



# PLANNING THE FUTURE OF WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND



## HOW CAN YOU GET INVOLVED ?

**ADOPTED STATEMENT OF  
COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

December 2006

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Planning shapes the future of Weymouth & Portland – developing policies and considering major planning applications determine where we live, work, shop and play, and how we travel around the Borough and which parts of the built and natural environment are protected.
- 1.2 This publication is the first in a series of documents that will form the Local Development Framework (LDF) as part of the new planning system – which will eventually replace the Weymouth and Portland Local Plan. It suggests how YOU, the community, could be consulted and involved in developing future planning policy documents.
- 1.3 The Local Development Framework (LDF) has been introduced following the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act in 2004. The new system is designed so that authorities can produce a variety of documents to meet emerging priorities, making it easier to keep policies and proposals up to date. The LDF is made up of documents known as local development documents (See paragraph 2.2), each document helps to either form part of the statutory development plan or expand upon the policies and provide supplemental detail on those policies.
- 1.4 The Local Development Framework must fit within the overall development plan for the South West region. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) produced by the South West Regional Assembly provides a framework for development until 2026 to help the Borough Council plan the provision of future need to meet the expected housing and economic growth in the region. The LDF will therefore be in general conformity with the RSS. The Borough Council will take an active role in consulting with the Regional Assembly over the future key plan matters and development needs of Weymouth and Portland.
- 1.5 The LDF offers an opportunity for local stakeholders and members of the community to engage more constructively in both shaping planning policies and contributing to major planning applications. We need to consider how to engage with “hard to reach” groups and involve residents, businesses and anyone with an interest in the future of the Borough.
- 1.6 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is will be the first Local Development Document (LDD) produced by the Borough Council with over arching proposals regarding community engagement.

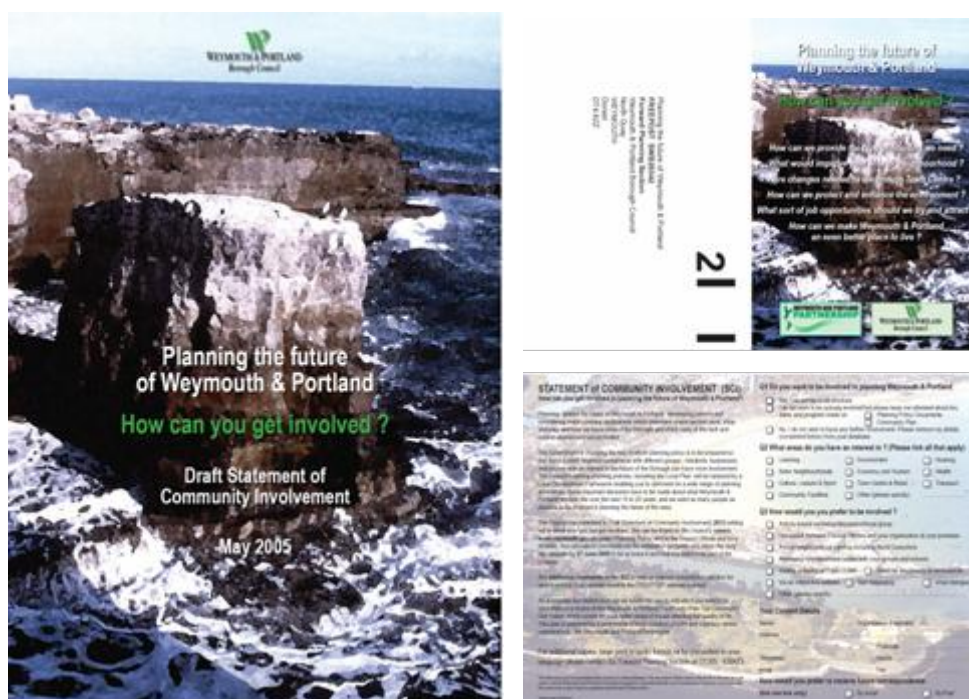
## **2.0 WHICH PLANNING POLICY DOCUMENTS AND WHEN? WEYMOUTH & PORTLAND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

- 2.1 The documents that will collectively form the 'Local Development Framework' are set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS indicates how Weymouth & Portland Borough Council intends to produce development plan coverage over the next three years including the transition to the new planning system. The purpose of the Local Development Scheme is to programme the various Local Development Documents (LDDs) over a three year period.
- 2.2 A Local Development Document can be either a Development Plan Document (DPD) or Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Development Plan Documents hold full Development Plan status and are required to go through an independent examination before they can be adopted fully. Supplementary Planning Documents are not subject to independent examination and expand upon policy or provide further details to policies in Development Plan Documents.
- 2.3 There will be a range of opportunities for involvement on each Local Development Document. Annex B provides a summary of these opportunities at October 2005. This may change in the future. Please check the Weymouth & Portland Borough Council website [www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk) for changes to the Local Development Scheme. You will also receive a newsletter to keep you up to date and inform you of forthcoming consultation events on planning policy documents.

