

MY NEIGH BOUR HOOD

A NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLANNING PROTOCOL
FOR BATH AND NORTH
EAST SOMERSET



Adoption Draft September 2012

For more information on *My Neighbourhood*
please contact the Planning Policy team at:

planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk

This document can also
be viewed on our website:

www.bathnes.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

My Neighbourhood can be made available
in a range of languages, large print, Braille,
on tape, electronic and accessible formats
by contacting Planning Policy on:

Telephone: 01225 477548

Fax: 01225 394199

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P2

ONE
INTRODUCTION

TWO
HAVE YOUR SAY ON
PLANNING APPLICATIONS

P4

THREE
HERITAGE
ASSETS

P16

FOUR
GET INVOLVED
IN LOCAL
PLANNING
POLICY

P20

FIVE
HOW TO
DO YOUR OWN
NEIGHBOURHOOD
PLANNING

P28

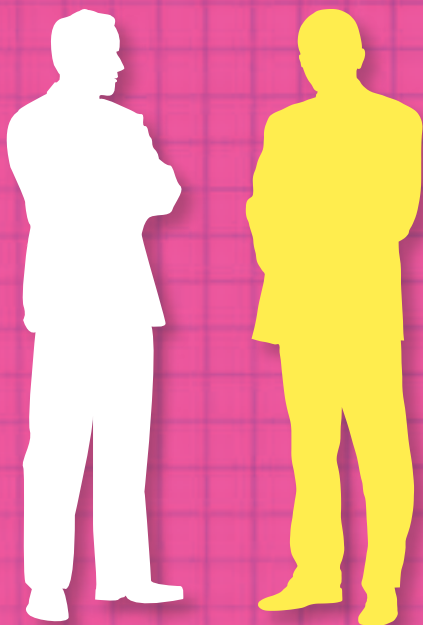
P52

P46

SIX
THE IMPORTANCE
OF TREES

SEVEN
OTHER TOOLS
AND TIPS FOR
COMMUNITIES

ONE INTRODUCTION



If you need help understanding any technical terms the Planning Portal website has a useful glossary:

www.planningportal.gov.uk/general/glossaryandlinks/glossary

Bath and North East Somerset Council want to see more people get involved in the planning process. Whether you live or work in the area or have an interest in the area we want to hear from you and we want to make that process of involvement as easy as possible.

It is important that we involve the wider community at an early stage in the decision-making processes, when it is possible to make a difference. There are a range of tried and tested ways in which you can get involved in planning issues.

With the introduction of the Localism Act and the new Neighbourhood Planning duties a new tier of planning has been introduced which will empower communities more than ever before to shape the future of development in their neighbourhoods.

This *My Neighbourhood Guide* is a Neighbourhood Planning Protocol for Bath & North East Somerset outlines all of the ways you can get involved in planning issues in your neighbourhood. This includes:

- How to have your say on planning applications
- How to get involved with local planning policy development
- How to do your own Neighbourhood Planning
- How to protect your trees
- Other tips and tools for communities

This document has been prepared to provide advice and clarity to the community and developers with interest in Bath & North East Somerset. It supersedes the previous B&NES Statement of Community Involvement.

Local people should be at the heart of changes to their neighbourhoods

The Glass-House Community Led Design

Promoting independence and positive lives for everyone

Creating neighbourhoods where people are proud to live

Building a stronger economy

THIS NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING PROTOCOL SUPPORTS THE COUNCILS 2012 VISION AND VALUES:

TWO

HAVE YOUR SAY ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS



DEVELOPERS AND HOME OWNERS SUBMIT PLANNING APPLICATIONS TO THE LOCAL AUTHORITY TO GET PERMISSION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND BUILDING WORK. YOU HAVE THE CHANCE TO COMMENT ON THESE APPLICATIONS TO MAKE YOUR VIEWS KNOWN.

INTRODUCTION

Planning applications are dealt with by the Development Management Department. Two teams in the Department deal with all types of planning application and one other team specialise in dealing with listed buildings and conservation area applications.

All planning applications must be decided in accordance with Bath & North East Somerset's Local Development Framework (LDF), National policy and adopted Neighbourhood Plans. It is possible for anyone to comment on a planning application.

The majority of planning applications considered by the Council are small scale e.g. householder applications or applications for development which will affect a relatively small area. **Figure 1** is a summary diagram outlining the process of determining a planning application. The Council aims to determine planning applications within 8 weeks of validation.

Planning applications for major development in Bath & North East Somerset require wider community consultation and a greater degree of community involvement. For major development it is advisable for community involvement to be initiated at the pre-application stage.

What is a Major Development?

- Housing developments of more than 10 dwellings
- Housing development on a site of 0.5 hectares or more
- Any other development with a floor area of 1000m²
- Any other development on a site of 1 hectare or more
- Waste development or mineral working

The process for applying for planning permission for major development is more complex and the applicant is required to submit more documentary evidence (e.g. an environmental assessment, transport study, design & access statement etc). Planning obligations (section 106 agreements) are also likely to be negotiated with applicants for this scale of development. The Council aims to determine major applications within 13 weeks of validation.

For some development areas the Council will produce Supplementary Planning Documents (e.g. Bath Western Riverside SPD), which outline the development requirements of the site in more detail. SPDs require community involvement.

The opportunities for community involvement at each stage in the Development Management process will be outlined in this chapter.

The key stages are:

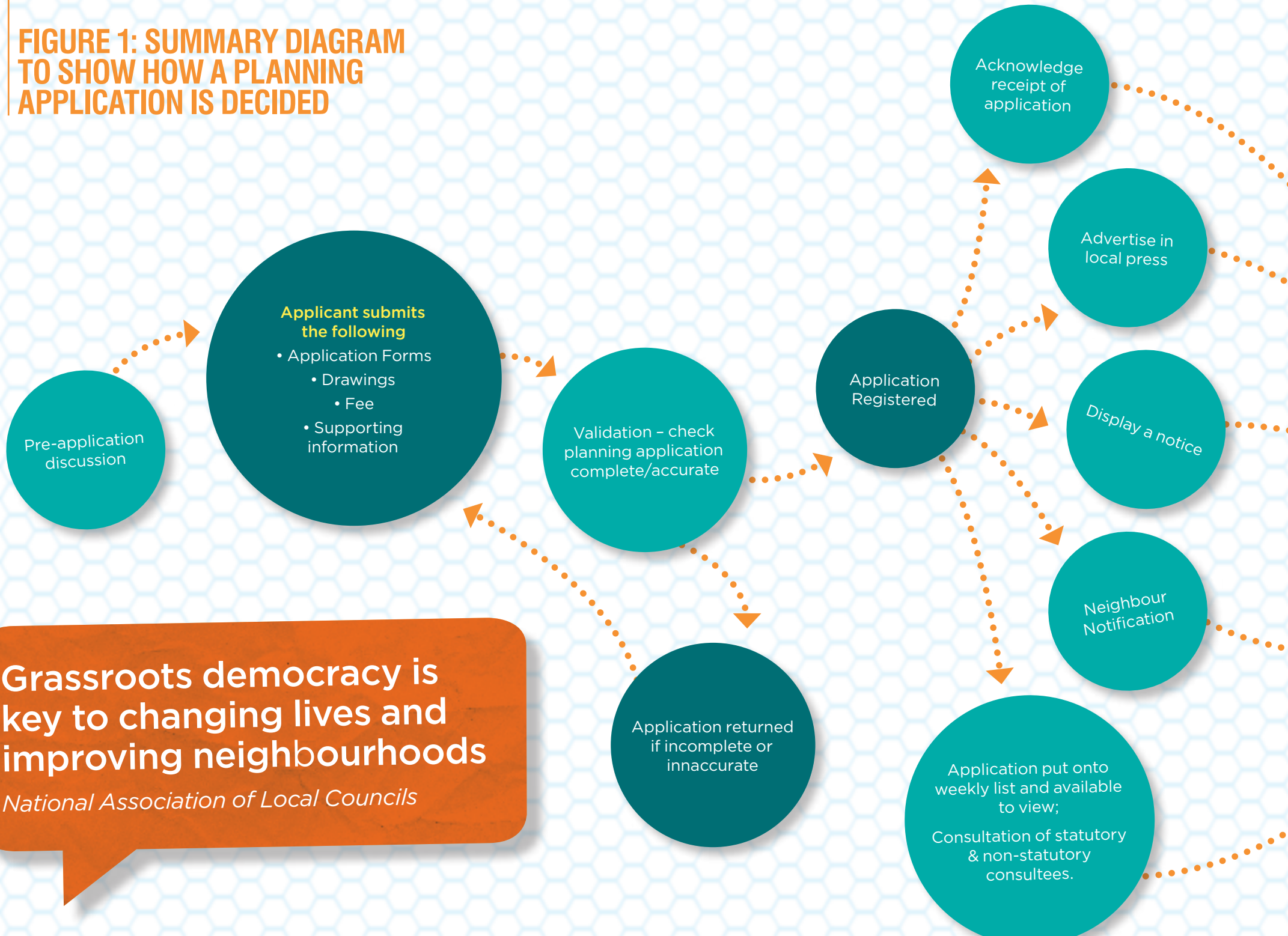
- Pre-application
- Submission of an application
- Considering an application
- Determination of an application
- Post-determination
- Enforcement Action

The West of England's Planning Toolkit 2012 published by the four local authorities and the Local Economic Partnership to promote a positive and consistent approach to handle large scale complex applications.

[www.westofengland.org/
media/245604/woe%
20planning%20
toolkit.pdf](http://www.westofengland.org/media/245604/woe%20planning%20toolkit.pdf)

The process of deciding planning applications is called **Development Management**

FIGURE 1: SUMMARY DIAGRAM TO SHOW HOW A PLANNING APPLICATION IS DECIDED

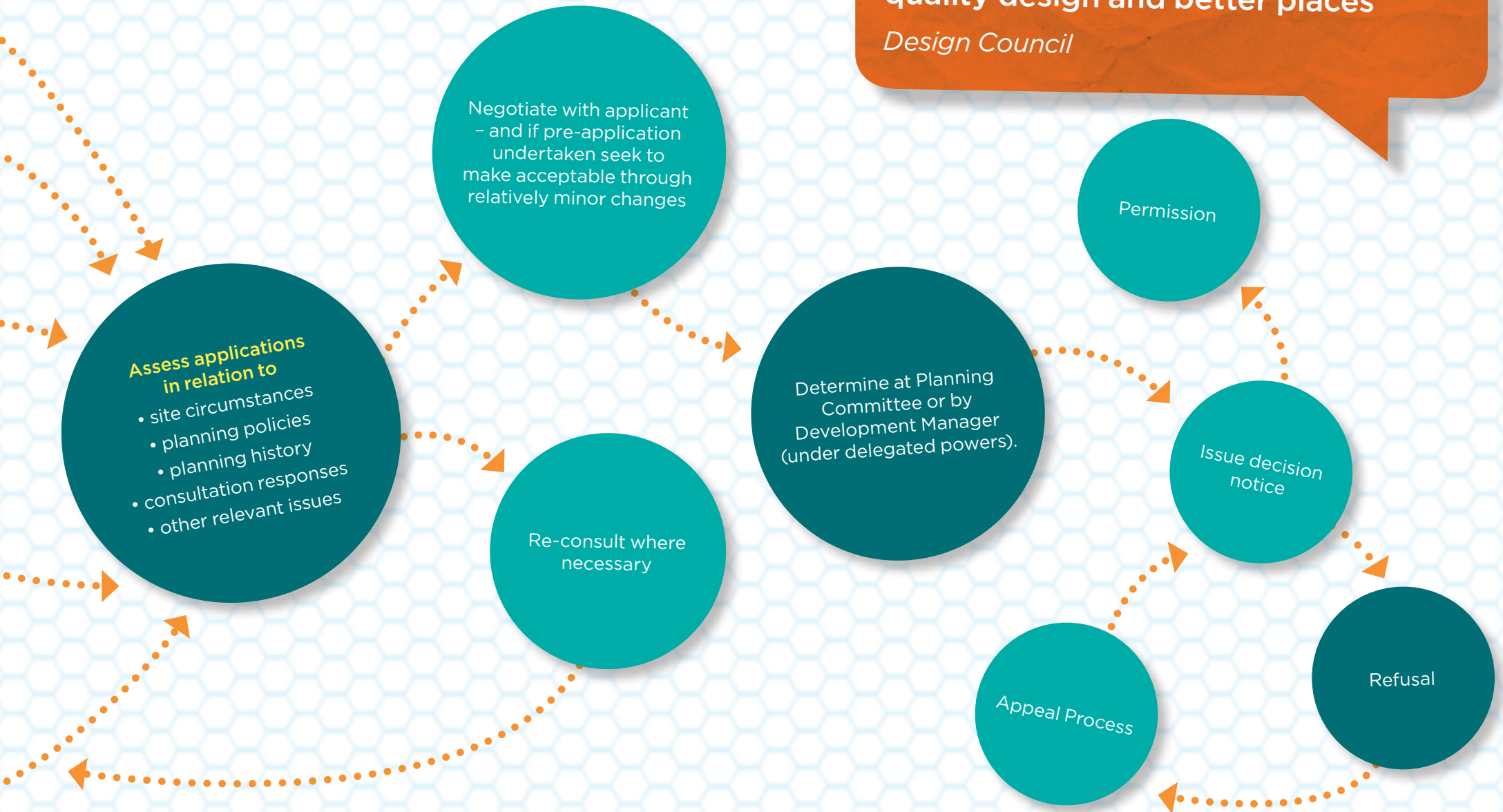


Grassroots democracy is key to changing lives and improving neighbourhoods

National Association of Local Councils

Participative planning with local communities can help deliver better quality design and better places

Design Council





Planning Performance Agreements

These are normally signed up to by a local authority and a developer to guide all aspects of project development, including community consultation. The Agreement outlines clear procedures and responsibilities for all parties and includes an agreed timetable.

PRE-APPLICATION

Large or Sensitive Sites

Bath and North East Somerset is home to people with an active interest and passion for their communities. Before a planning application is made for a large or sensitive site it is best if the applicant invests in time and effort to talk with local communities and with the Council.

Exchanging information and solving problems at an early stage adds credibility and balance to the planning process. It is positive and proactive and allows proposals to be adapted to respond to emergent issues. This reduces the risk of wasted time and cost and is likely to enhance quality, clarity and certainty for the applicant, the Council and local communities.

An appropriate and well executed early consultation process that demonstrates how engagement has helped understand and address the aspirations and concerns of communities and key stakeholders. This will help to ensure greater support for development proposals, and will smooth the formal planning application process.

The Localism Act now places a national expectation that meaningful pre-application engagement with communities is undertaken on development schemes of above 200 homes and 10,000sqm of floorspace.

To help applicants to work effectively with the Council and with local communities, all applicants are encouraged to make full use of the discretionary pre-application services which includes the Development Team, access to the Urban Regeneration Panel and other groups such as the South West Design Review Panel.

Developers of large or sensitive sites are also encouraged to enter into a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) with the Local Planning Authority that sets out an agreed process as well as the key stages that work towards the submission of planning application(s). This will include agreeing on the approach to community engagement.

Early discussion with the Planning Service can help plot the best route for your application.

Pre-application Advice

It is beneficial to all parties if applications are discussed prior to the submission of a formal application. The Council offers a pre-application service for all those wishing to make a planning application. All meetings and correspondence prior to the registering of an application will be treated as confidential, although it should be noted that the Council cannot guarantee that it will not have to release information if a Freedom of Information Request is received.

The pre-application advice service is available to customers at a charge, which assist the department in covering the costs of the service. All pre-application requests must be submitted in writing. Details of the Pre-application Service and its related fees can be found on the Council's website. Those who want further guidance on the pre-application should contact Council Connect in the first instance.

Pre-application dialogue in relation to proposals for major development is also undertaken by the Council. A productive dialogue at this stage can resolve issues and help ensure that the application submitted is well presented and includes the appropriate information to enable the proposal to be assessed and understood by the Local Authority, consultees and stakeholders. This dialogue should take place through the Council's multi-disciplinary development team approach. More detail about this service can be found on the Council's website at live.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/apply-planning-permission/you-apply.

Pre-application consultation

The Council actively encourages applicants to engage the community in pre-application consultation. Advice on appropriate methods for community involvement can also be suggested by the Council. Pre-application consultation should allow those affected or concerned by a proposal to discuss their concerns before any key decisions have been made. It should also help resolve or identify areas of concern earlier in the process and avoid unnecessary objections at a later stage.

To ensure that a developer undertakes pre-application community involvement that is suitable for the size and type of development proposed, guidelines for the level of community involvement that will be encouraged have been produced. **Figure 2** illustrates the types of community involvement which will be encouraged by the Council for significant developments of varying scales and sizes. Examples of applications which could fall into each level are summarised in **Figure 3**.

