
 - Using Facebook, Twitter and other social networking websites where appropriate.
 - Attending meetings of interested groups as appropriate.

- 2.12 For the largest consultations and where the issues being discussed are complicated or likely to be controversial, we will consider:
- Including articles in the Stockton News magazine.
 - Holding 'road shows' at locations around the borough, including libraries, supermarkets and community venues.
 - Running workshops where issues can be explored in greater depth.

What You Can Do

- 2.13 If you tell us you are interested in the Local Plan and would like to be kept informed, we will add your details to our Consultation Database. This means that you will receive a letter or email whenever there is an opportunity for you to be involved and to let you know that new documents have been adopted – this usually leads to three or four communications each year. This communication will give details of the document concerned, where the document is available, how you can get involved and how you can get further information. If you would like your contact details to be added to our database, please contact us using the details at the end of this document.
- 2.14 If you would like to access further information on the Local Plan, including details of the evidence informing policy development, you can visit our web pages at **www.stockton.gov.uk/spatialplanning** You can also use the 'Topic Alerter' function of the Council's Egenda system, which will alert you when any item relating to the Local Plan is to be considered by a Council committee. You will then be able to read any publicly available reports that have been produced and attend meetings as a member of the public. More information is available on the Council's website .
- 2.15 Whilst we always welcome your views and suggestions, in order to take your comments on specific matters into account and incorporate them into the Local Plan process, we generally need to receive them in writing (by letter or email), during set consultation periods. This means that the process is transparent and everyone can see how our policies have developed. When we hold consultation events such as workshops, we will write up the views expressed so that they can be taken into account formally.
- 2.16 To make your comments as effective as possible you should:
- Make sure your comments relate to the issues being considered.
 - Make your comments clear and concise, so that we know what your main points are.
 - Make your comments within published time periods.
 - Use the form provided. For most of our consultations, we provide a comments form for you to fill in. Using the form isn't compulsory, but it makes your comments clearer and makes sure we have all the information we need
 - Be aware that your comments will be made publicly available on our website, in our offices, and in subsequent publications (your personal details, such as email address, postal address and signature will remain confidential).
 - Be courteous and respectful of other people's views.
 - If you are a member of a group or organisation, let us know whether you are responding on your own behalf or as a member of that body. If you are responding on behalf of a group or organisation, you should make sure that the full range of members' views is represented. You can include a variety of views on an issue where necessary.

¹ www.stockton.gov.uk/stockton-council/councillors-and-council-meetings-egenda/

- 2.17 If you need any assistance with any of our documents or making your comments, please contact us using the details at the end of this document. We are happy to help. In addition, Planning Aid is a free, independent and professional service offering advice and help on planning matters. It is aimed at individuals, community groups and other voluntary groups who cannot afford to pay for private consultants. Contact details for Planning Aid are also available at the end of this document.

How will decisions be made?

- 2.18 Planning is a complicated mix of national priorities, local circumstances and community views. In bringing these different strands together, there are likely to be conflicting views about the best use of land. The principle of frontloading - ensuring consultation and community engagement takes place at the earliest appropriate stage - is intended to reduce conflict by ensuring everyone has an opportunity to express their views. In addition, place shaping - where key stakeholders and the community are encouraged to have an active role in shaping the place they live in - will build capacity for understanding planning issues and conflicting points of view.
- 2.19 Despite the application of these principles, there may still be occasions when differences of opinion cannot be easily resolved. The Council will analyse comments made in response to consultations and balance different needs and opinions, including the need to conform to national policy and guidance, and the needs of groups who have not been engaged in the consultation.
- 2.20 Once the Council has considered the representations of these groups, and made any necessary amendments, Local Development documents will progress to Examination in Public, whilst Supplementary Planning Documents will be adopted by the Council. Any representations made on the Local Development Documents will be forwarded to the Inspector conducting the examination, who will consider the points raised.

Feedback

- 2.21 Where consultation has been carried out as part of the preparation of a Local Development Document or Supplementary Planning Document, a summary of the views and comments received, together with our response will be made available in the following ways:
- On our web-site.
 - In paper format, for those who request feedback.
 - As part of reports to the Council's Planning Committee and Cabinet.
 - Where appropriate, via newsletters and the local press.
 - Where appropriate, as part of follow-up consultation exercises.
- 2.22 Full feedback on comments received during consultations is usually made available when the next draft of the relevant document is produced. We will evaluate and learn from consultation and where appropriate, improve arrangements. After each consultation, we will:
- Review those who responded to a consultation exercise to identify whether there are any patterns or obvious gaps. This may help to identify any groups not reached by the methods used and will be incorporated into an Equalities Impact Assessment.
 - Compare the methods of consultation used and the views expressed to see if there is any significant variation in comments which may be directly related to the methods used.
 - Review our feedback arrangements.