### 3.0 THE PURPOSE OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

#### Draft SCI & Consultation (Regulation 25)

- 3.1 The forward planning section submitted a draft SCI (see picture below) for public consultation on the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2005 and placed it on deposit for a period of 6 weeks at all libraries and Council Offices within the Borough. An accompanying public consultation leaflet was produced and posted to over 1500 contacts made up of local interest groups, organisations, members of the local Community Panel and former Local Plan respondents. The respondent was encouraged to include their contact details for inclusion onto the new Local Development Framework database.
- 3.2 An interactive leaflet/comments form was published on the Borough Council website together with a downloadable version of the document. The first round of consultation was further advertised through a press notice in the local newspaper.
- 3.3 Feedback on the draft SCI resulted in 4 written comments and over 400 leaflet responses requesting inclusion on future databases. The Leaflet (see below) gave the public the opportunity to express their areas of community interest together with their preference for future consultation techniques and engagement.



#### Pre-Submission Statement of Community Involvement (Regulation 26)

- 3.4 In November 2005 the Borough Council released a second document for consultation called the 'Pre-Submission Statement of Community Involvement'. This document was again placed on deposit for a period of 6 weeks at all libraries and Council Offices in the Borough and also on the Borough Council website. Copies of the document were sent to all identified statutory consultees and letters were sent to all other identified contacts

including stakeholders, organisations and individual members of the public explaining that the document was available for consultation.

- 3.5 The document itself included revisions from the draft consultation document. The amendments included simple requests for named groups/organisations to be included as consultees, to more elaboration and detail on the identity of each contact and their role. Comments raised at the Draft document consultation stage also expressed the need to detail the function of consultation methods and give greater indication of when and where certain methods are more necessary than others when formulating planning policy documents and in processing planning applications.
- 3.6 The consultation on the Pre-Submission document resulted in 22 written responses, many of which offered support for the style, function and format of the document. The minor criticisms given ask for more clarity and openness in the document, particularly with reference to the database and the provision of venues for consultation techniques.



- 3.7 The Borough Council conducted a final phase of consultation on the SCI during March and April 2006. During that time, 13 representations were received on a submission draft. The draft document, together with copies of each representation were sent to Secretary of State for examination in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. The examination was based on a series of 9 tests of soundness - these tests examined whether the document has been prepared correctly in accordance with the regulations. In October 2006, the Borough Council received an Inspector's Report from the Secretary of State. The report which

recommended minor changes was taken to Full Council on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2006 where it was formally adopted by members.

- 3.8 This 'submission' document sets out how all sections of the community, from individual members of the public through to representative organisations, will have the opportunity to participate in better planning of the Borough. This will allow greater accessibility by the community at different stages of the new Local Development Framework both in the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs) and in the determination of planning applications. The SCI will ensure the active, meaningful and continued involvement of local communities and stakeholders throughout both processes.

### **The Benefits of Community Involvement**

- 3.9 Stakeholders and local communities can bring a different perspective to planning and should be valued for their experience, opinions and insight. The aim is that by publicising proposals and inviting the involvement of stakeholders and local communities, authorities can demonstrate their commitment to improving areas and facilitating joint working to achieve better outcomes.
- 3.10 Many elements of the Local Development Framework will require joint working between local planning authorities, local communities and stakeholders. Involving communities at an early stage of document preparation will help to resolve issues, thereby hopefully avoiding the need for lengthy examinations.
- 3.10 Community involvement gives the local community the opportunity to say what they would like to see in their area. In turn, this gives those commenting a sense of public participation, ownership and democracy as well as the potential basis for resolving potential conflicts between parties. The process also benefits planners by drawing on existing 'local' knowledge and paying more attention to public priorities as well as obtaining value for money.

### **Who is the Community?**

- 3.11 Community consultation for the purposes of this document will embrace all those within the Borough of Weymouth and Portland as well as those with an outside interest in the Borough. People can belong to more than one community but it is equally important to recognise that people may not regard themselves as being part of any defined community. Benefits of existing community involvement will:
- Allow for the identification of key planning issues which may give an opportunity for their resolution at an early stage.
  - Iron out issues through early involvement – potentially reducing the need for lengthy Public Examinations.
  - Build consensus and sense of ownership of the LDF and promote the LDF as a tool for implementation, not merely something to be adhered to once it has been completed.
- 3.12 Members will have to give due weight to both public opinion and national and regional planning policy statements and guidance.