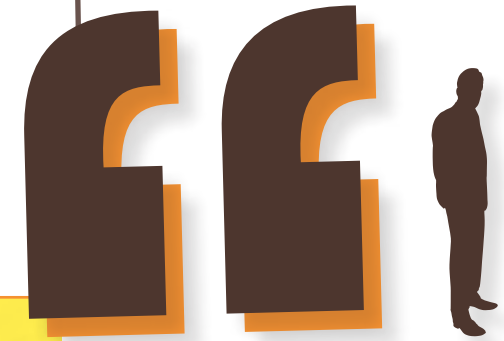
When undertaking consultation applicants should ensure that involvement is inclusive and that efforts are made to include all sections of the community.

Details of any pre-application public consultation undertaken by developers should be outlined alongside the planning application in the form of a consultation statement. The pre-application consultation will be organised, managed and funded by the potential developer.

It must be noted that the Council cannot refuse a planning application because pre-application consultation has not taken place. However, failure to carry out suitable consultation activities could result in objections being made which lead to the delay or refusal of the planning application.

FIGURE 2: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN PLANNING APPLICATION

Approach	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	Applications where there are issues of scale and controversy or which are contrary to local development framework policy or development of the size requiring pre-application engagement under the provisions of the Localism Act	Applications broadly in accordance with the local development framework but raising a controversial issue or detail.	Applications of a scale or on a site for which authorities require wider community involvement. Also, applications that fall within sites that are 'sensitive' to development pressures.
Public Meetings	✓		
Public Exhibition	✓	✓	
Surgeries	✓	✓	
Development briefs	✓		
Workshops	✓		
Workshops and other interactive events	✓	✓	
Citizen Panel	✓	✓	✓
Consultation Panel	✓		
Town/parish councils	✓	✓	✓
Media	✓		
Website	✓	✓	✓
Ward Councillors	✓	✓	✓
Local Architectural or design panel	✓	✓	
Letter/Leaflet	✓	✓	✓
Involvement of community interest and amenity groups	✓	✓	✓



LOCALISM IN PLANNING WILL CREATE THE FREEDOM AND THE INCENTIVES FOR THOSE PLACES THAT WANT TO GROW TO DO SO

Greg Clark Minister for Planning

FIGURE 3: DEFINITIONS OF DIFFERENT LEVELS OF MAJOR PLANNING APPLICATION

Level 1

This could include major infrastructure projects and developments which depart from the development plan and are referred to the Secretary of State. This would also include schemes of above 200 homes and 10,000 sqm of floorspace, where under the new requirements of the Localism Act meaningful pre-application community engagement is required.

Level 2

This could include:

- Schedule 2 developments as defined by Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations as requiring an EIA.
- Development proposals which fall within the Town & Country Planning (Residential Development on Greenfield Land) (England) Direction 2000 i.e. applications that relate to 5 hectares or more of Greenfield land, or comprise of 150 dwellings or more regardless of the size of the site, and which the council resolve to approve.
- Development proposed on playing fields as set out in the Town & Country Planning (Playing Fields) (England) Direction 1998. This applies to any playing fields owned by the Council or used by an educational institution.
- Applications which require a Full Transport Assessment (to reflect the scale of development and the extent of the transport implications of the proposal).

Level 3

Applications of local significance that the Council considers to require wider community involvement will be determined on a site by site basis and include those which:

- Fall marginally below the thresholds for Level 1 and 2;
- Involve the provision of affordable housing; and
- Involve the requirement to contribute towards school places.

Applications that are 'sensitive' to development pressures may include:

- Development adjoining a listed building;
- Substantial demolition in a conservation area;
- Loss of allotment land;
- Loss of employment land for housing.

SUBMISSION OF APPLICATION

After a planning application has been submitted and validated, details of the application are publicly available and details of the application are publicised. Planning applications are available to view on the Council's website 2-3 days after validation. The Council's website can also be accessed at Council Connect offices. Council Connect Officers are available to assist those wishing to use this service. For large scale major applications a hard copy summary document may also be requested at Council Connect offices.

Where there are significant changes to any planning application, which are material (relevant) in planning terms, we will re-notify relevant neighbours, Parish and Town Councils, consultees and those who have commented on the application, allowing a further 14 days for comments.

The methods used to publicise planning applications are outlined in **Figure 4** (see **page 15**).

This figure is adapted from the guidelines in Statements of Community Involvement in Planning Applications (DCLG, 2004: pages 33-37)

CONSIDERING AN APPLICATION

Planning applications are considered and determined either by a Committee (made up of elected Councillors) or under delegated powers by nominated officers. The Council's delegation scheme explains how it is decided whether a planning application will be determined at Committee or under delegated powers. For further info, visit: live.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/view-and-comment-planning-applications/scheme-delegation

Development Control committee meetings are open to the public. All committee papers and minutes of committee meetings are available on the Council website 3 days before the meeting or on request 5 days before the meeting, from the following Public Access Points: The One stop shop, Manvers Street, Bath; The Hollies, Midsomer Norton; Riverside, Keynsham; Bath Central Library; Keynsham Library; Midsomer Norton Library. See the Council website or contact Council Connect for details.

Members of the community can comment on a planning application either by:

- submitting a written statement (known as a representation); and/or
- speaking at a planning committee meeting.

Submitting a representation

Comments on planning applications should be made in writing and sent by post or emailed to the Development Management team. Please remember to quote either the planning application number or location details for the site in any correspondence. The Council will accept petitions and pro-forma letters as representations however due to the volume of individual addresses contained in representations of this kind it may not be possible to write to all involved separately with updates on the progress of the related applications. The Council will however write to the owner of the petition/pro-forma letter where possible or seek alternative methods of communication.

Comments on planning applications must be made within a minimum of 21 days (for first consultation) and 14 days for re-consultation. Due to the high volume of comments received, letters will not be acknowledged. Comments received after the deadlines are not required to be considered by the Council when determining the application. However, bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.

The comments made on planning applications are placed on the electronic planning application file and the Council's website (hard copies are not retained). They are public information and copies can be made up until the point that a decision is made on the application at which point they are removed from the website. Any comments made will be summarised in the planning officer's report to the relevant committee and will be considered when applications are decided.

Current planning application files are available to view on council's website. Archive applications from August 2005 onwards are also available on the website, though documentation may be limited for older applications.

Only comments relating to **material considerations** (i.e. are relevant in planning terms) will be considered in the determination of a planning application. You should focus your comment on relevant planning issues. These include:

- suitability of the site for development (including conflicts with policies in Local Development Framework);
- design, appearance and layout issues;
- possible loss of light or overshadowing;

- highway safety and traffic issues;
- impact on residential amenity/trees/conservation area/listed buildings;
- possible noise, disturbance, pollution and smell nuisance;
- impact on residential amenity / trees / historic assets (including listed buildings, conservation areas and other non-designated assets) and natural environment.

There are a number of issues that are *not* generally material in planning terms, which will *not* be considered in the determination of a planning application. These include:

- Private property rights (boundary/access disputes, restrictive covenants etc.);
- effect on the value of property;
- matters covered by other laws;
- private disputes;
- competition with other businesses.

Applicants and those who have made a representation will be informed in writing if their application has been referred to Committee, this will include details of the venue and time of the meeting.

Speaking at a Committee Meeting

Under the Council's public participation scheme oral statements can be made by members of the public in respect of planning applications at committee meetings. For each planning application there is a maximum of nine minutes for comments for and against the application:

- 3 minutes are available for the relevant Town or Parish Council representatives to speak;
- 3 minutes for objectors to speak against the proposal;
- 3 minutes for an applicant, agent or supporters of the proposal to speak in favour of the proposal.

Any person may indicate their wish to make a verbal statement to the Committee by contacting Democratic Services at least two days before the Committee meeting. If a member of the public has any particular needs or has concerns about speaking at the meeting, please discuss them with the relevant Committee Administrator, who can be contacted via Democratic Services.

Contact Democratic Services
01225 394414
democratic_services@bathnes.gov.uk

Any verbal comments made at Committee will not be recorded in the Committee minutes, although any related comments made by Councillors in attendance will be recorded.



**APPROXIMATELY 5%
OF ALL PLANNING
APPLICATIONS ARE
DETERMINED
BY COMMITTEE.
THERE IS A DEDICATED
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL
COMMITTEE WHICH
MEETS MONTHLY.**

DETERMINATION OF PLANNING APPLICATION

Representations made and verbal comments made at Committee meetings (where relevant) will be carefully considered when deciding whether planning permission should be granted.

Decision notices state the decision that has been taken in relation to a planning application and justify why this decision has been made. The Council will notify those who have made representations on applications where possible of when a decision has been made. Decision notices can be viewed on the Council's website and enquiries into decisions can be made via Council Connect.

Further information about the local planning enforcement policy see

live.bathnes.gov.uk/services/planning-and-building-control/planning-enforcement

POST DETERMINATION

Planning applications are most often approved, though they may be subject to conditions and a small portion will be refused outright or subject to a split decision. If an applicant is aggrieved by the decision there are a number of actions that can be taken.

Appeal to the Secretary of State

There is no right of appeal for third parties. However, if an applicant is aggrieved by the decision of the Council to refuse an application or to grant it subject to conditions, they can appeal to the First Secretary of State under the provisions of the *Town & Country Planning Act 1990* or the *Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990*. Appeals must generally be made within 6 months of the date of the determination of the planning application, using a form which can be requested from the Planning Inspectorate. Details about how to appeal are sent to the applicant alongside the decision notice.

Appeals are intended as a last resort and they can take several months to decide. It is often quicker to discuss with the Council whether changes to your proposal would make it more acceptable.

Contact the Planning Inspectorate
Temple Quay House, 2 The Square,
Temple Quay, Bristol, BS1 6PN

Look at the Appeals web page
www.planningportal.gov.uk/pcs

Make a complaint about the process of considering the Planning Applications

Any complaints about community involvement activities in relation to planning applications can be reported to the Planning Services Complaints Officer in the first instance:

Planning Services, PO Box 5006
Bath, BA1 1JG

development_control@bathnes.gov.uk

If you have reason to believe that proceedings have been unlawful then you should, in the first instance, contact the Council to explain your concerns. A Judiciary Review may be undertaken if dialogue with the Council is not sufficient to address your concerns. It is worth noting that neither this nor the complaints procedure is intended to deal with the merits of planning decisions.

Further information can be found on the Judiciary website:
www.judiciary.gov.uk.

PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

Enforcement is an important role of the Planning Service. Where development has been carried out without planning permission or where conditions on a planning permission have not been complied with, the Council can take enforcement action.

But the Council is not empowered to take enforcement action merely because of the absence of planning permission. Officers are always ready to discuss problems and seek solutions rather than resort to formal legal proceedings.

Members of the public have an important role to play in identifying and reporting suspected breaches and to register an enforcement complaint do so in writing either to planning_enforcement@bathnes.gov.uk or

Planning Services, PO Box 5006,
Bath, BA1 1JG

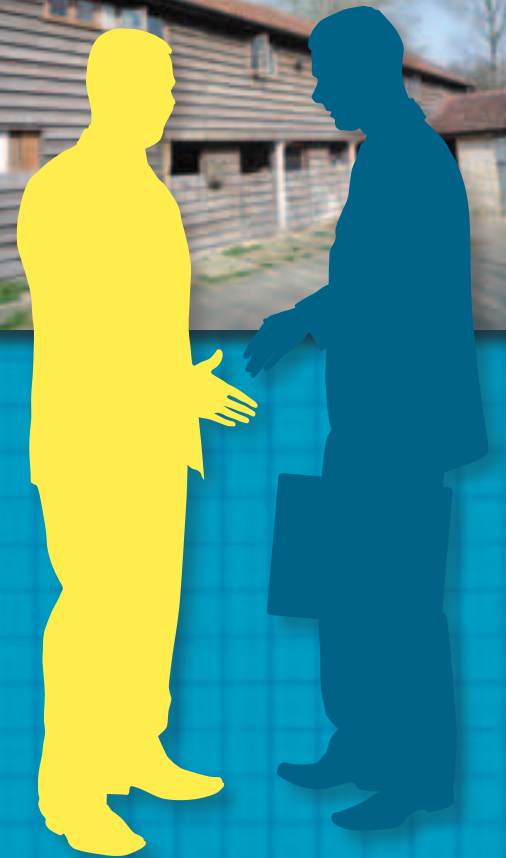
including as much detail of the alleged breach, your name and contact details.

FIGURE 4

Method	Description of how this will be used	
Weekly list of applications	A list of planning applications validated by the Council for a specified date range can be produced using the Council's website.	We send all Councillors, Parish and Town Councils a list of new applications validated on a weekly basis and inform them of all items to be considered by committee.
Council website	All applications are available to view on the Council's website. There are a number of ways to search for applications including a map search facility.	Applications of special interest are also highlighted on the "Specials Interests" page during their consultation period.
Neighbour notification letter	Adjoining owners or occupiers will continue to be notified by letter for all planning applications.	
Display a site notice	<p>A site notice on a laminated A4 sheet, which briefly outlines the planning application, is displayed in a prominent place on or near the site. Site notices are used when a planning application:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relates to Listed Building consent; • affects the setting of a Listed Building; • affects a Conservation Area; • relates to a Conservation Area consent; • where the proposed development is a departure from the Development Plan (i.e. it is not in agreement with Local Development Framework); 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is subject to an Environmental Impact Assessment; • affects a public right of way; • where the development constitutes a major development as defined by the GPDO. <p>The use of site notices is in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act (General Permitted Development) Order (as amended).</p>
Consult statutory organisations	In accordance with the nature of the proposed development the Council must consult statutory consultees. Statutory consultees are listed in Appendix B .	
Consult Town or Parish Councils	Town and Parish Council's will be consulted on all planning applications made within their administrative boundary (copies of these applications will be provided). Town and Parish Councils that will be consulted are listed in Appendix B .	Members of the community may be able to view planning applications at Parish and Town Council offices by prior appointment. Consultation with adjoining Parish and Town Councils is also encouraged where the proposal is considered to be significant.
Consult other consultees	Special interest groups or community groups will be encouraged to be consulted where there are planning applications of particular interest, at the discretion of the Case Officer.	Specialist teams within the Council will also be consulted on Planning Applications e.g. Historic Environment, Trees & Woodland who will in turn consult other consultees as appropriate.
Local Advertisement	Applications are advertised in the local press as required by the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) Order 2010.	
Contact Council Connect	Members of the public can contact Council Connect with general enquiries about current planning applications. Contact details can be found at the back of this SCI.	

THREE

HERITAGE ASSETS



INTRODUCTION

Bath and North East Somerset is fortunate in having a rich variety of designated and undesignated heritage assets. Designated heritage assets include the City of Bath World Heritage Site, as well as features such as Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas.

National policy states that when considering the impact of a proposed development on the significance of a heritage asset, great weight should be given to the asset's conservation. The more important the heritage asset, the greater the weight. World Heritage Sites are considered to be of the highest significance among heritage assets, along with (amongst others) Grade 1 and II* listed buildings, grade 1 and II* registered parks and gardens and battlefields, all of which exist in B&NES, and therefore any significant harm to any of these should be wholly exceptional.

The significance of locally important, undesignated heritage assets is specifically noted in the Local Planning Authority's policies and they are included in the Historic Environment Record. The impact of development proposals on undesignated historic assets are a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.

Heritage Assets are a finite resource. They can provide a foundation for the regeneration of an area and reinforce a sense of community, a shared sense of place and identity. Heritage assets are enjoyed and valued by present communities and should be preserved for future communities to enjoy and value. Listed buildings are protected for their special architectural or historic interest. Works of alteration that affect their architectural or historic interest and character requires listed building consent. Listed building consent is also required for works of alterations to curtilage listed buildings.

However the Local Planning Authority seeks to assist and help manage sensitive, thoughtful and informed change within the historic environment as a whole to meet the needs of present day communities whilst preserving it for future generations.

The application process for listed buildings is similar to planning applications. However, there are additional requirements to consider. The primary consideration is the duty placed on the Council under S16 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting

or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. Applicants must justify why their proposals do not harm the special architectural or historic significance of the listed building. Important issues that will be considered in these applications include:

- Impact upon external and internal features
- Impact upon historic fabric
- Integrity of original design, plan form and materials.
- Impact of extensions on the character of the building in terms of scale, style, design and materials
- proposals contained within planning applications that impact on the setting of heritage assets.
- Impact on the setting of the listed building or the setting of other listed buildings for example where buildings form part of an architectural composition.

It is good practice for conservation areas to be accompanied by detailed appraisals that identify their key characteristics and significance and they constitute important policy documents that can significantly inform the determination of planning applications. However they require significant resources and many conservation areas do not yet have conservation area appraisals. Communities are in a unique position to assist in the process of writing conservation area appraisals and the Local Planning Authority encourages community engagement and partnership. The preparation of recent appraisals has included varying degrees of community involvement and has proved highly successful.



HERITAGE ASSETS AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

Surveys and studies to identify important heritage assets in the production of a Neighbourhood Plan are strongly encouraged. The impact of Neighbourhood Plan proposals on the historic environment will be a key consideration. Neighbourhood Planning can also help to identify buildings of local historic interest.