Duty to Co-operate

- 2.23 The Localism Act (2011) includes a duty for local planning authorities to co-operate on sustainable development and use of land that would have a significant impact on more than one local planning area. It requires that councils and other public bodies engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis, to set out policies to address such issues and consider joint approaches to plan making. These might include homes and jobs needed in the area, the location of retail and other commercial development, the provision of physical and social infrastructure, and the conservation and enhancement of the environment, including climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- 2.24 The Council is committed to co-operating with other local authorities and public bodies with an interest in land use and development in the Borough. We will also work with other local planning authorities where our co-operation is required for the production of their Local Plans. Through this co-operation, we will promote Stockton-on-Tees' best interests whilst recognising these may be best served through compromise and the pursuit of sub-regional, regional and national goals.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 2.25 Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to agree a Neighbourhood Development Plan, make a Neighbourhood Development Order and make a Community Right to Build Order. The framework for producing these plans and orders is set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.
- 2.26 Where local people express an interest in neighbourhood planning, the Council will support them. This will include initial advice about the process, providing detail about emerging and existing Local Plan policies, and sharing other information available to the Council. Where an area is not a Parish, the Council will designate Neighbourhood Forums and Neighbourhood Areas in response to submissions from neighbourhoods. However, each neighbourhood will be responsible for defining its Neighbourhood Area and preparing its plan or order.
- 2.27 The Council will ensure that the Neighbourhood Development Plan, Neighbourhood Development Order or Community Right to Build Order meet the minimum conditions before organising their independent examination. In addition, the Council will run and pay for the neighbourhood planning referendum unless alternative funding is available.
- 2.28 Further information about funding and support for neighbourhood planning is available at www.gov.uk.

Availability of Documents

- 2.29 Adopted Local Development Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents will be made available on the Council's website, at the Council's Contact Centre in Stockton Town Centre and at all libraries within the Borough.
- 2.30 Evidence base documents which have informed policy preparation will also be made available on the Council's website and will be available to view at the Council's Contact Centre in Stockton Town Centre. They will be made available as soon as reasonably practicable following the submission of Local Development Documents to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public. They will continue to be made available for three months following the document's adoption by the Council.
- 2.31 The Council will supply copies of documents on request where practicable; however a charge will be made for this.

3 Community Involvement in Planning Applications

- 3.1 There are a number of legal requirements for consulting members of the public and other stakeholders on applications for planning permission – the Council will ensure that all these requirements are met before a decision on an application is made. However, the Council believes that engaging the community in development schemes has many advantages and results in better developments.

What the Council will do

- 3.2 The Planning Development Services Team are available to speak to members of the public regarding planning matters:
- By telephone from 8.30am to 5pm Monday to Thursday and 8.30am to 4.30pm Friday. We aim to answer your call within five rings and use voicemail when we are unavailable.
 - If you email us you will receive an acknowledgement within one working day. We will aim to send you a full response within 10 working days.
 - If you write to us we will aim to send you a full response within 10 working days.
 - If you have difficulty communicating with us, we will make information available in other formats such as braille, large print and audio, on request. We will provide you with an interpreter if you need one and can arrange to have information translated into different language. Our translation and interpretation service is provided free of charge.
- 3.3 When a planning application is submitted, the Council undertakes a range of consultation activities. The scale and nature of the activities depends on the nature of the particular application. The processes for community involvement in the various stages of determining applications are set out on the Planning Development Services Section of Council's website under the heading 'The planning process explained':
- 3.4 Planning applications and most of the documents associated with them are available on the Council's website. You can also use a computer at the Council's Contact Centre in Stockton, or any of the Borough's libraries to access planning applications. A duty officer will be available at the Contact Centre in Stockton to answer any general queries, however if you would like to speak to a particular officer in relation to an application, you must make an appointment.
- 3.5 When a planning application has been submitted, the Council uses a variety of methods to inform people and organisations who may want to make comments. The methods used depend on the type of application and are set out in regulations, but can include:
- Sending letters to neighbours, telling them about the application and inviting them to make comments.
 - Preparation and publication of a list of the planning applications submitted each week.
 - Newspaper advertisements for major applications, applications that are a clear departure from the development plan, or those affecting public rights of way, listed buildings and conservation areas.
 - Display of site notices.
 - Existing consultation processes with specific bodies (e.g. Parish/Town Councils).
 - Existing protocols with statutory agencies (for example Environment Agency, Highways England).
 - Placing copies of the application form and plans for all proposals on our web site.

3.6 Interested parties are invited to make comments on applications in writing, either by post, by email or use our online 'Public Access' system which is available on the Council's website . Where comments are material to the planning application, they will be taken into account when decisions are made.

What we will expect developers to do

3.7 Engaging with the community and stakeholders prior to an application being submitted does not mean that a scheme will definitely be given approval or be deliverable, however it does have significant advantages for everyone. For developers, engaging with the local community and stakeholders can bring local knowledge and improve the relationships of all involved. Communities also input into the formulation of proposals, fully understand proposals once they are drawn up and identify how a development can work with and add value to the local area. By entering into a dialogue early in the process, developers and communities/stakeholders can work together to produce better schemes and to make good relationships which will be maintained as the development is constructed and becomes operational. Good community engagement is unlikely to end when the planning application is submitted. Effective engagement will continue when the application is submitted and as it passes through the decision making process to the construction and operation stage.