- 3.13 The over-arching policy document for the area, produced by a partnership of local service providers, voluntary and private sector organizations. Our Local Strategic Partnership - the Weymouth and Portland Partnership (W&PP) is well established. The Community Plan "Our community Our Future" is currently being reviewed and will be an essential influence on the core strategy of the Local Development Framework. The W&PP will have a key input to the new planning system through shared consultation and a direct input to document production. A partnership coordinator has recently been appointed to take this work forward along side the Local Planning Authority. There is also a county wide Dorset Strategic Partnership which has prepared a Dorset Community Strategy.
- 3.14 The Dorset Strategic Partnership (DSP) was formally set up in 2002. It consists of a wide range of organisations, agencies and other partnerships throughout the county. The partnership's mission is to improve quality of life and well-being for people in Dorset in a sustainable way. This is achieved by working through the partnership to implement, monitor and review the Dorset Community Strategy, a long term plan for the people and communities of Dorset. The Dorset Strategic Partnership concentrates on those strategic issues that are significant for a large number of people and communities in Dorset and that cannot be tackled locally by Local Community Planning Partnerships.
- 3.15 The Borough Council has already undertaken joint consultation exercises with the Weymouth and Portland Partnership at the draft stage of this documents production. The Borough Council are looking to tie in work on the Core Strategy with the Community Plan consultation review exercises, village plans and village design statements. The outputs of such exercises can be fed into the Community Plan and the Local Development Framework, and where possible assist with consultation which is consistent with the methods set out in this Statement of Community Involvement.

### Who to Consult?

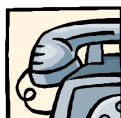
- 3.16 The list contained in table 1 offers examples of the various groups/organisations which the Borough Council will utilise when considering community consultation. The full database of contacts will also consist of individual members of the public who have expressed an interest following consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement.
- 3.17 Movement to and from the database will remain open. The public can both join and leave the database whenever they want through three options:



A simple letter, explaining who you are and what involvement you would like in planning.



An email, again explaining who you are and what involvement you would like in planning.



A telephone call to the planning department.



- 3.18 The Borough Council will produce an LDF newsletter for the benefit of all database contacts. The newsletter will inform the public of recent consultation events and provide brief summaries of their findings. The newsletter will also function as a tool to give details of progress on current and forthcoming publications. The newsletter will be sent through the post or electronically to all current contacts and placed on deposit at all libraries and Council Offices in the Borough as well as the Council website. The newsletter will also offer the chance for new members of the public join the database. The newsletter placed on the Borough Council website will detail the current timetable of all documents and be updated at least quarterly.
- 3.19 In the production of all Local Development Plan Documents, the Borough Council must consult with a wide range of public bodies and organisations in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2004. Appendix 1 contains some examples of the Statutory and Non – Statutory consultees which the Borough Council have identified and intend to consult with, the list of examples is an indicative list in the sense that it only includes groups/organisations as opposed to all individual public contacts as these contact details are likely to change more often. Feedback from individuals and groups and the use of the newsletters will help ensure that the list of contacts, particularly those identified in Annex A, will be kept up to date. The database however will remain dynamic in the sense that inclusion and exclusion remains open.
- 3.20 The Borough Council is aware that there are certain groups in the Borough that find it harder to engage in Council-led consultation exercises, these include the young, the elderly and those with learning difficulties to name just a few examples. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups make up a very small proportion of the resident population in Weymouth and Portland and are therefore even more difficult to reach. The Planning Authority works closely with community development workers to access these groups. In the past the Borough Council has used a wide range of consultation tools and measures designed to help remove the barriers which inhibit engagement. These include workshops, focus groups, community newsletters and other local media sources. Under the new planning system the Borough Council will also seek to utilise the Internet further as it is recognised as an increasingly important information source and consultation tool.

Table 1. Database Structure – Indicative list see ANNEX A

<b>Statutory Consultation Bodies</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government Office</li> <li>• Regional Assembly (Regional Planning Body)</li> <li>• County Council</li> <li>• Adjoining Councils and Parishes</li> <li>• Regional Development Agency</li> <li>• Environmental Agencies</li> <li>• Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England</li> <li>• Strategic Rail Authority</li> <li>• Strategic Health Authority</li> <li>• Electronic communications companies/owners or operators of telecommunications apparatus</li> <li>• Electric undertakers</li> <li>• Gas undertakers</li> <li>• Water and sewerage undertakers</li> </ul>	
<b>General (Non Statutory) Consultation Bodies (groups listed below)</b>	
Other Authorities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Local authorities around Weymouth and Portland</i></li> </ul>
Service Providers within Weymouth and Portland:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Emergency services</i></li> <li>• <i>Bus companies</i></li> </ul>
Local bodies (some voluntary), some or all of whose activities benefit any part of Weymouth and Portland:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Community groups</i></li> <li>• <i>Residents associations</i></li> </ul>
Bodies who represent planning, property & housing in Weymouth and Portland:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Planning consultants</i></li> <li>• <i>Property developers</i></li> <li>• <i>Land developers</i></li> <li>• <i>Solicitors</i></li> <li>• <i>Housing associations</i></li> <li>• <i>Estate/Land agents</i></li> </ul>
Bodies which represent health and disability in Weymouth & Portland:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Access groups</i></li> <li>• <i>Mental health groups</i></li> </ul>
Bodies which represent business in Weymouth & Portland:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Economic partnerships</i></li> <li>• <i>Management groups</i></li> <li>• <i>Local business forums</i></li> </ul>
Environmental Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Religious Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Transport Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Leisure Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Harder to reach groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Youth groups, students, colleges</i></li> </ul>
Bodies which represent local arts/culture groups:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Indoor/outdoor sports clubs, societies or venues</i></li> <li>• <i>Drama, dance, music and theatre groups</i></li> <li>• <i>Arts, crafts, photography groups</i></li> </ul>
<b>Individual members of the public (database registered)</b>	