Conservation Area Designation and Character Appraisal

Once a Conservation Area is formally designated a thorough Character Assessment has to be done to guide decisions about planning applications. Such studies are expensive and have usually been done entirely by specialists. As a result, many Conservation Areas do not yet have full assessments in place. Recent practice now includes varying degrees of community involvement in their preparation.

B&NES Council has produced a number of Conservation Area Character Assessments working with local communities.

Did you know?

- The whole City of Bath makes up the World Heritage Site
- Bath contains nearly 5,000 listed buildings
- 66% of Bath is designated as a conservation area

City of Bath World Heritage Site Management Plan

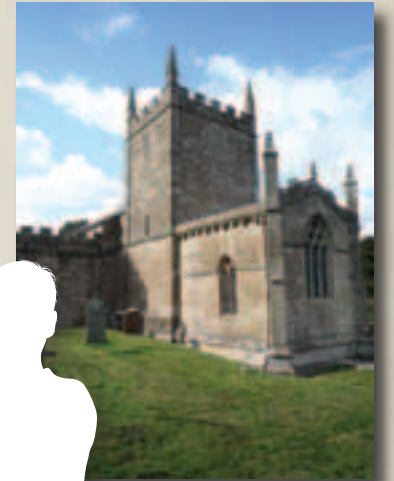
More detail on some of the tools available for communities can be found in **Chapter 7** for example Heritage Projects

For more information about the Council's Historic Environment Record search for this item in the Council's A-Z on the website

www.bathnes.gov.uk

For more information on heritage assets and listed building applications please visit our website for FAQs and more detailed information. Search for "listed buildings" or "conservation areas" in the A-Z

www.bathnes.gov.uk





We have produced guidance for communities undertaking neighbourhood plans, with particular attention to the historic environment

English Heritage, see www.english-heritage.org.uk/caring/get-involved/improving-your-neighbourhood



FOUR

GET INVOLVED IN LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

THE COUNCIL SETS LOCAL PLANNING POLICY RELATING TO IMPORTANT ISSUES FOR THE DISTRICT, YOU CAN INFLUENCE WHAT THESE ARE.

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP



City of Bath World Heritage Site Setting Study SPD

A Stakeholder workshop was held to present to and discuss with key stakeholders research and tools developed to enable assessment of the impact of future development proposals on the setting of the City of Bath.

www.bathnes.gov.uk/settingofbath

It was such a positive, far sighted decision to have school children involved in the debate. They often have a much clearer view than adults. After all, in 2026 [when this strategy ends], the children today will be adults.



CONSULTATION

PlanLoCal Low Carbon Future Consultation with young people.

Young people helped to decide the low carbon future of Bath and North East Somerset as part of the Core Strategy consultation to help residents of Bath and North East Somerset comment on the draft Strategy for their Local Development Framework (LDF).

INTRODUCTION

Local Authorities are required to produce local planning policies which conform with national planning policy.

Through the recent Localism Act, a new tier of Neighbourhood Planning has been introduced. More information on this can be found in **Chapter 5**. There is no longer a tier of regional planning, although local authorities have a duty to cooperate with adjoining authorities on a sub-regional basis.

There are two different types of local policies:

Development Plan Documents

These are policy documents whose preparation is controlled through statutory processes and which are subject to independent examination by the Secretary of State for their “soundness”.

Supplementary Planning Documents

These policy documents add detail to policies contained within Development Plan Documents. They must also follow a statutory process but are not subject to formal examination. They can be prepared quickly and must be endorsed by the Council.

WHO WILL WE ENGAGE WITH?

Appendix B lists the types of local and national consultees that the Council will engage with. If you are interested in local planning policies get in touch and we can add you to our mailinglist and tell you about opportunities to get involved.

Contact us at
01225 477548
planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk

We have identified a range of target groups we need to make extra effort to engage, as illustrated in **Figure 5**. Consultation with and participation from with these groups will be targeted depending on the nature of the local policy.

A National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was brought into force in March 2012. This has superseded a range of national planning policies previously included in a range of Planning Policy Statements and Circulars.

FIGURE 5: TARGET GROUPS WE NEED TO INVOLVE IN THE PREPARATION OF THE LDF

Young people

Children and young people have not traditionally been involved in planning issues. However, we will seek to involve young people through existing initiatives within the Council led by Youth Services (such as DAFBY – the Democratic Action for Bath & North East Somerset Youth initiative).

Involvement will also be encouraged through initiatives linked to local universities, colleges, schools and youth groups. To effectively engage young people we will need to provide information which is accessible, relevant and engaging. Interactive workshops and the use of models and diagrams would be appropriate.

We will seek to secure the support of youth workers, teachers and play workers to assist us in developing and delivering appropriate activities.

Faith, Ethnic and Language groups

Further work needs to be done to ensure that faith, ethnic and language groups are engaged and informed in the planning process. Many organisations representing faith, ethnic and language groups will be routinely consulted.

Information might also be disseminated through community newsletters or at community events. Work undertaken by other initiatives within the Council will also be taken on board e.g. the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is currently considering how best to engage faith communities in the district in the Community Strategy.

Disabled People

We will seek ideas and feedback from disabled individuals as well as local and national organisations representing disabled people to ensure that community consultation is inclusive. We will ensure that all community involvement events are fully accessible, and will always respond to any accessibility requests in a positive way.

Gypsies and Travellers

We will involve gypsy and traveller groups, particularly as part of the policy evidence gathering process. We will consult members of the gypsy and traveller communities, particularly where issues are of direct relevance.

People living in rural areas

Residents in rural areas may not have easy access to council offices and may have less access to community events

depending on where these are held. We aim to build on established Parish Council networks in order to disseminate information and attain feedback at the most local level possible. We will also make links with the creation of Parish plans, working with bodies who are helping to support the development of these Plans. The development of e-consultation within the Council will ensure that consultation reaches a wider audience. Information, posters and leaflets will be provided for display on village notice boards and in mobile libraries.

Small business owners

Small businesses have an important role in the local economy. However, there is evidence that small business owners often do not have the time or resources to spare to become involved in planning issues. To overcome this, organisations representing small businesses will be consulted. The Economic Development Partnership currently links to the LSP and contains business representation, whilst Business West is directly represented on the LSP – links to the LSP will therefore be important. In addition, direct links will be made with local Chambers and with the local representatives of the Federation of Small Businesses.

Residents

We acknowledge that we need to ensure that all residents in the district have opportunities to be involved in planning issues.

Information about a variety of opportunities to be involved in the preparation of the LDF will need to be disseminated widely, and advertised in good time. Residents Associations will also be utilised as a way of disseminating information where they are established. It is noted that unlike residents in the rest of the district, residents of Bath are not represented by either Town or Parish Councils, and that extra effort is needed to reach these residents.

A programme of all of the local policy documents under production can be found in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

HOW WILL WE ENGAGE YOU?

We always aim to improve the way that we communicate and are committed to making sure that all consultations are accessible and that documents produced are available in a variety of formats.

We will do this in three ways:

- Information – Providing information through the internet, local media and local publicity.
- Consultation – Finding out the views of the community through meetings, exhibitions, qualitative research surveys and questionnaires. Documents will be produced to generate discussion.
- Participation – Involvement which actively identifies needs and priorities, methods include workshops, discussion, focus groups and linking with existing community involvement initiatives.

Appendix B presents a toolbox of methods which the Council will use to encourage community involvement in the creation of the LDF and go beyond the statutory minimum requirements.

WHEN CAN YOU GET INVOLVED?

The earlier you get involved in local policy development the better as you can help shape its contents.

These discussions have given us a valuable opportunity to explore, in-depth, the impact of the Localism Act with our community

Bath and North East Somerset Council



Bath and North East Somerset Council Planning Dept. held a series of focus groups with a range of community representatives. In-depth discussions about the possible implications of the Localism Act, opportunities and challenges to communities in undertaking Neighbourhood Planning were discussed. The group shared ideas about how the Council can make it easier for community groups to take up these new opportunities.

FOCUS GROUP

FIGURE 6: KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PREPARATION OF DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS*

Stage 1 Pre-production consultation to establish issues and options

'Issues and options' and evidence gathering consultation. Early community involvement using a wide range of methods (as outlined in **Appendix B**).

There will be more than one specific consultation carried out at this stage and consultations will be targeted at a range of consultees.

Statutory and non-statutory consultees will be consulted and efforts will be made to secure the involvement of the target groups outlined in this document.

Statutory consultees (and other relevant consultees where identified) will be consulted on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report.

Stage 2 Preferred Options consultation

The Council's options and emerging preferred options will be presented for a statutory consultation period of 6 weeks. Comments made will be considered and feedback given as outlined in this document. Community Involvement opportunity will be provided using a wide range of methods (as outlined in **Appendix B**).

Statutory and non-statutory consultees will be consulted and efforts will be made to secure the involvement of the target groups outlined in this document.

Consultation on the associated Sustainability Appraisal will also occur alongside this.

Stage 3 Draft DPD Submitted to the Secretary of State with 6 week statutory consultation

Taking into account representations from Stage 2, the proposed submission DPD is prepared. Before the DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination it will be published for a period of 6 weeks and representations invited on the 'soundness' of the document.

Statutory and non-statutory consultees will be consulted and efforts will be made to secure the involvement of the target groups outlined in this document.

The Council will consider these responses and if changes are necessary (and in exceptional cases only) an addendum to the DPD will be submitted with the DPD for examination by the Planning Inspector.

Stage 4 Examination by Planning Inspector

The Planning Inspector considers the DPD and the representations submitted at the proposed submission version stage. If the Inspector finds the DPD 'sound' then the Council will alter the DPD in line with the Inspector's recommendations and adopt the Plan. All those who registered an interest in the DPD or who made written comments during the consultation period will be notified.

*Details of the minimum statutory requirements for community consultation in the preparation of DPDs can be found in the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

FIGURE 7: KEY OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE PREPARATION OF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS *

Stage 1 Informal community involvement in the preparation of draft Supplementary Planning Document

Evidence gathering consultation. Early community involvement using a range of methods (as outlined in **Appendix A**).

Statutory consultees and other relevant local consultees (as relevant) will be consulted and efforts will be made to secure the involvement of the target groups outlined on **page 22**.

Stage 3 Adoption by the Council

All those who registered an interest in the Supplementary Planning Document or who made written comments during the consultation period will be notified.

Stage 2 Formal consultation on SPD

The draft SPD will be published for a formal six week period of consultation. A range of community involvement methods will be used depending on the nature of the document (e.g. whether the SPD is topic based or area based).

A report will be published at this stage of the consultation summarising the main issues identified through the informal consultation and the Council's response to these.



DROP IN EVENTS

Bath Ministry of Defence Sites

A series of drop-in sessions for members of the public were held to help shape "concept statements", these are placemaking briefs being prepared by the Council to set out the policy requirements and expectations ahead of the sale of the MOD sites in Bath.

[www.bathnes.gov.uk/
mod-conceptstatements](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/mod-conceptstatements)

Placemaking Briefs

Placemaking Briefs outline the key principles of content, layout, design and viability for a potential development. They are developed collaboratively with the local community, landowner, developer, other key bodies, elected members and planners and are then endorsed by the local authority. Development Briefs bridge the gap between broad policy and site specific detail and, when done early can affect land value and can enable more locally relevant developments.

These can also be called "concept statements" or "development briefs" and where needed can be taken forward in the form of Supplementary Planning Documents and/or Development Plan Documents.

They can be a key tool in community involvement on development sites and early stage engagement.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR VIEWS AND COMMENTS?

When undertaking community involvement on planning issues it is crucial that the purpose and parameters of particular consultations are clear. We are aware of the importance of providing feedback and the need to show the community how their views have been taken into account.

Three key documents will be produced alongside each consultation, which will be made publicly available:

A **schedule of comments** made during the consultation will be available for public inspection, together with the Council's response to the issues raised. The comments and responses will be agreed by the Council, Cabinet or Cabinet member as appropriate. Please note we cannot treat any comments made as confidential.

A **consultation report**, for each key stage in the preparation local policy document which sets out who was consulted, how they were consulted, a summary of the main comments received and how these have been addressed. For Development Plan Documents this will be submitted to the Secretary of State. For Supplementary Planning Documents this will be presented to the Council, Cabinet or Cabinet member as appropriate. These reports will be made available on our website, www.bathnes.gov.uk and in paper copy at the deposit stations used during the consultations (see **Appendix C** for details).

A **statement of compliance to the Neighbourhood Planning Protocol** will be produced. This statement will outline how the Local Authority has complied with the Neighbourhood Planning Protocol. For Development Plan Documents this will be submitted to the Secretary of State. For Supplementary Planning Documents this will be presented to the Council, Cabinet or Cabinet member as appropriate.

SUSTAINABLE CONSTRUCTION AND RETROFITTING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP



Sustainable Construction & Retrofitting Supplementary Planning Document

A stakeholder workshop was held to help shape the new planning guidance aimed at householders and small scale developers to improve the environmental performance of new and existing buildings.

www.bathnes.gov.uk/greenbuild



COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY PROJECT

Bath Homes fit for the Future was a collaborative project between the Council, Bath Preservation Trust and Transition Bath and with the help of many other local community groups and volunteers a series of events were held to coincide with the draft SPD consultation on the topic of sustainable construction and retrofitting.

www.bathhomesfitforthefuture.co.uk

- An open homes weekend where you could visit sustainable new builds and houses with energy efficiency measures and renewable energy installation

- Love your windows: Draft proof sash window demonstration

- A touring exhibition

- Technical talks

- A visit to Ecobuild Conference for community and business representatives

- Film screening of short film about the open homes weekend

- Workshops, talks and displays at Bath City Conference

EVENTS INCLUDED

CONFERENCE

On 25th anniversary of Bath becoming a World Heritage site, this conference considered how Bath can sensitively improve the energy efficiency of the city's buildings and was run as part of the consultation on the SPD in collaboration with Bath Preservation Trust and Transition Bath. With speakers from Historic Scotland, other technical experts and updated on a range of exciting projects coming forward in Bath from the community and voluntary sector.

POSTCARDS

A series of 5 postcards were launched with top tips for a greener Bath linking to the 25 year anniversary of the World Heritage Site. These drew on themes from the SPD. Bath Preservation Trust then ran a daily "tweet" of the tips.



FIVE

HOW TO DO YOUR OWN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

A NEW TIER OF NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING HAS BEEN INTRODUCED VIA THE LOCALISM ACT TO EMPOWER COMMUNITIES MORE THAN EVER BEFORE TO MAKE DEVELOPMENT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE HAPPEN IN YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD.



The Council has a Neighbourhood Planning webpage with links to a range of resources, funding opportunities and events

www.bathnes.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

INTRODUCTION

The Localism Act received Royal Assent in November 2011 and has introduced a new tier of Neighbourhood Planning which came into effect in April 2012.

The Act seeks to facilitate community-led planning in the form of Neighbourhood Plans, Neighbourhood Development Orders and the Community Right to Build and requires Local Authorities to resource and support Neighbourhood Planning.

This is widely seen as one of the most fundamental changes to the UK planning system since its inception in 1948.

Alongside the Localism Act, the government has also published Neighbourhood Planning Regulations, establishing a level of national consistency in the approach. However, according to the regulations there is the potential to set out local detail to suit local circumstances. This chapter aims to set out the local detail alongside the national proposals, but it may be subject to change until the national regulations are established.

THE NEW POWERS

Three neighbourhood planning powers have been introduced by the Localism Act. These are all permissive, pro-development tools which allow communities to shape and influence new development. Neighbourhood Planning activities must be in general conformity with national planning policy and local planning policies.

Neighbourhood Plan

A Neighbourhood Plan is a neighbourhood level development plan for all or parts of a defined neighbourhood area. The content can be locally defined, but it is likely to include a vision statement or diagram, and locally derived planning policies or site briefs.

Neighbourhood Plans can influence where new homes and offices should be built and what they should look like. It can be detailed, or general, depending on what local people want. They can be less restrictive than the Local Authorities policies but not more restrictive.

Neighbourhood Development Orders (NDO)

A Neighbourhood Development Order is an legal document which permits development that a community want to see in their area – either in full or outline, so that it does not require a full planning application or for planning permission to be granted for the local

planning authority. Essentially this tool extends existing permitted development rights for specific types of development.

In terms of process the process for producing a Neighbourhood Plan is much the same as preparing a Neighbourhood Development Order.

Orders might allow extensions to community buildings, affordable housing or local scale renewable energy installations.

All other consent regimes will still apply e.g. Building Regulations or Listed Building consent.

Community Right to Build

Is a type of NDO for a particular scheme. It will be for community and voluntary groups only (as defined in the regulations) to identify suitable land, sources of finance and secure support for their proposals. It requires agreement through a 'community referendum'. Such schemes will not need to go through the normal planning application process.

The Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 can now be viewed online

www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made

The Localism Act also introduces other community rights not relating to planning: the community right to bid (assets of community value) and the community right to challenge see **chapter 7**

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING MUST BE POSITIVE AND PERMISSIVE



FIGURE 8: THINKING ABOUT PREPARING A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OR A NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT ORDER?

Do you need these?

- Neighbourhood Planning is optional
- Do you know what the planning issues are in your neighbourhood?
- Is there an easier way to address these issues?
 - Can you influence local policy (e.g the B&NES Placemaking Plan) instead or does it already support your aspirations?
 - Do you actually need planning permission?
 - Are the issues you are interested in relating to works to listed buildings or highways and therefore covered by separate legislation?

Do you want either of these?

- Are you seeking to be pro-development or more permissive towards certain types of development in your neighbourhood?
- Are you aware of the process that you will need to go through?
- Is there another tool you can use that is quicker and easier (see other chapters of this document)?
- It is estimated that the Neighbourhood Plan process will take approximately 1-2 years, does this match your timeframe?

Are you eligible to prepare these?

- In the rural areas of the district only Parish Councils can lead the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans
- In Keynsham, Midsomer Norton, Radstock and Westfield only the Town Councils can prepare Neighbourhood Plans
- In Bath, you must be designated as a Neighbourhood Forum in order to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan.

Do you have the resources to prepare these?

- Have you found out about what support the Council can offer?
- Do you have a budget and volunteers to help with consultation activities?
- Have you considered making use of any community funding opportunities?

Is a Neighbourhood Plan or Development Order the best option?

- Have you considered the other routes to meet the aspirations of your community and dismissed them?
- Have you sought advice from the Planning department?

See CPRE's Guide to Neighbourhood Planning for practical advice and tips on Neighbourhood Planning

www.cpre.org.uk/resources/housing-and-planning/planning/item/2689-how-to-shape-where-you-live-a-guide-to-neighbourhood-planning

FIGURE 9: A SIX STEP GUIDE TO PRODUCING A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN OR A NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT ORDER



We see this as a unique chance for this community to influence and shape its own future and we welcome the encouragement, expertise and support that we are receiving from the two Authorities.

Freshford Parish Council & Limpley Stoke Parish Council

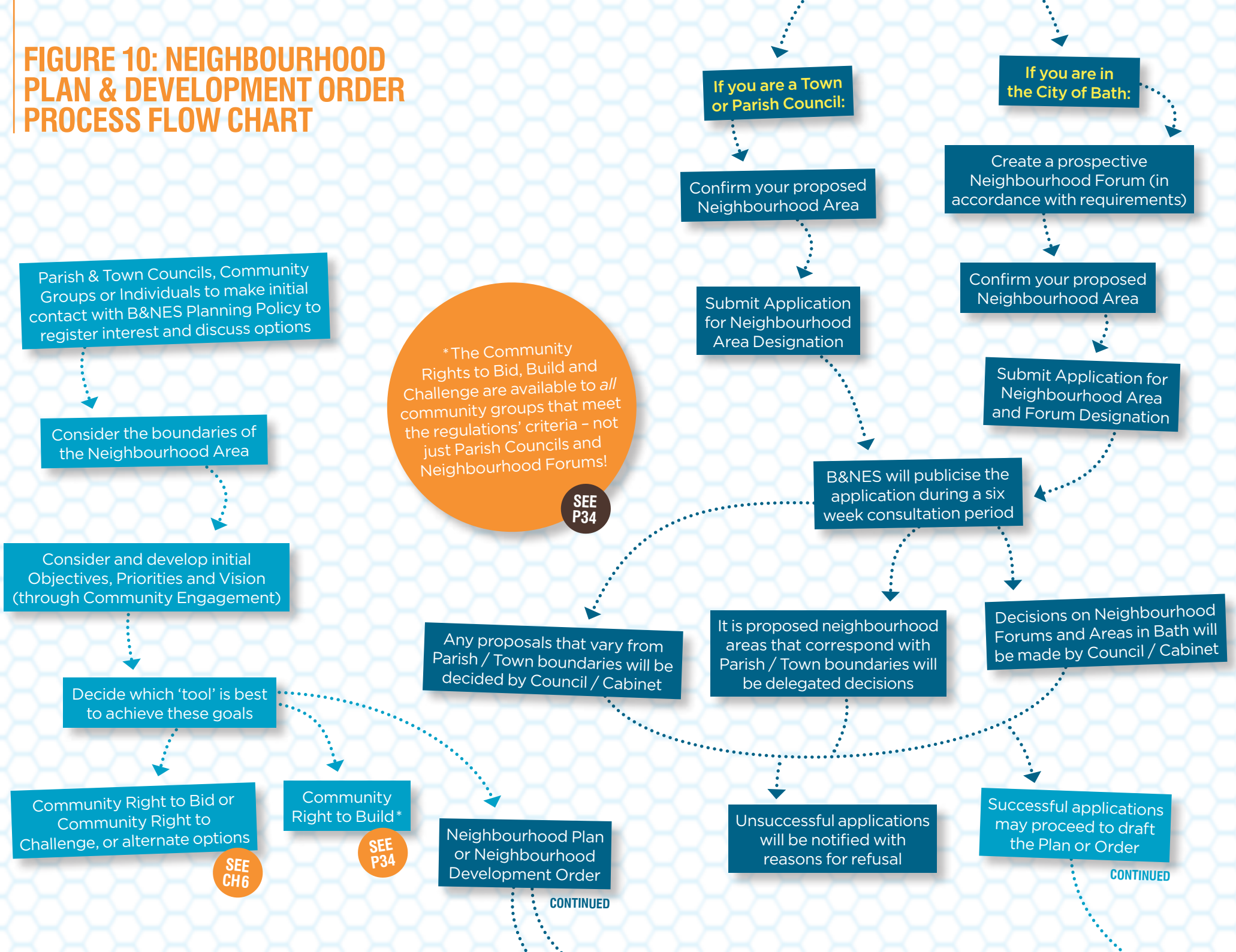
CASE STUDY

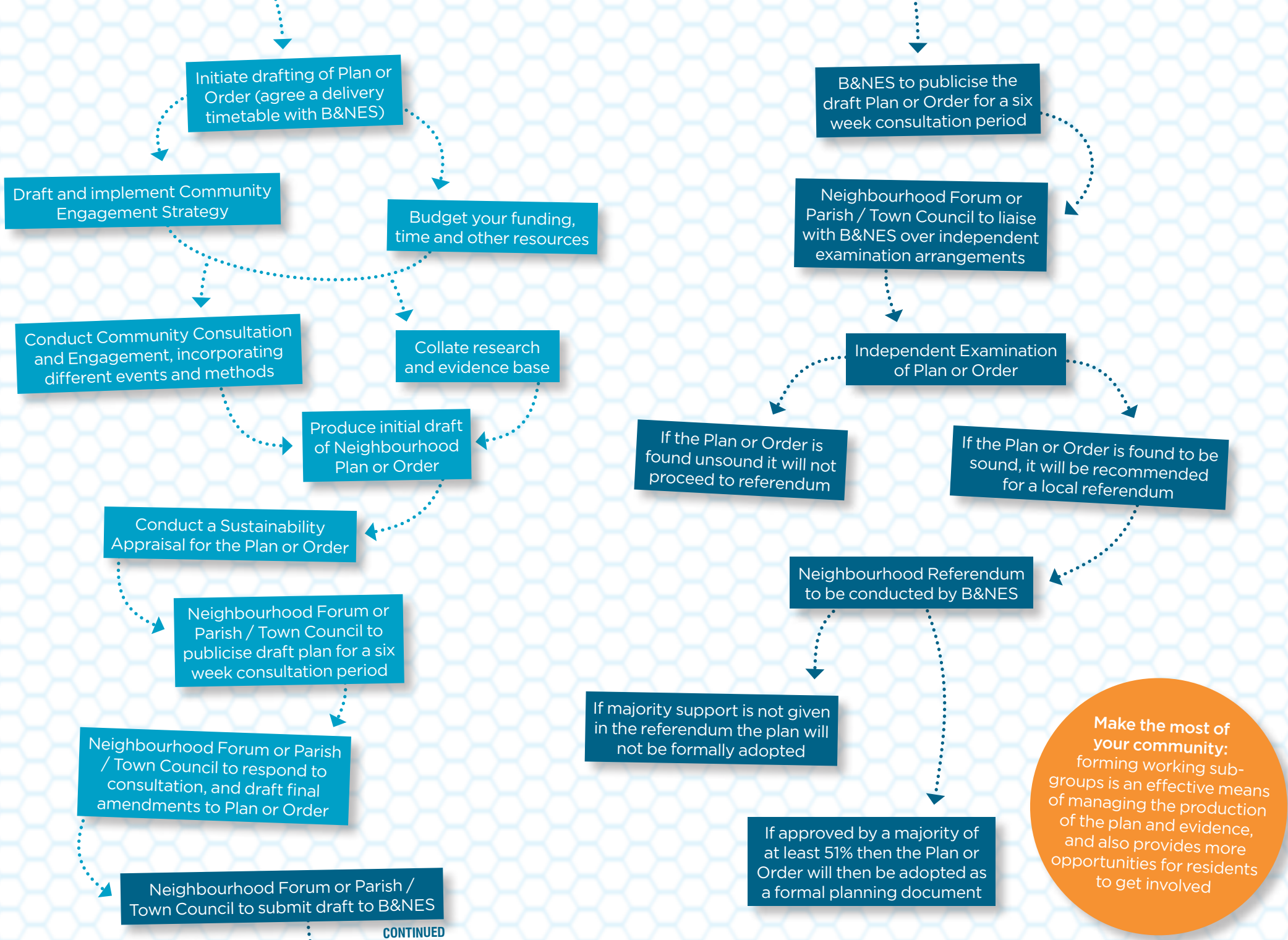
Freshford and Limpley Stoke aspire to produce a joint Neighbourhood Plan

Bath and North East Somerset Council and Wiltshire Council worked together to support the parishes of Freshford and Limpley Stoke to submit a successful application for government funding to assist with the development of their Neighbourhood Plan.



FIGURE 10: NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN & DEVELOPMENT ORDER PROCESS FLOW CHART





CONTINUED

Make the most of your community: forming working sub-groups is an effective means of managing the production of the plan and evidence, and also provides more opportunities for residents to get involved

MORE DETAIL ON THE PROCESS

Step 1: Start the Process

If you are a Parish or Town Council you can start the process straight away, you must lead the production of any neighbourhood plan for your area. However, you will need to apply to the Council to formally designate your Neighbourhood Area.

If you are a neighbourhood group within Bath you will first need to establish yourself as a Neighbourhood Forum.

Neighbourhood Forums in Bath

Subsequent applications where there is an existing Neighbourhood Forum or Area Designation in place will not be considered. Voluntary withdrawal of a Neighbourhood Forum designation is also acceptable and such groups should notify the planning department in writing of this request.

Council Role: Approving Neighbourhood Forums in Bath

The Council will approve applications for the designation of a Neighbourhood Forum in Bath, this decision will be made by Council / Cabinet.

The Council will work in collaboration with neighbouring authorities where a cross-border Neighbourhood Plan/ Development Order is pursued to establish a process which all parties can agree to.

Should the Council refuse to designate a Neighbourhood Forum it will issue a refusal statement outlining the reasons for refusal on the website together with a statement that outlines where hard copies of this statement can be viewed.

For Bath Neighbourhood Area applications will be considered alongside relevant Neighbourhood Forum applications as part of the decision making process.

Neighbourhood Area Applications

The Council will publicise, accept comments on and determine applications for the designation of a Neighbourhood Area for Parish and Town Council's undertaking Neighbourhood Plans. This will include publicising the application on Neighbourhood Planning area of the website, notifying the public via our Planning Policy consultation database and issuing a press release.

Council Role: Approving Neighbourhoods Area Applications for Parish and Town Councils

Where there is no change to the Parish or Town Council's administrative boundary this will be a delegated decision undertaken by the Divisional Director of Planning and Transport. Where there is a different boundary being proposed a decision will need to be made by Council / Cabinet.

The Localism Act allows for Neighbourhood Planning to cross local planning authority boundaries and defers the decisions on how best to work these arrangements to local authorities to work on collaboratively.

Neighbourhood Forum Applications

Figure 10 outlines the proposed process for Neighbourhood Forum Applications in Bath.

Business Neighbourhoods

The Council will consider when designating the neighbourhood if it is wholly or predominantly business in nature. If it is the Council will decide whether the neighbourhood should also be specifically designated as a 'business neighbourhood'.

Urban Design London have also prepared useful guidance for communities scoping and consulting on neighbourhood plans, with a particular focus on addressing design issues

www.urbandesignlondon.com/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/UDL-Neighbourhood-Planning-guide-12.pdf

Design Council CABE have sign-posted a wide range of resources, toolkits and case studies which can be helpful for communities at the early stages of development

www.designcouncil.org.uk/our-work/CABE/Services/Plan/Neighbourhood-planning-toolkits-and-guidance/

Find the new B&NES Neighbourhood Forum/ Neighbourhood Area application forms online at

www.bathnes.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning

FIGURE 11: PROCESS FOR PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM DESIGNATION IN BATH



Good design can make neighbourhoods sustainable, adaptable and resilient and create places where people want to live and work.

Design Council

National Requirements*

Application

An application to become a Neighbourhood Forum should be addressed to the local planning authority. It must consist of the following elements:

- A plan or statement clearly showing the proposed neighbourhood area
- A statement explaining why this area is appropriate to be designated as a neighbourhood area
- The name of the proposed neighbourhood forum
- A copy of the written constitution
- The name of the relevant neighbourhood area
- the contact details of at least one member of the Neighbourhood Forum
- A written statement to explain how the proposed Neighbourhood Forum meets the following conditions:

A local planning authority may designate an organisation or body as a neighbourhood forum if the authority are satisfied that it meets the following conditions—

- a it is established for the express purpose of promoting or improving the social, economic and environmental wellbeing of an area that consists of or includes the neighbourhood area concerned (whether or not it is also established for the express purpose of promoting the carrying on of trades, professions or other businesses in such an area),
- b its membership is open to—
 - (i) individuals who live in the neighbourhood area concerned,
 - (ii) individuals who work there (whether for businesses carried on there or otherwise), and
 - (iii) individuals who are elected members of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned,

- c its membership includes a minimum of 21 individuals each of whom either —
 - (i) lives in the neighbourhood area concerned,
 - (ii) works there (whether for a business carried on there or otherwise), or
 - (iii) is an elected member of a county council, district council or London borough council any of whose area falls within the neighbourhood area concerned,
- d it has a written constitution, and
- e such other conditions as may be prescribed.

The local planning authority can decline to consider an application if the applicant has already made an application and a decision has not been made on that application.

* Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012

Communities undertaking a neighbourhood plan will also need to undertake a **Sustainability Appraisal** as part of the process. This considers the impact of the proposed plan on socio-economic and environmental sustainability, and allows the opportunity to identify alternative options and mitigation measures where adverse impacts are identified.

Communities may want to hire a professional consultant to undertake this for them, but guidelines for a 'DIY' appraisal can be found here

<http://levett-therivel.co.uk/DIYSA.pdf>

Suggested additional local response

B&NES Council will publish an application form on its website (and which can be made available in hard copy on request) which applicants will need to fill in and submit.

B&NES Council expresses a strong preference that:

- 1 a plan should be submitted showing the proposed Neighbourhood area with a red line boundary on an OS base map.
- 2 Contact details for all 21 named members of the Neighbourhood Forum are provided
- 3 That at least one Ward Councillor from the ward(s) covered by the area in question is represented on the Neighbourhood Forum and support the application.
- 4 That the aims, objectives, funding sources and working methods for the Forum are provided.

5 The Forum acknowledges the provisions of the Bribery Act 2010, section 3.

6 That the Forums has open public membership arrangements and is not dominated by any one organisation making up more than a third of its membership.

7 That the Forum is not dependent on any one interest group for funding.

8 That the boundaries of a neighbourhood area make sense in terms of community, communications, transport arrangements and services.

9 That the Forum signs up to the Council's Code of Conduct for Neighbourhood Forums.

The Council will prioritise assistance to those Forums which meet these criteria.

National Requirements*

Publicising an application

The local planning authority must publicise an application in such a manner as they consider is likely to bring the application to the attention of people who live, work or carry on business in the area to which the application relates.

Any publicity must contain:

- a a name of the proposed neighbourhood area
- b details of how to respond and make representations
- c deadline for responses (not less than 6 weeks following the date when first publicised)

* Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012

Suggested additional local response

B&NES Council will publish a link on its Neighbourhood Planning webpage www.bathnes.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning to any application made and advertise a six week consultation.

On advertising the consultation on the webpage the Council will also email all organisations registered on the LDF database by email (or letter where no email available) and will notify the ward Councillors who represent the areas covered by the proposed Neighbourhood area.