3.8 It is a requirement for certain developments (set out under Section 122 of the Localism Act) to undertake pre-application community consultation . We welcome evidence of pre-application community and stakeholder engagement on all proposals; however we will expect developers to undertake community engagement in the following instances. This is not an exhaustive list and developers and applicants are strongly advised to seek our views as to whether a proposal requires pre-application consultation.

- Applications which are subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment.
- Applications which involve the disposal and treatment of waste.
- Applications which involve the winning and working of minerals and the use of land for mineral deposits.
- Applications which involve residential development where the number of dwellings to be provided is 30 or more, or involve the demolition of existing residential property to facilitate the erection of flats, or there is a site area of more than 1 hectare, and the principle has not yet been established by means of a detailed or outline planning permission.
- Applications which involve the provision of a building or buildings for industrial or storage use where the floor space is over 50,000 sq. metres.
- Applications which involve the provision of a building or buildings where the floor space to be created is over 25,000 sq. metres.
- Applications which involve a traffic or retail impact assessment.
- Applications which are a departure from the Development Plan and involve the development of land owned by the Council.
- Applications which, in the view of the Local Planning Authority, are of special interest to the community.

² www.developmentmanagement.stockton.gov.uk/online-applications/

- 3.9 There is no fixed formula for effective community engagement; every development scheme and every community will be different. However, as a minimum, community engagement usually includes:
- Explaining proposals to residents, workers and users of the area around the site of the proposed development.
 - Requesting the views of people in the community.
 - Considering those views.
 - Amending the proposals to take the views of the community into account where appropriate, or clearly demonstrating why it has not been possible to do so.
- 3.10 There are some key activities and principles which will support a positive and beneficial engagement process. Further detail and good practice guidance on engaging the community can be found in the Planning Aid booklet 'Good Practice Guide to Public Engagement in Development Schemes'.
- 3.11 Following community engagement, you should prepare a statement to accompany your planning application which sets out:
- Who was involved in the community engagement exercise.
 - The methods used to engage the community, including any activities undertaken to build the community's understanding and capacity to make comments.
 - The measures taken to ensure an inclusive, community-wide view were achieved.
 - How the scheme developed as a result of community engagement, including changes made as a result of community views. Where community views have not been reflected in the scheme, this should also be explained.
 - How feedback was given to the community.
- 3.12 This statement could also set out any arrangements for on-going community engagement in the development process. You could also report how any difficulties were overcome and any particular successes which will be taken forward into future projects.

4 Contacts

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Principal Office

Customer Service Centre
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD

Tel: 01642 393939
www.stockton.gov.uk

Economic Strategy and Spatial Planning

Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD

Tel: 01642 526050
Email: spatialplans@stockton.gov.uk

Planning Development Services

Municipal Buildings
Church Road
Stockton-on-Tees
TS18 1LD

Tel: 01642 526022
Email: planningdevelopmentservices@stockton.gov.uk

Planning Aid

Planning Aid Advice Line:

Tel: 0330 123 9244 (local call rate from landlines and mobiles)
Email: advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

Planning Aid England - General Enquiries:

Tel: 020 7929 8338
Email: info@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

If you would like this information in any other language or format for example
large print or audio please contact 01642 526050

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بالشريط المسجل فالرجاء الإتصال 'بدايفرستي تيم'
على هاتف رقم

ARABIC

اگر شما این اطلاعات را به زبان یا شکل دیگری مثلا چاپ
بزرگ یا بصورت صدا میخواهید لطفا با تیم دایورسیتی
(گونگونی) با شماره به تماس شوید

FARSI

Si vous souhaitez obtenir ces informations dans
d'autres langues ou sous un autre format, par
exemple, en gros caractères / version audio, veuillez
contacter l'équipe au n°

FRENCH

نه گهر حهزت لئ یه نه م زانیاریه به ده سنتت بکه ویت به
زمانه کانی نر یان به شیوه یه کی نر یو نمونه چاپی گه وره/یان
به تیپی تو مارکراو تکابه په یوه ندی بکه به 'تیمی دایفرستی'
له سه ر ژماره ی ته له فون

KURDISH

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CHINESE

ਜੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਬਣਤਰ ਜਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੱਡੀ
ਛਪਾਈ ਵਿੱਚ ਜਾਂ ਟੇਪ/ਸੀ ਡੀ 'ਤੇ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ
ਉੱਚ ਨੰਬਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ।

PUNJABI

اگر آپ ان معلومات کو کسی بھی اور زبان یا انداز، مثلاً بڑے پرنٹ/آڈیو ٹیپ وغیرہ میں حاصل کرنا
چاہیں، تو ڈائیورسٹی ٹیم کو اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے

URDU