#### 4.0 METHODS OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 4.1 The requirements of the new Planning and Compulsory Act extend the opportunities for community engagement. Some of these techniques will have been used in previous Local Plan consultation exercises but advances in techniques, particularly electronic consultation, offer greater scope for targeting harder to reach groups. Electronic sources, e.g. the Internet, offer 24-hour access to information. Information displayed on this platform is written to reach all levels and all abilities.
- 4.2 With this information in mind, the Borough Council felt it appropriate to assess the role of consultation techniques through the use of a leaflet along side the Draft SCI. Two questions were tailored specifically for this purpose.
- a) To identify areas of public interest.
  - b) To identify preferred methods of consultation.
- 4.3 Results showed that out of approximately 400 responses, the public were predominantly interested in the environment, also safer neighbourhoods and transport whereas the public were least interested in learning and health. In terms of the methodology, the public felt that the best way to be consulted was through having information posted/emailed to them. Other useful methods included public displays and neighbourhood meetings. The public were least in favour of electronic methods of communication together with holding direct discussions with planning officers and property developers.
- 4.4 The table below offers a comprehensive list of methods of community engagement which will inform the public more clearly on exactly how each consultation method intends to work. These methods will adopt a 'fit for purpose' approach recognising the limits of the Borough Council's resources. The choice of individual methods used from the list below will reflect the nature and scale of the planning application or local development document (See section 5).

**Table 2. Community Involvement Methods.**

Method	Main Considerations
Documents available for Inspection	Weymouth & Portland Borough Council will make it clear as to how and when people should respond to local development documents. Documents will be made available to view from libraries and other community venues such as schools, major employers and hospitals, etc. Copies of each document will also be available from Portland Town Council Offices as well as the Council Offices in Weymouth.
Engaging and Consulting with Stakeholders	Weymouth & Portland Borough Council will identify such bodies it considers necessary and consult them early on as part of a process of engagement on planning issues.
Internet	The Weymouth & Portland Borough Council website <a href="http://www.weymouth.gov.uk">www.weymouth.gov.uk</a> will act as an important source of information for public and professionals seeking information on consultation events. All documents will be provided in portable document format (.pdf) and all web pages will be updated regularly. The website is currently used to display current planning

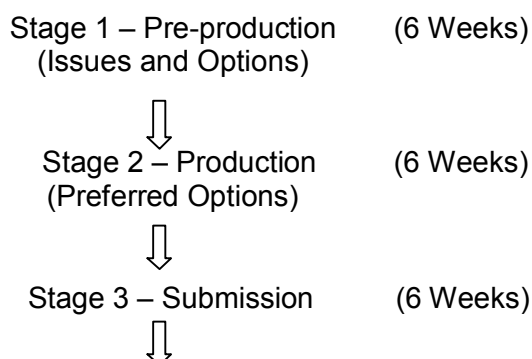
	<p>applications on a monthly list basis. The website now offers a planning application archive where full details of applications stretching back 10 years can be examined online.</p> <p>The site also has links to download its application forms as well as operating as a platform for contacting the planning department and providing feedback on consultations. The Weymouth &amp; Portland website has established links with the Planning Portal <a href="http://www.planningportal.gov.uk">www.planningportal.gov.uk</a> to create an online planning application service whereby members of the public can register an application, submit plans and pay for their planning application using a cheque or credit card. The Planning Portal also provides an interactive planning policy proposal map and Local Plan wording.</p>
Media	<p>The local newspaper (Dorset Echo) has been used to inform the general public of important stages and events (such as consultation periods) on all existing Local Plans and will continue to do so with future development plan documents. This media source can also be used to feature articles about proposals as well as providing opportunities for advertising planning applications.</p> <p>The Borough Council issues its own community newspaper which has been used on many occasions to broadcast consultation events. This paper is delivered via the local free newspaper advertiser and therefore offers a much wider level of response than most other means.</p> <p>In the past the Borough Council has used local radio and TV when appropriate to do so. The Borough Council has also considered using digital television as a means of providing web page style information in the form of static television images. This method will target those groups who cannot access the internet but have access to satellite television. The Borough Council is also considering SMS text alerts as a means of gauging public interest in the participation of consultation events.</p>
Leaflets	Leaflets can be tailored to supplement a proposed document or application to inform the public and offer the opportunity to become involved by using a reply slip.
Public exhibitions / displays / road shows *	This technique is better suited to sizeable LDDs such as the Melcombe Regis AAP, as exhibitions are costly and can be labour intensive. An exhibition can form an important role in setting the scene and promoting awareness as well as encouraging public involvement. In the past the Borough Council has targeted popular street and supermarket venues for this technique as well as using the Council Offices to display materials.
Public Presentations *	Again, this technique would be particularly relevant to planning applications, Core Strategy and AAPs as it is regarded as one of the most open and inclusive ways to engage in discussion. This technique can be time consuming and requires careful management.
Formal Written Consultation	A written response can identify key interests using clear and consistent feedback forms
Area Forums *	This can include particular community forums on either a geographical or social basis. This can include for instance youth