If you already have a Parish or Town Plan that you still think is up to date you could skip to **step 3** (see **page 40**). However, you will still need to formally apply to designate your Neighbourhood Area, although where no change to your parish area this will be undertaken quickly via a delegated decision.

National Requirements*

Notice of accepted application

When a local planning authority receive an application that meets the requirements, they must publish on their website:

- a the name of the proposed neighbourhood forum
- b the contact details of at least one member of the organisation or body making the representation
- c date on which the application was received
- d statement that any other application for the relevant neighbourhood area, after the first application to be accepted must be received by the LPA no later than 28 days after the date information published on website

* Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012

Suggested additional local response

National Requirements*

Publicising the Decision

The local planning authority must publish on their website details of their decisions on an application. These details must include:

- a name of neighbourhood forum
- b name of neighbourhood area
- c contact details for at least one member of the neighbourhood forum member

* Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012

Suggested additional local response

B&NES Council will also provide a link to the original application and the committee papers when the decision was made.

Bath's future is inextricably dependent on the vitality of its neighbourhoods and businesses. A proactive, collaborative approach with key stakeholders is essential to the City's continuing success and vitality.

Paul Taylor, Director of Property, St John's Bath.

FIGURE 12: CODE OF CONDUCT FOR NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS

Essential

- 1 A single point of contact should be nominated for the Forum which must be provided to the Council and made publicly available. This contact should be kept up to date.
- 2 All Neighbourhood Forums should hold an open Annual General Meeting.
- 3 Agendas should be prepared for meetings of Neighbourhood Forums and the meetings should be minuted, both agendas and minutes should be made publicly available to the public in accordance with existing arrangements for Parish Councils.
- 4 Members of the public may submit statements that relate to issues that are on the agenda for the meeting or any other issues, providing sufficient advance notice is given. These should be submitted to the nominated point of contact for the Forum.

5 Meetings should be Chaired, the arrangements for this are left to the Forum to decide.

- 6 Any financial contributions to the Forum from third parties must be declared.
- 7 Forums must be open to respond to potential concerns about their activities – any such complaints if considered to be justified may lead to a review of the designation of the forum.

Desirable

- 1 A Forum webpage is desirable.
- 2 The frequency of meetings of the Forum is to be determined locally. Quarterly meetings are suggested as a minimum.
- 3 It is desirable that a range of people from the area are represented and attention should be given to involving equalities groups and young people in the Forum.

Review Process

- 1 A breach of this Code of Conduct may lead to the Council re-considering the designation of a Neighbourhood Forum.
- 2 A decision will be made on a case by case basis, on the basis of evidence presented by both the complainant and the Forum.
- 3 Where issues can be satisfactorily resolved this will be preferable to further action such as the suspension of the Forum as a designated Neighbourhood Forum.
- 4 A new application would then need to be lodged to re-designate the Forum and this would be considered on its own merits.

Step 2: Prepare your Plan

The content of a Neighbourhood Plan is entirely up to you. However, it should be consistent with national and local planning policies and with EU obligations. Only planning related elements of a Neighbourhood Plan will need to go through an examination and referendum.

For more information about the full suite of community tools made available through the Localism Act visit

<http://mycommunityrights.org.uk>

Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations 2012 are available online

http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2012/9780111525050/pdfs/ukdsi_9780111525050_en.pdf

Council Role: Duty to provide advice and assistance

General support

- General guidance to be provided (this document)
- Provide a basic process checklist to make sure all regulations are being met for qualifying bodies undertaking Neighbourhood Planning to use which is downloadable from the website (or available on request)
- B&NES Neighbourhood Planning webpage
- Dissemination of information through briefings and workshops
- Disseminating information on local case studies (as these emerge)
- Information on funding and skills for Neighbourhood Planning

Support to groups preparing Neighbourhood Plans

The local planning authority will be able to provide the following in-kind assistance, this will be subject to demand:

- Electronic maps (pdf format) of your Neighbourhood area and relevant planning designations (print outs or GIS maps also available, although providing these will be charged at usual rates)
- Information on planning designations and planning policies
- Guidance in designing community consultation activities on planning issues
- Support for community planning events (e.g. facilitation, feedback, presentations)
- Provide advice on who to consult in relation to additional requirements for a Neighbourhood Development Order

Please give ample notice for us to respond to your requests in the most helpful way.

The local planning authority will not have any specific grant funding for Neighbourhood planning, however, we can advise you on any local or national community funding opportunities.



The Village Design Statement and Community Plan will provide a base for the development of a Neighbourhood Plan for Paulton which it is hoped will prove to be an equally beneficial document.

Paulton Parish Council

CASE STUDY

Paulton Design Statement and Community Plan

Paulton Parish Council and residents worked together to produce a Village Design Statement and Community Plan for the parish. These documents have proved to be invaluable in supporting responses to planning applications and grant applications, giving the council guidance on the needs and views of parishioners and instigating and supporting other initiatives.



Step 3: Extensive Community Engagement and Consultation

It's very important that you engage your community within the neighbourhood area from the outset as your plan or development order will be subject to a local referendum and needs strong buy-in from all parts of the community to get through this final stage. You should also make sure you liaise with statutory consultees.

Make sure to keep a record of consultation activity that you run or organise as you will need to submit a "consultation statement" with your Neighbourhood Plan (the requirements of this are explained in **step 4**).

Before submitting your Neighbourhood Plan or Neighbourhood Development Order to the local planning authority, according to the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 the qualifying body (i.e. Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum) must, publicise in a manner that is likely to bring it to the attention to people who live, work or carry on business in the relevant neighbourhood area:

- (i) A draft of their Neighbourhood Plan/ Neighbourhood Development Order
 - (ii) Details of how to make representations
 - (iii) Deadline for responses (minimum 6 weeks after the first publicised)
- The qualifying body must also consult any statutory consultee whose interests it considered would be affected by the proposals and submit a draft of the proposal to the local planning authority.

The draft submitted to the local planning authority in writing and according to the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 must be accompanied by:

- a A plan or statement showing the area covered by the proposed Neighbourhood Plan/ Development Order
- b A consultation statement (including details of the persons and bodies consulted, how they were consulted, summarises main issues and concerns raised and describes how these issues have been addressed in the proposal)
- c Title of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan/ Development Order

When submitting a proposal to the local planning authority it must be in writing and accompanied by:

- A plan or statement identifying the land to which the proposal relates
- A consultation statement (as above)
- The title of the order
- A statement to explain how the proposal meets the basic conditions required

As appropriate, for a community right to build order this submission should also include:

- Details of any disenfranchisement rights which the qualifying body proposes should not be exercisable
- The relevant properties

The local planning authority has a duty to publicise this information and invite representations. Further to a decision by an Independent Inspector and a referendum in support, the local authority must then publicise the decision and adopt making details of the proposal available.

Council Role: Formal Validation

The local planning authority will validate your Neighbourhood Plan against national planning policy, local planning policy and can flag up any issues in relation to other legislation (e.g. Habitat Regulations issues) to make sure it is ready to go to Independent Examination. It is proposed that this is undertaken under delegated authority by the Divisional Director of Planning & Transport. It is best to approach the local planning authority at an early stage to flag up key policy issues before this formal validation process is triggered.

Please contact the planning policy team in good time to arrange a validation check:

01225 477548

planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk

Actions for a range of properties, both old and modern, have been developed with the character of the area in mind and aim to ensure that locally distinctive features are protected and enhanced. The recommendations in the strategy will help residents who own or rent homes to take practical actions to reduce energy bills, cut carbon emissions and combat climate change

Our experience at the Millstream at Englishcombe is that, by working together on community projects, neighbours can and do become friends

London Road & Snow Hill Climate Change Mitigation Design Strategy

Bath Preservation Trust has been working with the London Road & Snow Hill Partnership and the Centre for Sustainability to develop a neighbourhood energy efficiency design strategy on this project funded by Design Council CABE. The aim is to enhance the local environment by raising design quality and creating a sustainable future for the London Road community.

Volunteers from within the local community have undertaken surveys to define the character and value of the built environment within their neighbourhood and have undertaken simple energy audits of their buildings. The strategy will seek to identify climate change mitigation measures appropriate for visually and historically significant aspects of local character, explore design solutions, options and creative approaches, and identify shared community objectives. Principles and recommendations identified could be used to inform neighbourhood plans and local development orders which have a direct link to emerging new planning system.

CASE STUDY



CASE STUDY

The Millstream Neighbourhood at Englishcombe

Millstream is a community project to create a haven of peace and tranquility in run by residents of the village and parish, Millstream is a wildlife sanctuary where people of all ages can enjoy, can sit, can wander and can appreciate the beauty of Englishcombe heritage and environment.



Step 4: Independent Examination

The qualifying body must organise the Independent Examination into the Neighbourhood Plan/Development Order and appoint a suitable Independent Examiner in liaison with the local planning authority.

The Independent Inspector will decide if it is necessary to hold a public hearing into the Plan/Development Order although as a general rule the examination will take the form of consideration of written representations.

At this early stage, indications suggest that examination will seek to consider:

- Are the ambitions of the plan broadly in conformity with local strategic aims?
- What evidence has been provided to support the ambitions of the plan (particularly where significant development is proposed)?
- Has the plan been drafted with sufficient consultation with the local community?
- Is the plan positively planned and permissive?

Further information on the experiences of other Neighbourhood Plans at examination will emerge in due course.

Council Role: Independent Examination

The local planning authority will publish the draft plan on their website. The local planning authority must publicise the Neighbourhood Plan/Development Order with details of how to respond to it in advance of the Independent Examination in line with Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

The Council recommends that a Planning Inspector from the Planning Inspectorate is the preferred independent examiner. However, they will support the Neighbourhood Planning body if it seeks to find an alternative person to undertake this role in line with the requirements in the regulations.

The local planning authority will fund the Inspectors costs and will provide a Council venue for the examination as needed.

The local planning authority will consider the Inspector's recommendations.

Step 5: Referendum

A referendum at the end of the process will ensure that communities have the final say on whether a neighbourhood plan or development order comes into place in their area. A referendum is also required for a Community Right to Build Order.

The referendum will be held among the registered electors of the neighbourhood area and any adjoining neighbourhood area which might be affected. A positive result requires 51% of the turnout to vote in favour.

Within business neighbourhoods separate referendums will be held for residents and businesses to approve Neighbourhood Development Orders. A person is entitled to vote in the additional referendum for businesses if they are a non-domestic ratepayer in the referendum area. If both referendums approve the Order, it will be adopted. If both oppose it, the Order will not be adopted. If there is a split vote the LPA will seek to resolve differences.

Council Role: Referendum

The Council's Electoral Services will administer and fund the local referendum on the Neighbourhood Plan, as it is required by the regulations that the Council funds these. The Neighbourhood Planning (Referendum) Regulations were published in 2012. They include a proposal for the question to be asked at Neighbourhood Planning referendums.

The local planning authority will publish the results of the referendum on their website.

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUILD

Step 6: Adoption

The Council will adopt the Neighbourhood Plan/Neighbourhood Development Order where it has successfully been through Stages 1-5.

Council's Role: Adoption

Adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan/Development Order will require ratification by full Council.

Once adopted the Neighbourhood Plan/Neighbourhood Development Order will be published on the Council's website and hard copies will be available for inspection at the One-Stop-Shop, Manvers Street in Bath, the Hollies and Riverside offices as well as at public libraries.

Once adopted the Neighbourhood Plan will form part of the Development Plan and will be used to determine planning applications within your Neighbourhood area.

The Localism Act introduces new powers to deliver development that a community wants in their area. This could be new homes, business premises, shops, playgrounds, community halls or small scale renewable energy installations.

This right is open to use by groups other than Parish/Town Councils or Neighbourhood Forums and can be exercised by a range of community organisations.

Further detail is outlined in the Localism Act section 3 (1) (b) of Schedule 4C, this can be summarised as follows:

What is a "community right to build order"?

- Order is made by a community organisation
- Order that grants planning permission for a specified development in relation to a specified site in a neighbourhood area
- There are limits in relation to the area where a development can take place and the type of operations or land uses (in line with Environmental regulations)

What is a "community organisation"?

Eligible community organisations must meet the following criteria:

- Allow individuals within the neighbourhood area to become voting members
- Residents of the neighbourhood area must hold the majority of voting rights and the majority on the governing body
- Must have at least 10 members, each from different dwellings that all live in the area
- Must have a written constitution to confirm and permit the above
- The constitution must confirm that the organisation's activities will benefit the neighbourhood area, and how this will be done
- Assets and profits of the organisation must be disposed in a manner that benefits the community
- Provision must be made that in the event of the organisation disbanding, its assets must be transferred to another appropriate organisation

When can a local authority decline to consider a community right to build order?

- When another proposal has been made for another Neighbourhood Development Order or Community Right to Build Order and when the other proposal is outstanding and where the proposals are the same or substantially the same
- If the local authority considers that the specified development falls within Annex 2 to the Environmental Impact Assessment directive and is likely to have significant effects on the environment by virtue of factors such as its nature size or location.
- If the local authority considers the specified development is likely to have significant effects on a qualifying European site (European site within the meaning of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010), whether on its own or in combination.
- If this happens the authority must notify the person making the proposal and outline their reasons for declining to consider

What is the examination process?

- An Independent Examiner must be appointed
- If the Independent Examiner recommends that the draft order is refused, the authority must refuse the proposal
- If the examiner recommends that the draft order is submitted for a referendum a referendum must be held by the local authority (subject to any modifications being made that the local authority consider appropriate to make sure there is not a breach of EU obligations and the Human Rights Act 1998).

Community Right to Build Orders must meet the criteria of eligible 'community organisations' to be considered sound by an independent inspector and must be supported through a local referendum. If all of these stages are fulfilled, the Order will be adopted by the local authority and the development will be able to go ahead without the need for a traditional planning application. Any financial benefit from this development must be returned to the community where the development has taken place.

Councils Role: Referendum & General Assistance

The Council's Electoral Services team will administer and fund the local referendum on the Community Right to build and the Council will decide on the area of coverage for the referendum in line with national guidance.

In addition, the local planning authority can provide advice to Community Groups seeking to use this right to establish if this is necessary to achieve their aims and to provide other planning guidance.

There are some areas still to be clarified by the government:

- Exact details of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations will not be known until they are due to come into force on 1st April 2012

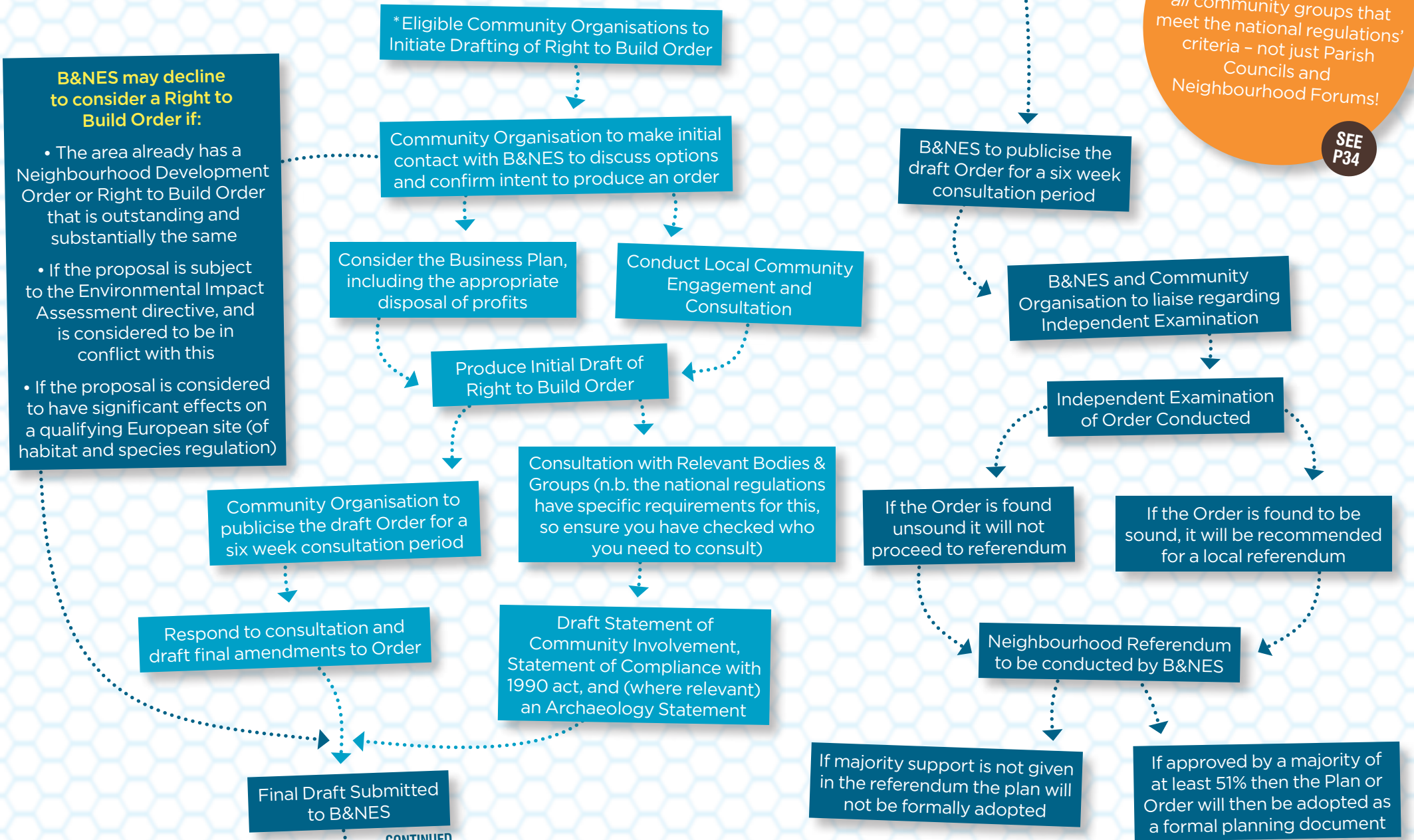
- Regulation making powers on charges that local planning authorities can levy on development under a Neighbourhood Development Order are still to be clarified. It is envisaged that this will enable some of the costs of Neighbourhood Planning to be recouped. This is due to be the subject of a separate consultation later in 2012.
- Provisions in relation to requirements to ensure compatibility with EU obligations are not yet finalised. These are likely to be resolved with amendments to relevant directives.
- The details on referendums are not yet clear, but are to be brought forward in separate regulations based on existing referendum legislation.

