

Purbeck District Council

Statement of Community Involvement



Adopted October 2018

This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how and when the Council will consult, and involve both statutory bodies and the wider community when preparing planning policy documents and making decisions on planning applications.

Community consultation and involvement

The Council wants to be sure that everybody is able to be involved in both the preparation of planning policy documents and in making decisions on planning applications.

The benefits of involving local communities in planning issues for their area are:

- Getting knowledge and expertise from the perspective of local people, local organisations and community groups.
- Building greater community support for, and ownership of, policies, strategies and decisions.

We aim to:

- Seek the views of statutory bodies, landowners, developers, service providers, community organisations, businesses and individuals as early in the process as possible.
- Engage with and involve all people regardless of their race or ethnicity, faith or belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or disability, particularly involving people who are affected by social, economic and rural isolation and those who are often marginalised or considered 'hard to reach'.
- Provide a range of opportunities and consultation methods that are inclusive appropriate, cost effective and timely.
- Produce consultation documents and materials that are clear, concise, easily understood and jargon free.
- Make documents available, on request, in alternative formats, such as large print and audio.
- Provide feedback to responses made to consultations.

Making plans

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) – sets out the Government’s priorities for planning in England. All council plans must reflect this guidance.

Local plans and neighbourhood plans - provide the strategic policy for the district, allocate some housing sites and include policies that will be used to determine planning applications.

Other plans that cover different topics are known as Development Plan Documents (DPDs), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other documents and guidance. The Council also has a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule. CIL is a tax on new development to help fund infrastructure. The timetable for the production of plans is set out in the Council’s Local Development Scheme.

Neighbourhood Planning - Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDPs) can set planning policies for a designated neighbourhood area. NDPs must be in general conformity with the local plan. NDPs cannot stop development that is already allocated or permitted in the Council’s adopted local plan. The Council will adopt an NDP subject to an independent examination and a positive community referendum.

The community can also produce a Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO) which permits development (in certain places and circumstances), in full or in outline, without the need for a planning application. Both NDPs and NDOs require extensive community engagement and involvement.

In Purbeck, only parish or town councils can lead on NDPs. In the first instance they must apply to the Council to designate the neighbourhood area. We will publish the application and a map of the area on [Dorset for You](#), and invite representations during a six week consultation period. If the area is designated, we will publish a map of the area and the name of the parish or town council that is leading on the plan.

We will support neighbourhood planning by providing officer support, funding the independent examination and organising and funding the referendum on a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood order that meets the basic standards. The referendum ensures that the community has the final say on whether a neighbourhood plan or order comes into force. A referendum must achieve more than 50% support from those who voted.

Producing the Local Plan

We aim to involve the community in all stages of producing plans, from the early ‘evidence gathering’ stage, and throughout their production, to ensure that the final documents are shaped by local people.

Evidence gathering - At the outset we will seek ideas and views from statutory and other organisations, individuals and communities.

Public participation - Depending on the document and the nature and scale of issues, this may involve more than one stage of consultation. Formal consultations will run for a minimum of six weeks.

Pre-submission - There is a statutory six week period to submit comments on the ‘soundness’ of the plan, prior to submission to the Government.

Public examination by an independent planning inspector - The finalised plan will be submitted for public examination. An independent planning inspector will consider comments received from the pre-submission stage and may invite respondents to attend the examination hearing.

The Inspector’s recommendations - The Inspector will determine whether the plan is ‘sound’.

Adoption - Following examination, the plan, if found sound, is formally adopted by the Council.

Involving everyone

By law we must seek the views of statutory organisations, such as neighbouring local authorities, infrastructure providers, other government bodies and organisations representing geographical, economic and social interests.

We also want input from local businesses, voluntary and community groups/organisations, and communities of interest, as well as involving and seeking views from the general public, including local residents, people who work in the district and people who visit for social, leisure and other interests.

The types of consultation that we carry out will vary depending on the nature of the document. We will aim to engage with the right people who will be interested.