	forums and young people in general.
Steering Group	The Council has created a Sustainable Communities Working Group (SCWG) consisting of Councillors and members of the planning unit. The purpose of the Group is to be an informal working party which will make recommendations at all appropriate stages to be reported back to the Environment and Conservation Committee.
Agents Meetings	The Borough Council promotes meetings with Agents to discuss planning issues. The Council will at the very least adopt a watching brief regarding developer consultation.
Workshops *	Planning for Real exercises can engage communities more honestly with their concerns or recommendations regarding planning proposals. This method is particularly important for identifying and focusing discussion around difficult key issues and themes but is particularly resource intensive.
Involving Artists	Consultation could involve using artists to engage with school children and other hard to reach groups.

\* For the benefit of attendees and database members, the outcomes of the interactive events will be summarised in the LDF newsletter and via the Borough Council website.

## 5.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS

- 5.1 Weymouth & Portland Borough Council will seek to involve the community at an early stage in the preparation of local development documents. Failure to do so would be contrary to the aim of the new planning system. Each Development Plan Document will involve at least three separate stages of consultation before examination and final adoption.



- 5.2 The pre-production document identifies planning issues that affect the Borough and sets out options that may address the issues. The community can consider and raise new options at this stage. The Council then considers the responses before a preferred options document is published for further consultation; this document will address how the public response has been taken into account. A similar process leads to a submission document which is submitted to the Secretary of State, again, the community have an opportunity to comment.
- 5.2.1 Following each round of consultation, the Borough Council will examine the comments received. Planning Officers and Members will consider each representation carefully and may recommend changes to the next version of the DPD. A report setting out whether the Council has accepted or rejected the comment, and any proposed change is published. Members will consider the report and endorse or reject the Officer's recommendations. The Borough Council publishes its Committee agenda reports and subsequent minutes on the Internet. Paper copies are available at the Council Offices. The results of the consultation, including the Committee report and minutes are also available on the LDF section of the Council's website along with any other document relating to that DPD. A brief summary of the findings after each stage of consultation will be fed into the LDF newsletter where possible.
- 5.3 Where representations are put forward to a DPD at submission draft stage suggesting alternative or additional development (omission) sites, or changes to the boundaries of identified sites, the Council will advertise them as soon as possible after the 6 week period of consultation. The public will then be given a further 6 weeks to comment on the alternative proposal. Developers may also wish to present their case directly to local communities and/or the Borough Council Officers. All suggested omission sites and other sites proposed by the Borough Council will be subject to SA/SEA.
- 5.4 Good consultation requires tailoring methods to specific audiences. The Contact database identified in section 4 can be broadly grouped amongst three categories. 'General Public (non-database)', 'General Consultation Bodies', 'Statutory Consultation Bodies'. The methods detailed in table 3 will

not be necessary to use in all cases. This list is neither exhaustive as other tools may be considered.

**Table 3. Possible Tools for Development Plan Document Consultation**

	General Public	General Consultation Bodies	Statutory Consultation Bodies
Stage 1 Consultation.  Issues & Options	Posters Exhibitions Public Meetings Public Exhibitions Website Press Releases Questionnaires	Meetings Letters and emails Presentations Newsletter	Website Correspondence  Copy of document for consultation
Considering the size and nature of the borough of Weymouth & Portland, all statutory and general consultation bodies will be made aware of forthcoming DPDs as all contacts may consider that a particular development/issue will affect them. It will be up to the contacts to express whether they wish to continue with the consultation at the preferred options stage.			
Stage 2 Consultation.  Preferred Options	Workshops Exhibitions Leaflets Media Documents available for inspection Website Press Releases	Stakeholder meetings Formal written consultation Steering Group Agents Meetings Newsletter Free Portland News Wyke Register	Website Correspondence  Copy of document for consultation
Those bodies with a geographical or contextual relationship to a DPD will be encouraged to participate more rigorously in the production process. The geography/context of the document will also warrant the location of the consultation techniques.			
Stage 3 Consultation.  Submission	Media Website Press Releases	Newsletter Provide report of consultation	Website Correspondence  Provide report of consultation and final DPD
Those who have made a recommendation through consultation will be sent an extract of the outcome of the Inspector's decision in the final report to explain how the Council has resolved that issue.			

### Consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents

- 5.5 Supplementary Planning Documents are intended to expand upon policy or provide further details to policies in Development Plan Documents. As with DPDs the public will be encouraged to participate during periods of consultation. There are only two stages of consultation (each lasting 6 weeks) as opposed to three stages for DPDs.

Stage 1. Consultation Prior to Draft (6 Weeks)



Stage 2. Consultation Following Draft (6 Weeks)

- 5.6 The general public will be made aware of forthcoming SPDs through press releases and website information. However, general consultation bodies will only be chosen for consultation dependent on their relationship to the extent/locality (if any) of the document. Clearly if a site specific document is being produced for a particular site, community involvement will focus on those who live and work in the site's vicinity. If however, the document is of a more technical nature e.g. infrastructure requirements, the Council will focus on engaging more with specialist stakeholders i.e. developers, highways etc.

**Table 4. Possible Tools for SPD Consultation**

Identified Consultees	Methods for Stage 1.	Methods for Stage 2.
Representatives of Health, Business, Environment, Services. Relevant Private, Voluntary and Public Sector Based Consultees	Meetings with chosen groups Exhibitions Website Local Media Questionnaires	Workshops/discussion groups Website Letters and emails

- 5.7 The Borough Council will seek to engage with the relevant consultation bodies from the outset and look to employ cost effective yet wide reaching methods at all stages, particularly on site specific documents.
- 5.8 A report summarising representations and Officers considerations will be published following consultation, again this will be available from the Council website, all libraries and both Weymouth and Portland Council Offices. From this stage, an SPD can move directly to adoption.

#### **Consultation on Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment**

- 5.9 A Sustainability Appraisal examines the implications of the Local Development Framework for the community, the environment and the natural resources. Strategic Environmental Assessments are undertaken to measure the effects of the plan/policy/programme on the environment generally. The process aims to integrate environmental, social and economic considerations into the preparation of plans in order to promote sustainable development.
- 5.10 All Development and Supplementary Planning Documents will be subject to Sustainability Appraisal (SA). The Core Strategy, Site Allocation DPDs and Action Area Plans should also be subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The Borough Council will integrate the consultation techniques for DPDs and SA/SEA to enable the public to consider the objectives used to undertake the appraisal/assessment, the way alternative options have been appraised/assessed and the outcome of the appraisal/assessment. The outcome of the consultation will be explained in a Sustainability Appraisal Report which will accompany each Local Development Document. A draft of this report will form part of the consultation on strategy and preferred options and the final version will be published for formal consultation with submitted documents.

**Website** [www.weymouth.gov.uk](http://www.weymouth.gov.uk)



- 5.11 All documents for public consultation will be published on the Planning pages of the Borough Council website often with interactive questionnaires. Officer reports, together with adoption statements where required can also be found setting out a summary of the main issues raised in the representations and how these main issues have been addressed in the planning policy document.

## 6.0 COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Development should be in accordance with the policies and proposals set out in the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

Weymouth & Portland Borough Council intends to exceed the minimum legal considerations by:

- Continuing existing practice undertaking pre-application discussions – particularly in respect of major applications.
- Making more use of the website as a promoting tool.
- Encouraging householders to hold informal discussions with neighbours over proposals.
- Encouraging applicants to undertake their own consultation prior to submitting a planning application (see picture right).



- 6.2 Consultations by private developers/landowners on major development proposals can be very beneficial and encouraging.

### What Planning Applications do Weymouth & Portland Borough Council Consider?

- 6.3 Weymouth and Portland Borough Council are the Local Planning Authority who determine the majority of planning applications submitted in the Borough, Dorset County Council determines a small number of applications for minerals and waste proposals and County Council development. Planning Officers in the Development Control Section of the Planning Unit act as case officers for each application.

### Types of Application handled

#### Major (defined as):

For Residential - 10 or more dwellings or a site area of 0.5 hectares or more.  
Other development – 1,000 sq. metres or site area of 1 hectare or more.

- Erection of dwellings
- Erection of non-dwelling units, e.g. Offices, Research & Development, Light Industry, Heavy Industry, Storage, Warehousing, Retail Distribution and Servicing, all other major developments.

#### Minor

- Erection of dwellings
- Erection of non-dwelling units, e.g. Offices, Research & Development, Light Industry, Heavy Industry, Storage, Warehousing, Retail Distribution and Servicing, all other minor developments
- Dwelling extensions

- Buildings/features within the curtilage of a dwelling (walls, fences etc)
- Change of use/Sub division of dwelling
- Planning permission renewals
- Listed building consent
- Demolition of buildings within a Conservation Area
- Advertisement

### **Other Applications**

- Tree works
- Certificates of Lawful Existing Use

### **How do you know a Planning Application has been submitted?**

- 6.4 The Borough Council is committed to consulting on planning and other applications (highlighted above) in line with the General Development Procedure Order. When a major/minor application is received, neighbours (which are those with a common boundary to the application site) are notified individually by letter. The Borough Council also notifies those within close proximity to a development who do not share a common boundary.