Changing or Revoking an order

- Additional detail on revocation and modification of a Neighbourhood Development Order, a Community Right to Build order or a Neighbourhood Plan are outlined in Part 9 of the Draft Neighbourhood Planning regulations but have not been reproduced here.



FIGURE 13: COMMUNITY RIGHT TO BUILD PROCESS FLOW CHART

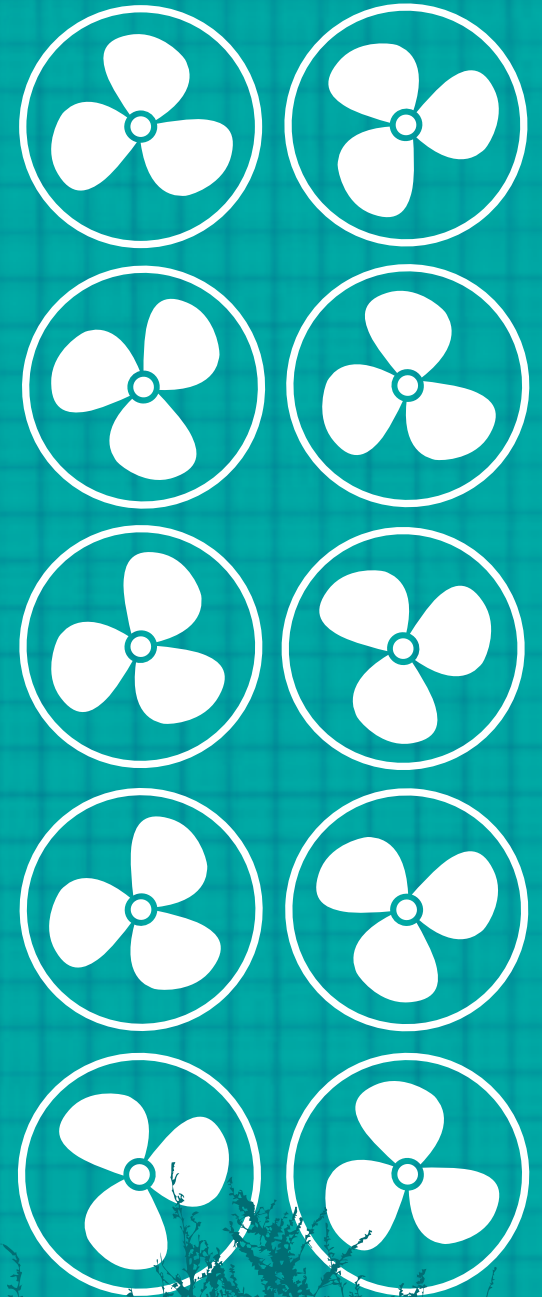


SIX

THE IMPORTANCE OF TREES

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS CAN BE USED TO PROTECT IMPORTANT TREES.

Each year the Council receives approximately 700 applications and notifications to undertake works to protected trees.



One mature tree has the same cooling effect as 10 room sized air conditioners

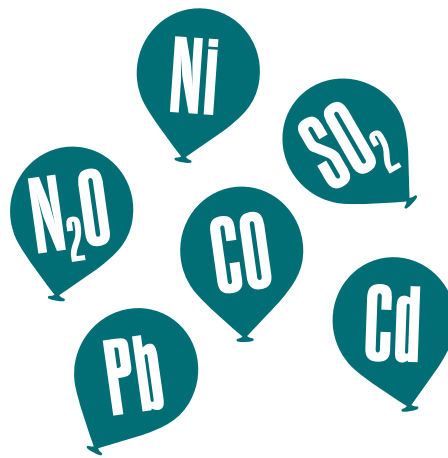


One hundred trees can capture over one million litres of rainwater each year which can help reduce flooding and soil erosion

60

PER CENT

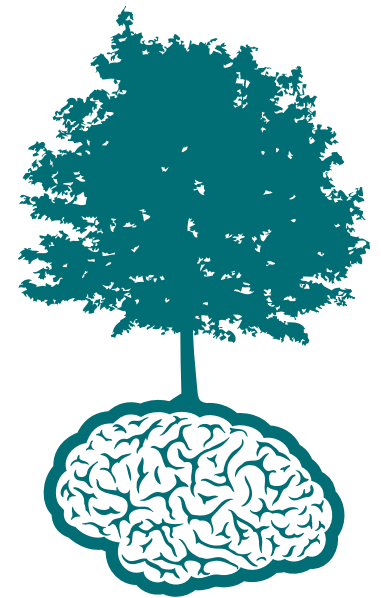
Trees improve air quality – particulate levels on tree-lined streets can be 60% lower than those without trees



Trees can capture and store pollutants including: sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and particulates, carbon monoxide, cadmium, nickel and lead



Trees have been shown to help reduce incidences of stress-related illness



Trees can aid concentration and enhance learning skills in children

15

PER CENT

Trees and green spaces can improve property prices by as much as 15%

21.6

KILOGRAMMES

A single mature tree can absorb carbon at a rate of 21.6kg per year



INTRODUCTION

The importance of our trees is embedded in the Council's policy documents such as the Bath and North East Somerset Local Plan, Core Strategy, Green Infrastructure Strategy, Landscape Character Assessment and the City of Bath World Heritage site setting study.

Trees in the district are protected if they are growing within a conservation area as designated under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and can be protected by Tree Preservation Orders (TPO).

Trees can also be protected by virtue of landscape conditions attached to planning consents and, more unusually, by section 106 agreements attached to planning consents. Landscape conditions are not suitable for long term tree protection because they last for a finite period of time, normally 5 years following completion of a development.

HOW CAN WE PROTECT TREES?

What is a Tree Preservation Order?

It is a legal document made by a local planning authority which in general makes it an offence to cut down, top, lop, uproot, wilfully damage or wilfully destroy a tree without the planning authority's permission.

A Tree Preservation Order is made when trees are considered to be under threat and when an assessment determines that they are important trees.

A tree can be considered under threat for development or when a notification has been received for tree works in a conservation area for instance. More information regarding Tree Preservation Orders and Trees in Conservation Areas can be on our website.

live.bathnes.gov.uk/services/environment/trees-and-woodlands/tree-preservation-orders

What happens once a Tree Preservation Order is made?

Once the TPO is made it is served on the persons interested in the land affected by the order. Parish and Town Councils are also provided copies and a copy is made available for public inspection. People affected by the order can object or make representations.

The Council must decide whether the TPO should be confirmed or not within 6 months from the date the order was made. This is likely to be decided by the Development Control Committee if an objection is made.

How are trees assessed for a Tree Preservation Order?

The Council will assess a tree, groups of trees or woodland to determine whether they are worthy of a TPO using the following criteria:

- visibility to the general public
- overall health, vigour and appearance
- suitability of their location and anticipated future management

- special factors such as contribution to the character of a conservation area, World Heritage Site setting or overall green infrastructure; their rarity; their ecological contribution and whether they have historical significance such as in the case of veteran trees.

Not all trees can be protected by a TPO which may be for a number of reasons such as;

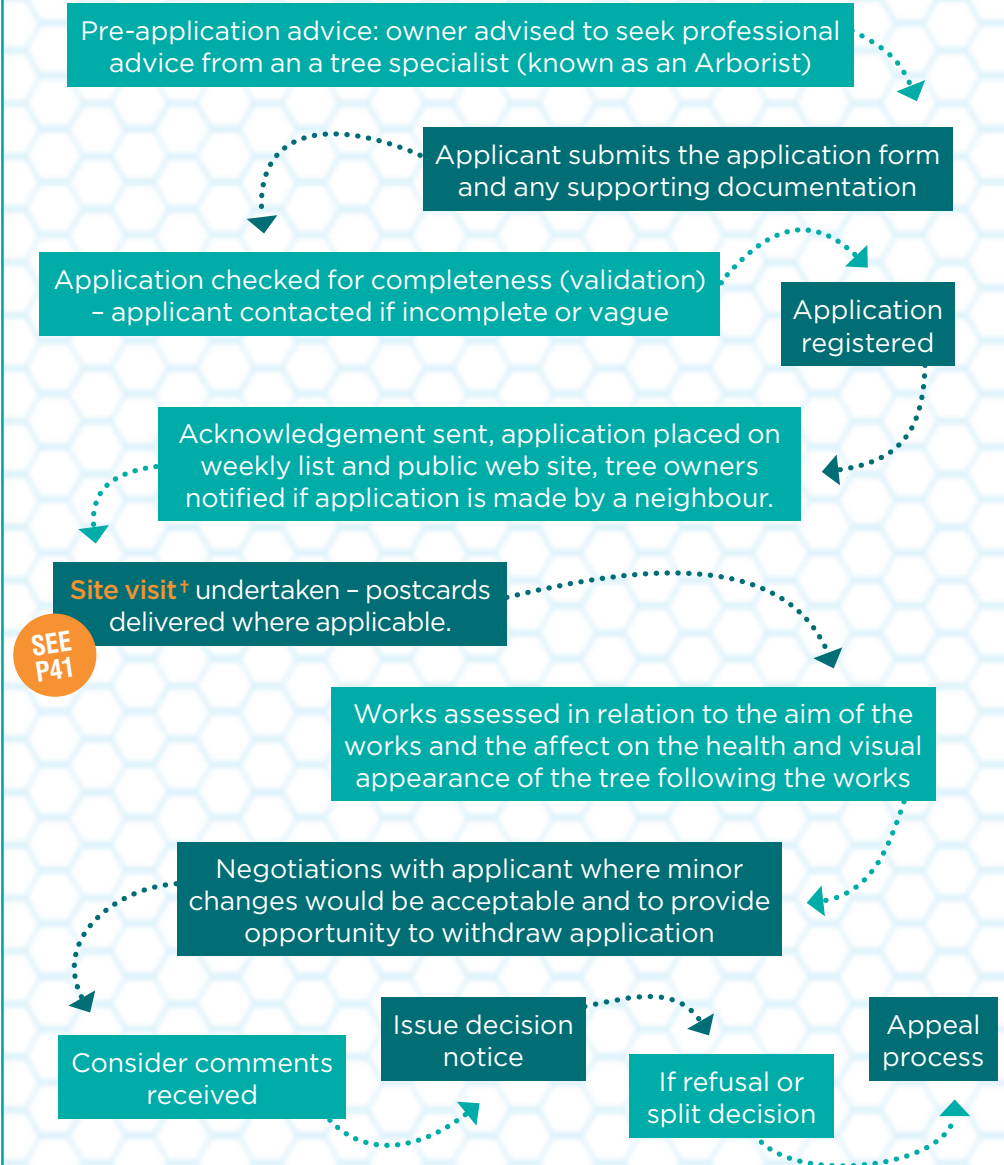
- the trees are unsuitable for their location, for instance they are close to a house and would require regular and significant work as a result.
- the trees have developed significant structural weaknesses or poor shape.
- the trees are not visible to the public and have no other exceptional attributes to support a TPO.

If a tree is protected by either a TPO or conservation area then an application or notification respectively must be sent to the Council for tree surgery or felling.

Publicity

The Council publicises Tree Protection Order applications and notifications to undertake work to protected trees in the following ways:

FIGURE 14: HOW IS AN APPLICATION FOR TREE WORKS FOR TREES PROTECTED BY A TREE PRESERVATION ORDER DECIDED BY THE COUNCIL?



- All applications and notices are recorded on the public planning database and on the Council website. A decision will not be made within 21 days of the registration of an application or notification unless there are exceptional circumstances for doing so.
- Notify Town and Parish Councils of applications and notices within their area.
- Placing applications and notices on the weekly lists – available to Ward Members and the public.
- Advising applicants to contact their neighbours prior to carrying out any work.
- Advising applicants to contact tree owners if the applications or notices relate to neighbouring trees and seek their consent if the work extends beyond the boundary.
- Tree owners will be notified if they are not the applicant.

How do I find out if tree work is proposed near my home?

If you have access to the internet you can set up an 'Alert' for your address on our website www.bathnes.gov.uk. Alternatively, telephone Council Connect on **01225 394041**.

Exceptions

There are instances where work is exempt from the normal tree application or notification process. The Councils' permission is not required for cutting down or carrying out work on trees which are dead, dying or have become dangerous. Anyone who proposes to carry out work under this exemption is advised to give 5 days notice before carrying out the work, except in an emergency. Anyone who is not sure if their tree falls within this exemption should seek advice from an arboriculturalist since the burden of proof to show that the work was exempt rests with them.

5 day notices are not publicised, however, Town and Parish Councils are advised by e-mail. Relevant Councillors will be contacted.

If insufficient supporting evidence is provided for the work proposed within a 5 day notice then the Council will request an application (in respect of a tree covered by a tree preservation order) or 6 weeks notification (in respect of trees within a conservation area).

FIND OUT MORE

WoodWatch

A web-based 'neighbourhood watch' for the protection of woods and trees that are important to communities.

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/en/campaigning/woodwatch/pages/default.aspx

Love trees?
Why not create
a community
orchard?

Ancient Tree Hunt

Record and protect ancient and veteran trees.

www.ancienttreehunt.org.uk

Community Woodland Network

A network for community woodland groups to share information and resources.

www.yourwoods.info

A little rough guide around the hedges: why our hedgerows matter and how you can help

A pocket guide to hedgerows including a fun photo guide to hedgerow plants

www.cpre.org.uk/resources/countryside/hedgerows/item/2481-a-little-rough-guide-around-the-hedges

A Guide to the benefits of urban trees

A fascinating 12 page guide to the positive impacts of trees on urban living

www.greenleaftrees.co.uk/articlephp/6/_new_guide_to_the_benefits_of_urban_trees

No space for
street trees?
Is your front
garden
suitable?

Arboriculture association

The association provides free advice and a list of tree surgeons and consultants

www.trees.org.uk

Neighbourhood Plans

Advice from the Woodland Trust

www.woodlandtrust.org.uk

FIGURE 15: HOW IS A TREE WORKS NOTIFICATION FOR TREES PROTECTED BY A CONSERVATION AREA PROCESSED?