How we will consult with you

Notice of consultations will be made through: [Dorset for You](#). We may also use notices in local newspapers, leaflets, posters, displays, workshops and social media such as Facebook.

We will make consultation documents available at town council offices and local libraries, (copies of consultation documents can be bought at cost price at the Council offices). All documents and response forms will be available online to view or download. As well as the formal consultation there are various other ways to get involved.

Some of the methods we may use

Letters & email - We will send anyone who has registered an interest, notification of consultations and invite them to respond. We prefer to use email, but will use post if you ask us to.

Newsletters - We will produce newsletters, which will be put on Dorset for You and may also be distributed.

Website - We will publish details of all consultations on [Dorset for You](#).

Local media - We will prepare adverts and press releases.

Town and parish councils and community groups – Council officers may attend meetings of town and parish councils and community organisations.

Exhibitions and displays - We will host public events at accessible times and locations which everyone is welcome to attend to have their say. We may set up static displays to provide information.

Conferences, workshops and focus groups - We may host conferences, workshops and focus groups which may be area or subject specific.

Community groups & events - We will engage with existing community groups and forums, including communities of interest. We may also attend events such as village fetes and festivals.

We will record your views and comments – Using a variety of methods such as, face to face and online questionnaires and surveys, interactive displays, and responses sent by email and letter.

How we will monitor who we engage with - All consultations and engagement exercises will be subject to an equalities impact assessment which ensures that people who may be disadvantaged, such as people with disabilities, or those from minority backgrounds and groups, are able to be fully involved.

Planning Applications

Having your say on planning applications - When we receive a planning application, where appropriate, we will put up a site notice and advise neighbours by letter. In addition to site notices, when legally required, we will place a notice in the local press.

Pre-application advice - We encourage applicants to engage with and discuss their proposed application with neighbours and the community at the pre-application stage.

Planning application notifications - New applications are put on [Dorset for You](#) daily and copies are given to town and parish councils weekly. Associated plans are also sent to parish and town councils.

Applications can be viewed at the Council offices and can be tracked on the [Dorset for You](#) website.

Statutory consultees - are notified and given 21 days to respond.

Neighbours – We send letters to residents and businesses inviting them to respond. (*Unless the application is for listed building consent*).

Conservation areas and listed buildings -Notifications will be made by site notice.

Major or significant development applications - We may place notifications and adverts in the local press. We may also hold exhibitions and consultation events to seek input from the local community.

Planning Committee - has authority to determine planning applications, although the majority are determined by the Development Manager under delegated powers. Parish and town councils, applicants and their agents, and respondents can address the Planning Committee by prior arrangement. Planning Committee dates are available on the [Dorset for You](#) website.

Making decisions - We will consider all comments together with any relevant regulations, planning guidance, development plans and any other relevant plans and strategies. Where appropriate we will mediate and negotiate with applicants on responses made. Detailed reports prepared by officers are available on the website five working days before Planning Committee.

Letting you know about decisions - Decisions are displayed on the page on the [Dorset for You](#) website.

Appeals - Only applicants have the right of appeal. Anyone notified about the original application will be informed of the appeal process. The date, time and location of the inquiry will be displayed on a notice at the venue and in the council offices Appeals are carried out as laid down by statute.

Dealing with trees - We will publicise applications for works to trees in conservation areas and we will determine them within six weeks from the date of receipt. Where approval is not granted, protection of the trees will be considered through Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs). We will determine applications for trees that are protected by TPOs within eight weeks from date of receipt.

Enforcement - We encourage the community to report concerns about planning irregularities. We will maintain the confidentiality of people providing such information. Where a breach has occurred, and action is needed, an officer with delegated powers can take formal planning enforcement action. People who have made an allegation, as well as those who are potentially responsible for a breach, are kept informed throughout the investigation.

For further information contact:

Planning policy enquiries: Tel: 01929 557561 e-mail: localplan@purbeck-dc.gov.uk

Planning application enquiries: Tel: 01929 557561 e-mail: planning@purbeck-dc.gov.uk