Depending on the nature of the planning application, the Borough Council will consult with appropriate bodies e.g.:

- Environment Agency
- Natural England
- Dorset County Council
- Countryside Agency
- Wessex Water
- Government Office for the South West

In addition, a site notice is displayed and press advert released for development such as major applications, new dwellings, development affecting conservation areas or listed buildings, tree works etc or where neighbours cannot be easily identified. The public are allowed 21 days to comment on any planning application proposal by letter. The public can now submit comments via the monthly planning list pages where full details of each application are stored. Copies of application forms can also be found on the Weymouth & Portland Borough Council website.

- 6.5 The Borough Council Planning pages are by far the quickest and easiest way to check planning applications. A list of new applications within the last 28 days is updated daily together with an archive of decided planning applications stretching back to 1997. Larger sized plans can be viewed and downloaded freely through the Borough Council website. Weekly lists of planning applications are circulated to the local newspaper (Dorset Echo). Planning application records are also recorded on a formal planning register in the Council Offices, North Quay, Weymouth.

### **How can you find out more Information about a Planning Application?**

- 6.6 The Borough Council provides a Duty Planner service whereby members of the public can telephone or speak to a Planning Officer in person at the

Council Officers about planning applications and other planning matters. Members of the public can make an appointment to see the Case Officer involved in the planning application through contacting the Planning Unit's administrative office or via the duty planner. The public can write formally to the Planning Unit or alternatively telephone and/or email their views via the Borough Council website. The public also have the right to view and comment upon planning applications either in writing or via email, again using the Borough Council website. Computer terminals are freely available in all libraries within the Borough.

- 6.7 Planning Officers also attend Portland Town Council and other community groups, on request, to update and brief members on current applications and key planning issues.

### **How can I be involved at Planning and Traffic Committee?**

- 6.8 Most planning applications are 'delegated' by the Council to Planning Officers for the decision to be made, whilst the larger and/or more contentious applications are decided by the Planning & Traffic Committee comprised of elected Councillors. Planning & Traffic Committee is open to any member of the public to attend. Anyone who wishes to comment on a planning application can make a 3 minute oral presentation to the Committee, setting out their views and opinions, either in support or objection to a planning application. A summary of representations are included within the written Committee report from the Planning Manager, with an update of representations provided orally at the Committee meeting. These comments are then set out in an Agenda, which is considered by the Committee before a decision is made. In some cases, the Committee undertakes a site visit before considering an application and making a decision. This enables Councillors to see for themselves the issues relating to a proposed development on a particular site and its likely impact on individual neighbourhoods and the locality.

### **How do you find out about a Planning Decision?**

- 6.9 A record of decisions is available on the Council's website. The formal decision notice can also be purchased for a fee from the Council Offices. Members of the public, those commenting on an application, and applicants themselves can also contact the Planning Unit to discuss the reasoning for a decision with the relevant Case Officer. Those commenting on an application which is determined under delegated powers are sent a letter explaining the decision.

### **How do I get involved if an Applicant Appeals?**

- 6.10 Applicants have an opportunity to Appeal to the Secretary of State against a refusal of Planning Consent. This can be undertaken in the form of Written Representations (which are available for public inspection) or through an Informal Hearing, normally held at the Council Offices, or a full Public Inquiry which members of the public can attend. All representations which are submitted in respect of an application which is subject to an appeal are sent to the Inspector who will determine the appeal. Further comments can be submitted if any appeal is made.

**7.0 Table 5. RESOURCES TO PROGRESS THE SCI**

<b>Organisational Lead</b>	Planning Economy & Development Unit Manager & Principal Planning Officer (Forward Planning)
<b>Political Management Arrangements</b>	Submission document to be considered by Environment and Conservation Policy and Scrutiny Committee; Adoption will require both scrutiny and Full Council approval
<b>Internal Resources</b>	Forward Planning staff (1 Principal Planning Officer, 2 Planning Policy Officers, 1 Planning Assistant, 1 Graphics Officer), Development Control team (for consultation arrangements on planning applications), printing, IT (for web consultation) Community Development team and Community Consultation Officers.
<b>External Resources</b>	<p>Weymouth &amp; Portland Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership) Board and Support Group will have a significant role in community engagement. Portland Town Council and local community groups. An external facilitator may be required for some consultation events.</p> <p>In the past, the Borough Council have utilised buildings such as the Pavilion and the Council Offices foyer to undertake consultation events. Local schools, libraries, church halls, community centres and street locations have also been popular venues for consultation as they have the ability to serve all parts of the Borough.</p>
<b>Financial Resources</b>	The primary financial resource for undertaking consultation and consultation exercises will be derived from Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) budgets.
<b>Community and Stakeholder Involvement</b>	The SCI will be produced in partnership and consultation with the local community. It is intended to involve a wide range of community groups via existing contacts of the Borough's community development team, and to engage with the whole community including 'hard-to-reach' groups.