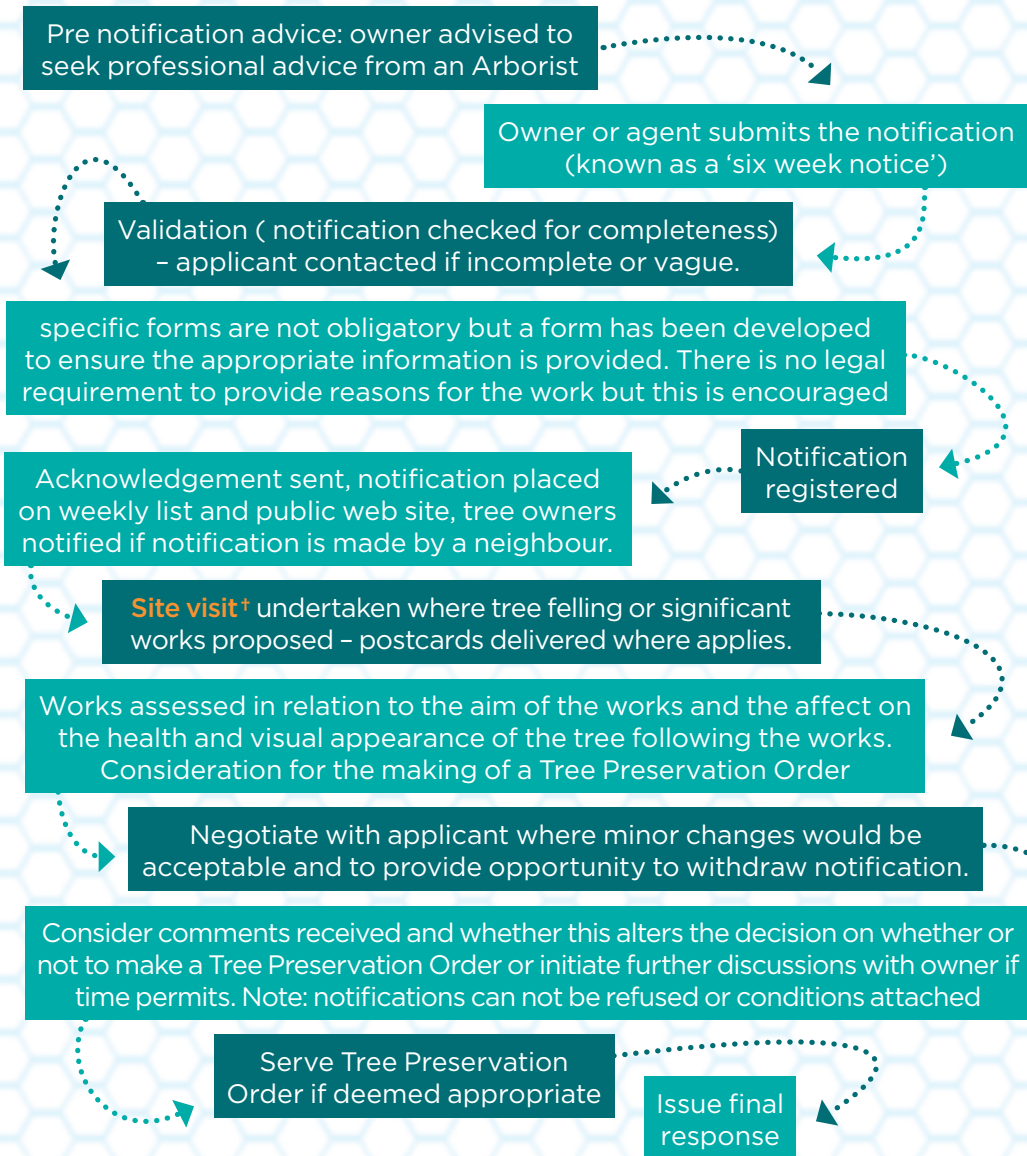
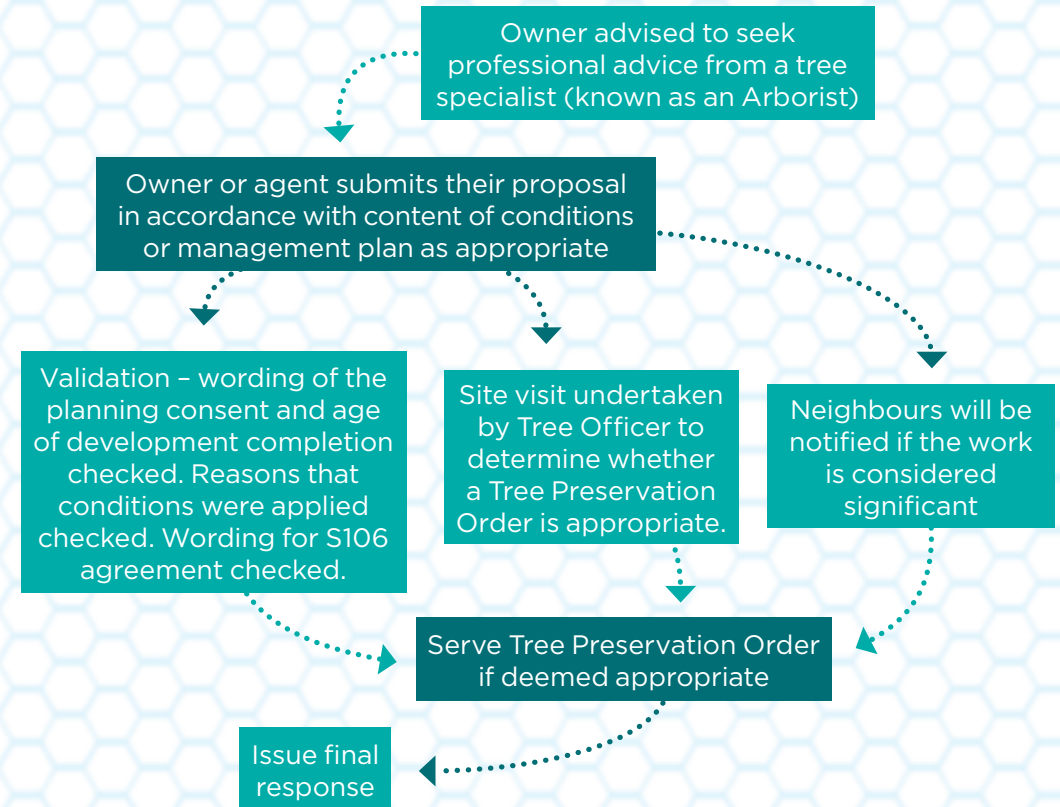


FIGURE 16: HOW IS PROPOSED TREE FELLING TO TREES PROTECTED BY LANDSCAPE CONDITIONS OR A SECTION 106 AGREEMENT PROCESSED?



Explanatory notes

Important - in terms of biodiversity; historical or cultural (where apparent)

Highly Visible - Tree clearly visible to the general public from major vantage points; for instance, main roads or heavily-used footpaths or where the tree is overlooked by many properties.

†

A site visit may reveal that major works which would have a significant impact on the visual amenity or health of a tree (such as a crown reduction greater than 30% or felling) relates to an important tree which is highly visible. Where sound arboricultural reasons support the proposal immediate neighbours will be notified by either cards or site notice and Ward Councillors or Parish and Town Councils notified.

SEVEN

OTHER TOOLS AND TIPS FOR COMMUNITIES

OTHER IDEAS ABOUT HOW TO GET
PEOPLE TALKING ABOUT PLANNING
AND CHARACTER ISSUES IN
YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD.

See our Neighbourhood
Planning website for the
latest info on local grants,
events and for other tips

[www.bathnes.gov.uk/
neighbourhoodplanning](http://www.bathnes.gov.uk/neighbourhoodplanning)

There are many ways to get people involved in planning, design and heritage issues in your neighbourhood. Extra tools and tips are outlined in this chapter.

Area-wide Landscape Character Assessment

Starting from national level work some years ago, landscape character assessments have been produced at national, regional and local authority level, and for National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). They cover history, land use, form of the land, tree cover, views and many other aspects. They have always been a professionally-led process, although more recent work has included some level of community involvement.

Find out about Funding

Research funding opportunities for local groups to take direct action or to support community consultation or activities. There are often local small grants pots administered by B&NES Council and other agencies. There may also be innovative ways you can re-use existing budgets.

A number of local groups in B&NES have recently accessed this kind of funding for one off community projects.

Local Distinctiveness Studies

As design issues have increasingly become matters of concern for the planning system, so planners in some areas have started to develop approaches, often but not always called Local Distinctiveness Studies. Such studies describe and evaluate key design features of a local area and produce guidelines in a way very similar to that in the more familiar Village Design Statements, but across a broader canvas. To date all have been professionally-led, if sometimes with a degree of community involvement. As semi-formal documents they can carry some weight in decision-making on planning applications

Avon River Corridor Group

The recently published Avon River Corridor Economy Group's report to Council has identified the value to many urban neighbourhoods along the river, such as at Twerton, Weston, and Keynsham of reconnecting in meaningful economic, social and cultural ways with the river.



KEYNSHAM TOWN PLAN CONSULTATION

The production of the Town Plan has resulted in a good quality document which will hopefully help promote a positive image of the town and its aspirations. At the same time the actual process that was undertaken to achieve the product has had benefits, for example increased links within the community with new individuals actively drawn in.

These pages list a number of tried and tested methods of consultation and engagement. Creativity is an important element of a stimulating and successful engagement strategy, be it through an unusual venue or quirky approach or with a more social event.



Local High Street Projects

Lobby groups like the New Economics Foundation have developed a number of tools on their website available for communities focused around local high streets.

[www.neweconomics.org/
programmes/connected-economies](http://www.neweconomics.org/programmes/connected-economies)

Community Right to Bid

The new Community Right to Bid comes into force during the summer of 2012. Its aim is to keep land and buildings, valued by the community in use, by giving local people the chance to bid to buy them if they come up for sale.

Communities will have the opportunity to nominate public and private land and buildings to be included on a list of 'assets of community value'.

If an asset on this list comes up for sale, the Community Right to Bid is enabled and up to six months becomes available for communities to prepare a competitive bid and possibly buy the asset on behalf of the community.

There is strong evidence that provision of green space effectively improves mental health

*The Marmot Review,
National Institute of Clinical Excellence*

Your community can use the Community Right to Bid to nominate, gain listing, then potentially buy local buildings and land including:

- village shops
- former schools
- public houses
- recreational facilities
- public open space

These could be owned by the local authority, another public body or a private company or individual.

For more information search for “community right to bid” in the a-z on the Council’s website www.bathnes.gov.uk

Community Right to Challenge

This allows communities to challenge and procure run a local service on behalf of the local authority.

For more information search for “community right to challenge” in the a-z on the Council’s website www.bathnes.gov.uk

LAUNCH

Green Infrastructure Strategy

The Council is progressing its first Green Infrastructure Strategy. It held a consultation launch event for stakeholders, a chance to find out more and to encourage networking between the wide range of stakeholders with an impact on green infrastructure.

www.bathnes.gov.uk/greeninfrastructure



Community Infrastructure Levy **Local Landscape Character Assessment**

When new developments happen, the developers are usually asked to pay a contribution towards the funding of associated infrastructure, historically this has been through 'Section 106' agreements negotiated between local authorities and developers. The Planning Act 2008 introduced a new way of doing this - the Community Infrastructure Levy - Bath & North East Somerset Council is seeking to introduce this.

A 'meaningful proportion' of the Community Infrastructure Levy is required to be passed on to the local community. Regulations are not yet in place, however, this could be an important source of local capital for neighbourhoods to make improvements where development has been undertaken locally.

For more information on this Council project see www.bathnes.gov.uk/cil

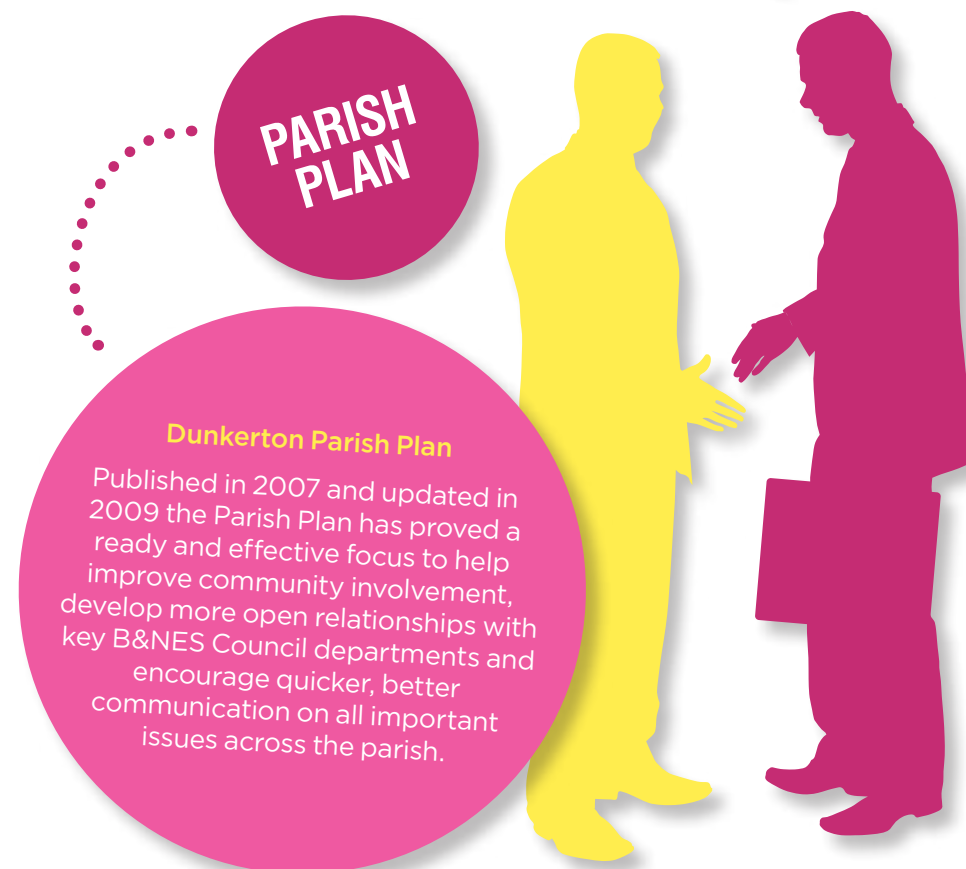
Area-wide Landscape Character Assessment is balanced with this approach, its local equivalent. These assessments are very much a community-led approach through which local people assess the nature and significance of their local landscape. No national guidance exists but models of good practice are beginning to emerge.

Green Infrastructure

Green Infrastructure is the term used to describe the networks of natural spaces and corridors within our urban and rural areas which support the health and wellbeing of local communities. The Council is developing a Strategy to make better use of these natural assets. The strategy should provide valuable resources for developing neighbourhood plans.

We see Neighbourhood Planning as a new and welcome opportunity to involve local people in key decisions that have a direct impact on their homes and everyday lives

Dunkerton Parish Council



Parish Plans, Town Plans & other community plans

Parish and Town Plans are produced primarily by local communities, albeit sometimes with procedural advice, sometimes technical advice. They generally cover almost everything except direct land use planning issues; for example open spaces, health, safety etc., but inevitably overlap at times with land use planning. They focus on generating local action plans and local projects, for example open space maintenance.

A number of communities in B&NES have developed these plans and have successfully met many of their actions. They are a good tool to focus action and establish local priorities.

Transition movement

Join the transition movement and start community-led local action in response to global challenges of climate change, economic hardship and energy. Typical project areas are around local food, transport, energy, education, housing, waste and art. There are a number of existing transition groups in B&NES.

For more information:
[www.transitionnetwork.org/
support/what-transition-initiative](http://www.transitionnetwork.org/support/what-transition-initiative)

Village and Town Design Statements

Some 600 or so Statements have been produced to date for villages and small towns, mainly by local people themselves. A Statement includes description and analysis of the distinctive aspects of a village or town and ends with design guidelines. Though done by local people, they can be formally or informally adopted into the planning system. Many have been shown to have a positive impact on local design standards.

Some B&NES Parishes have already successfully developed village design statements, these can be used to guide public realm improvements (signage, street lights, green space maintenance) as well as being a first port of call for design teams working on development proposals for planning applications in your area.

Heritage Projects

Understanding local history is an essential first step in promoting local character and enables heritage features important to the community to be preserved and enhanced. Useful sources of information include English Heritage's website and guidance as well as more locally specific information and guidance from local heritage groups and organisations.

A new community checklist developed by English Heritage with Civic Voice is designed to help local groups with an interest in their local history including historic buildings to get more people involved and generate ideas for projects
[http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/
local-checklist](http://hc.english-heritage.org.uk/local-checklist)

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TOOLKIT

These pages list a number of tried and tested methods of consultation and engagement. Creativity is an important element of a stimulating and successful engagement strategy, be it through an unusual venue or quirky approach or with a more social event.

Method of Involvement	Usefulness/Considerations	Target groups
Information		
Provide information about opportunities for consultation in good time* (e.g. online consultation calendar, email bulletins, SMS Text messages and reminder letters)	It is crucial that opportunities for public involvement are flagged up in good time and that they are held at times and locations which are as convenient as possible. This should increase the response rate and give the best chance to those who would like to participate to be involved.	Wide audience – general public
Media (Local Press*, Council publications – e.g. Council News, radio, regional TV, voluntary group newsletters, etc.)	Local media can be provided with press releases and statements about proposals to report and discuss. With wide distribution, local media can help reach a large audience and publicise how and when communities can become involved. A disadvantage is that there may be little control as to which issues the media focuses on or how these are presented.	Wide audience – general public
Notification by email (or letter where no email contact available)*	Direct mailing is an effective way of contacting both statutory consultees and non-statutory consultees. The LDF consultation database will be used to generate mailing lists. See Appendix B for details of how to join this mailing list.	Statutory Consultees Non-statutory consultees Local residents & local/national organisations
Notification of consultation periods in local newspapers*	Statutory Requirement. Likely to make use of The Bath Chronicle, The Somerset Guardian, the Western Daily Press, Norton Radstock Journal, Bristol Evening Post as well as free newspapers. This is a statutory requirement. Notifications are usually published on Thursdays.	Local people – including residents, employees & businesses.

Method of Involvement	Usefulness/Considerations	Target groups
<p>Internet* (Council website*, email bulletins e.g. Bath & North East Somerset's weekly e-bulletin Inform*, e-consultation)</p>	<p>Can be used to provide detailed information, progress updates and feedback. The internet allows people to look at proposals in their own time, and is useful for those who would not be able to visit council offices to view documents.</p> <p>Posting information on the website and sending e-bulletins is low cost. Maintaining e-mail contact lists can be labour-intensive, but is very useful. External providers may be sought to provide a Council wide e-consultation package.</p> <p>However, not everyone has access to the internet or is a confident computer user. All documents must still be available in other formats.</p> <p>Dedicated webpages for projects will be used with shortcuts for ease of use.</p>	<p>Wide audience – general public.</p> <p>75% residents in Bath & North East Somerset have access to the internet (Voicebox survey, 2004–5).</p>
<p>Local Publicity* Posters/leaflets for display on notice boards, in council offices, community centres, sports centres, shopping centres, libraries, schools and colleges etc. Disseminate leaflets at consultation events/from displays</p>	<p>Summary posters, leaflets and flyers can be used to publicise consultations, outline proposals and inform the community about where further information can be found or how and when they can get involved. This can be a useful way of reaching people who would not normally seek to get involved and for targeting groups.</p> <p>Material should be tailored towards specific groups in terms of the language used, presentation style and issues raised.</p> <p>Design, production and distribution of materials will incur some costs. A distribution network will need to be organised so that the publicity material is displayed and used effectively.</p>	<p>Local people – including residents, employees & businesses.</p> <p>Can be tailored to reach the 'target groups we need to engage' that are identified in this SCI.</p>
<p>Area notification where site allocations proposed</p>	<p>Notification by letter of development proposals under consultation in local area. Letters sent to addresses in the vicinity of a proposed site allocation. The size and parameters of the area are to be determined by the size and nature of the site allocation proposed.</p>	<p>Local people – including residents, employees & businesses.</p>
<p>Hotline</p>	<p>Provision of direct contact telephone number to ask direct questions. Council Connect are the first point of contact for Planning queries.</p>	<p>Wide audience. A good way of getting information to those who do not have access to the internet.</p>
<p>Seminars and lectures</p>	<p>Provide information and the opportunity to learn more about planning. Guest speakers will be sought where possible to boost interest.</p>	<p>Can be used to build the capacity and awareness of local residents or local organisations.</p> <p>Can be tailored to reach the 'target groups we need to engage' that are identified in this SCI.</p>

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TOOLKIT

Method of Involvement	Usefulness/Considerations	Target groups
Consultation		
<p>Local Development Documents available for Public Inspection* (Council website, key Council offices and all public libraries in the district).</p> <p>The LDF Deposit Stations are listed in the Key Contacts section at the end of this SCI.</p>	<p>Statutory requirement. It should be clear how and when people should respond. All council offices are accessible to people with disabilities and there are members of staff available to assist members of the public and answer queries during office hours. The statutory consultation period should be advertised widely and in good time.</p>	<p>Local people – including residents, employees & businesses.</p>
<p>Formal and informal dialogue with statutory consultees* (see Appendix B for a list of Statutory Consultees)</p>	<p>Statutory requirement to formally inform statutory consultees of document publication and formal consultation periods.</p>	<p>Statutory consultees</p>
<p>Town & Village meetings and forums</p>	<p>Meetings must be well-organised and need to be chaired effectively. Useful to gain a better understanding of the issues as they are seen from a local perspective and directly engage with local people.</p>	<p>Parish Councils People living in rural area & rural businesses and other organisations.</p>
<p>Public exhibitions and road shows</p>	<p>Prior publicity is required to make this method worthwhile. Exhibitions should be held in accessible locations and may need to be held over a number of days and at different times to ensure that all members of the community can attend.</p> <p>Exhibitions should be part of a wider exhibition or in an area which is frequently used for such purposes.</p> <p>High quality promotional material and display stands are required to make the exhibition eye catching.</p>	<p>Can be used to build the capacity and awareness of local residents or local organisations.</p> <p>Can be tailored to reach the ‘target groups we need to engage’ that are identified in this SCI.</p>

Method of Involvement	Usefulness/Considerations	Target groups
Meetings & Workshops organised to involve the community*	<p>Can be used to identify and gain a fuller understanding of key issues.</p> <p>Efforts must be made to ensure these are well attended, purposeful and organised in good time.</p>	<p>Statutory consultees & non-statutory consultees as appropriate.</p> <p>Can be tailored to reach the 'target groups we need to engage' that are identified in this SCI.</p>
Qualitative Research (such as focus groups, citizen panels, interviews)	<p>Good method of identifying key issues and concerns and generating ideas. Useful for considering the presentation of options. Issues can be explored in more depth than in surveys.</p> <p>The consultation arrangements for the Local Strategic Partnership & Community Strategy consultation databases can be utilised to avoid duplication.</p>	<p>Wide audience.</p> <p>Can be tailored to reach the 'target groups we need to engage' that are identified in this SCI.</p>
Surveys (e.g. e-consultation and questionnaires)	<p>Good method for involving and seeking views of a large number of people. Initial start up costs relatively high. Utilise Council News and Voicebox (a postal survey sent to a random sample of households in the district).</p>	<p>Wide audience.</p> <p>Can be tailored to reach the 'target groups we need to engage' identified.</p>
Participation		
Workshops	<p>Engages local communities in an interactive and proactive way to identify priorities and help create action plans. This approach can help generate ideas and secure greater ownership of proposals. It is also useful for identifying and discussing controversial issues.</p> <p>Feedback and continuing dialogue necessary. Must be managed and delivered well. Need to built trust and communication to make this successful.</p> <p>Involves officer involvement and/or external facilitators required. Workshops must have target audience.</p>	<p>Can be used to build the capacity and awareness of local residents or local organisations.</p>
Steering/ Advisory/ Working groups	<p>Key stakeholders, statutory consultees and elected representatives can be involved in discussing key planning issues. Useful for facilitating discussions on controversial topics or discussing themes. Role of the group should be clear. There should be a transparent approach to member selection.</p>	<p>Statutory consultees</p> <p>Non-statutory consultees</p> <p>Elected representatives</p>

APPENDIX A: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TOOLKIT

Method of Involvement	Usefulness/Considerations	Target groups
<p>Linking with existing community involvement initiatives*</p>	<p>Linking with the Local Strategic Partnership and Community Strategy consultation would be highly useful. Linking into meetings and events organised by existing community groups would also be beneficial. This approach can help avoid consultation fatigue.</p> <p>Low cost as avoids duplication of consultation.</p>	<p>Wide audience.</p>
<p>Discussions with individuals and groups not involved with existing community initiatives (through outreach & pre-arranged meetings with specific groups e.g. gypsies and travellers, young people in schools and colleges)</p>	<p>Use of personal interaction to overcome barriers to participation can be effective. Although it is difficult to reach large number of people using this method. This method relies on building relationships over the longer-term.</p> <p>Members of the local community should be trained and supported to facilitate dialogue with their own communities. This is useful for building skills and capacity building within communities.</p> <p>The reliance on individuals to carry this method forward can be problematic if they move on.</p> <p>Facilitating members of local communities to play an active role in this can lead to capacity building.</p>	<p>Local residents and businesses not represented by any other organisation.</p>

Method of Involvement	Usefulness/Considerations	Target groups
Internal Corporate Discussion with elected representatives*	<p>Ensures effective participation of elected representative and cross-council officer involvement. Encourages integrated working and provides a system to feedback to constituents and council employees.</p> <p>The role of councillors within these discussions is crucial. They are often the first to hear of local concerns, and they need to be aware of key policies and initiatives.</p> <p>The Planning Policy team will contact Ward Councillors directly when developing Local Development Documents to keep them informed of progress. We will also signpost aspects of the policies which will directly impact on their Ward (e.g. area specific allocations).</p> <p>Councillors on Development Control Committees and the Executive have a significant policy-making role. A list of councillors is available on the Council's website.</p>	<p>Elected representatives</p>
Collaborative Projects	<p>Work with local community groups and amenity groups to bring forward linked or joint projects.</p>	<p>Community groups and civic groups within B&NES.</p>
Informal dialogue with local consultees	<p>Dialogue with relevant local groups can bring clarity over proposals, and a useful third party perspective and source of local information</p>	<p>Civic Societies & Amenity Groups; Lobby & Pressure Groups; Neighbourhood and Residents' Groups; Sports, Activity and Social Societies."</p>

APPENDIX B: STATUTORY CONSULTEES

Specific Consultation Bodies

The Town & Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 specify that the following bodies must be consulted if the council considers that body will be affected by what is proposed to be covered in a Local Development Document.

- Local Authorities adjoining Bath & North East Somerset:
 - Bristol City Council
 - Mendip District Council
 - North Somerset Council
 - North Wiltshire District Council
 - Somerset County Council
 - South Gloucestershire Council
 - West Wiltshire District Council
 - Wiltshire County Council
- Natural England (formerly Countryside Agency & English Nature)
- Environment Agency
- English Heritage (HBMC)
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
- Highways Agency
- Network Rail
- Strategic Health Authority
- Relevant sewerage and water undertakers
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- Relevant gas and electricity companies

Parish & Town Councils within Bath & North East Somerset Council

Bathampton Parish Council
 Batheaston Parish Council
 Bathford Parish Council
 Cameley Parish Council
 Camerton Parish Council
 Charlcombe Parish Council
 Chelwood Parish Council
 Chew Magna Parish Council
 Chew Stoke Parish Council
 Claverton Parish Council
 Clutton Parish Council
 Combe Hay Parish Council
 Compton Dando Parish Council
 Compton Martin Parish Council
 Corston Parish Council
 Dunkerton Parish Council
 East Harptree Parish Council
 Englishcombe Parish Council
 Farmborough Parish Council
 Farrington Gurney Parish Council
 Freshford Parish Council
 High Littleton Parish Council
 Hinton Blewett Parish Council
 Hinton Charterhouse Parish Council
 Kelston (Parish Meeting)
 Keynsham Town Council
 Marksbury Parish Council
 Midsomer Norton Town Council
 Monkton Combe Parish Council
 Nempnett Thrubwell Parish Council
 Newton St Loe Parish Council
 North Stoke (Parish Meeting)
 Norton Malreward Parish Council

Paulton Parish Council
 Peasedown St John Parish Council
 Priston Parish Council
 Publow and Pensford Parish Council
 Radstock Town Council
 Saltford Parish Council
 Shoscombe Parish Council
 South Stoke Parish Council
 St Catherine (Parish Meeting)
 Stanton Drew Parish Council
 Stowey Sutton Parish Council
 Swainswick Parish Council
 Timsbury Parish Council
 Ubley Parish Council
 Wellow Parish Council
 West Harptree Parish Council
 Westfield Parish Council
 Whitchurch Parish Council

Relevant Parish Councils adjoining Bath & North East Somerset Council Mendip Parish Councils

Chewton Mendip
 Chilcompton
 Hemington
 Kilmersdon
 Litton
 Norton St Philip
 Priddy
 Ston Easton
 Stratton on the Fosse

Wiltshire Parish Councils

Box
 Colerne
 Limpley Stoke

Monkton Farleigh
 Westwood
 Winsley

North Somerset Parish Councils

Blagdon
 Butcombe
 Dundry
 Winford

South Gloucestershire Parish Councils

Bitton
 Cold Ashton
 Hanham Abbots
 Marshfield
 Limpley Stoke
 Monkton Farleigh
 Westwood
 Winsley

The list presented here is not exhaustive and also related to successor bodies where reorganisations occur. The consultation database is available for public scrutiny on request.

If you would like to be added to our consultation database contact us: **01225 477548** or **planning_policy@bathnes.gov.uk**

We will use our consultation database to you when opportunities for consultation arise in the preparation of the LDF. We will target consultation according to area of interest wherever possible.

Relevant Government Departments

The Government Office for the South West (GOSW) will be the first point of contact for consultation with central government departments.

We will consult any government departments or agencies where they have large landholdings in the area covered by a LDD. This will ensure that we are fully aware of the possible need for expansion of existing facilities or the likelihood of large scale land disposals taking place within the period of time covered by the LDD.

- Home Office
- Department for Education and Skills (through GOSW)
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Transport (through GOSW)
- Department of Health (through relevant Regional Public Health Group)
- Department of Trade and Industry (through GOSW)
- Ministry of Defence
- Department of Work and Pensions
- Department of Constitutional Affairs
- Department for Culture Media and Sport
- Office of Government Commerce (Property advisors to the Civil Estate)

General consultation bodies:

Various types will be consulted depending on the nature and relevance of the Local Development Document. For example:

- Voluntary bodies
- Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups
- Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups
- Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons
- Bodies representing the business community

Other Consultees

This list is not exhaustive and gives example of non-statutory consultees that will be consulted. Although those listed here are organisations, individual residents are also encouraged to join the consultation database.

- Airport operators
- Ancient Monuments Society
- British Chemical Distributors and Traders Association
- British Geological Survey
- Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE)
- Canal and Rivers Trust, canal owners and navigation authorities.
- Centre for Ecology and Hydrology
- Chambers of Commerce, local CBI and local branches of the Institute of Directors

- Church Commissioners
- Civic Trust
- Civil Aviation Authority
- Coal Authority
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- Commission for New Towns and English Partnerships
- Commission for Racial Equality
- Community Associations
- Council for British Archaeology
- Crown Estate Office
- Diocesan Board of Finance
- Disability Rights Commission
- Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee
- Development Industry.
- Electricity, Gas, and Telecommunications Undertakers and the National Grid Company
- Environmental Groups at national, regional and local level including: National Forest Company; Council for the Protection of Rural England; Cotswolds Conservation Board; Friends of the Earth; Royal Society for the Protection of Birds; Wildlife Trusts & Woodland Trust.
- Equal Opportunities Commission
- Fire and Rescue Services
- Forestry Commission
- Freight Transport Association
- Friends, Families & Travellers
- Garden History Society
- Georgian Group
- Gypsy Council
- Health and Safety Executive
- Help the Aged
- Home Builders Federation
- Housing Corporation
- Learning and Skills Council
- Local Agenda 21 Groups including: Civic Societies; Community Groups; Local Transport operators; Local Race Equality Council and other local equality groups.
- National Playing Fields Association
- Network Rail & Passenger Transport Authorities
- Passenger Transport Executives
- Police Architectural Liaison Officers/ Crime Prevention Design Advisors
- Post Office Property Holdings
- Residents Groups and Associations
- Rail Companies and the Rail Freight Group
- Regional Development Agencies
- Regional Housing Boards
- Regional Sports Boards
- Road Haulage Association
- Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings
- Sport England
- Theatres Trust
- Twentieth Century Society
- Victorian Society
- Water Companies
- Women's National Commission

APPENDIX C: FURTHER INFORMATION

Key Contacts for advice on planning issues

The following section outlines the key contacts for information on planning issues.

Bath & North East Somerset Council

There is a designated 'environment & planning' section of the Council's website which gives details of planning applications, planning policy, heritage and environment & major developments and special projects. This can be accessed using the Council website A-Z facility.

www.bathnes.gov.uk

Subscribe to the Council's e-newsletter

For regular updates about planning and other issues you can subscribe to the Council's free e-newsletter 'Inform' from the Council website home page.

Contact Council Connect

Call, email and text Council Connect regarding general planning queries.

Telephone: 01225 39 40 41

Text: 07797 806544

Email: councilconnect@bathnes.gov.uk

Visit the One-Stop-Shop, Bath

To look at planning policy documents, planning application files or request to look at archived files visit the One-Stop-Shop on Manvers Street, Bath.

www.bathnes.gov.uk/contactus/counciloffices/pages/bathonestopshop.aspx

Visit the LDF Document Deposit Stations

During periods of statutory consultation on planning policy documents, draft documents, committee reports and associated background papers etc will be available at the following deposit stations in the district:

All Public Libraries

Bath Library, 19 The Podium,
Northgate Street, Bath, BA1 5AN

Keynsham Library, The Centre,
Keynsham, BS31 1ED

Midsomer Norton Library, 119 High
Street, Midsomer Norton, BA3 2DA

Mobile Libraries

Moorland Road Library, Moorland
Road, Bath, BA2 3PL

Paulton Library, Central Methodist
Church, Paulton, BS39 7QQ

Radstock Library, The Street,
Radstock, BA3 3PR

Saltford Library, 478a Bath Road,
Saltford, BS31 3DJ

Weston Library, Church Street,
Weston, Bath, BA1 4BU

The following Council Offices:

Riverside, Temple Street, Keynsham,
Bristol, BS31 1LA

The Hollies, High Street,
Midsomer Norton, BA3 2DP

The One Stop Shop,
Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JQ

Details of opening times etc are available on the Council website or via contacting Council Connect.

Planning Portal

www.planningportal.gov.uk

The Planning Portal is the Government's online service for planning. The website can be used to learn about the planning system, apply for planning permission, find out about development near you, appeal against a planning decision and research the latest government policy.