**Involving Councillors**

- 7.1 The Council has created a Sustainable Communities Working Group which consists of planning officers from the Forward Planning Section, the Chair and Vice Chair of Environment & Conservation Committee, the Chair and

Vice Chair of Planning and Traffic Committee, the Environment Briefholder, and the Member responsible for regional and strategic planning matters. The purpose of the Group is to progress various documents required under the new Planning System on behalf of the Environment and Conservation Committee, including completion of the Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review.

### **Measuring the Progress of the SCI**

- 7.2 The SCI will be reviewed as appropriate in the light of joint working experiences and consultation with stakeholders. This might include changes to reflect best practice in community/stakeholder involvement, managing stakeholder expectations more effectively or addressing specific problems or concerns in relation to joint working with stakeholders. Unforeseen circumstances or a change in the programme may determine that a review takes place more frequently. A statement on progress will be made as part of the Annual Monitoring Report.

## Glossary of Terms

**Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).** A report that each Council must prepare, showing how effective its policies and proposals have been in meeting the vision, core strategy and other Development Plan Documents for their area.

**Area Action Plan (AAP).** A development plan document prepared to provide a framework for a site or area where particular changes or conservation issues are likely to arise. Not all development sites will require an area action plan but it will be an advantage where co-ordination of implementation or delivery by a range of different organisations is required. This will be subject to independent examination, unlike a development brief which would be a supplementary planning document. The Borough Council will be producing one Conservation Action Area Plan for Melcombe Regis.

**Community Plan.** The over-arching policy document for the area, produced by a partnership of local service providers, voluntary and private sector organizations. Our Local Strategic Partnership - the Weymouth and Portland Partnership (W&PP) is well established. The Community Plan "Our community Our Future", is currently being reviewed and will be an essential influence on the core strategy of the Local Development Framework. The W&PP will have a key input to the new planning system through shared consultation and a direct input to document production. There is also a county wide Dorset Strategic Partnership which has prepared a Dorset Community Strategy.

The Dorset Strategic Partnership (DSP) was formally set up in 2002. It consists of a wide range of organisations, agencies and other partnerships throughout the county. The partnership's mission is to improve quality of life and well-being for people in Dorset in a sustainable way. This is achieved by working through the partnership to implement, monitor and review the Dorset Community Strategy, a long term plan for the people and communities of Dorset. The Dorset Strategic Partnership concentrates on those strategic issues that are significant for a large number of people and communities in Dorset and that cannot be tackled locally by Local Community Planning Partnerships.

**Development Plan Document (DPD).** Part of the Local Development Framework (e.g. the core strategy or development allocations document), has full development plan status and is required to go through an independent examination before adoption.

**Local Development Document (LDD).** The documents making up the local development framework, including both development plan documents and additional supplementary planning documents.

**Local Development Framework (LDF).** The replacement to local plans. The LDF will comprise a 'portfolio' of local development documents, some of which have full development plan status (development plan documents) and some of which form supplementary guidance (supplementary planning documents).

**Local Development Scheme (LDS).** The three year rolling programme for the preparation of local development documents. All planning authorities must submit their first local development scheme to the Secretary of State for approval within six months of the start of the new legislation.

**Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).** One of the required local development documents. This will set out the standards the council will achieve in involving the community in preparation and review of all local development documents, planning application decisions and how the Council intends to achieve these standards. It will not be part of the development plan but it will be subject to independent examination. This will need to take place at the start of the plan preparation process so that the agreed standards and arrangements are then followed when preparing the subsequent documents.

**Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SEA).** Environmental assessment of policies, plans and programmes likely to have significant environmental impact, should be considered at a sufficiently early stage in planning decisions, so that environmental harm is minimized. This assessment will be required of many, though not necessarily all, local development documents. It will be carried out as part of the sustainability appraisal required of all local development documents.

**Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).** These will provide more detailed supporting policy to specific policies of Development Plan Documents or saved local plans and must be consistent with those adopted policies. They do not require independent examination but should be produced with public involvement and consultation. They form an equivalent of current 'supplementary planning guidance' but have greater status as part of the Local Development Framework. The Borough Council is not currently intending to prepare any SPDs in the first three years.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA).** Assessment of the sustainability impact of proposed policies and allocations, to ensure that these impacts are considered properly in policy forming decision making so the most sustainable options are chosen. This assessment must be carried out as an integral part of the plan-making process and a sustainability appraisal report will be prepared at the 'issues and options' consultation stage.



**ANNEX A – Indicative list of Local Development Framework Contacts**

**Specific (Statutory) Consultation Bodies – Please note, this list is not exhaustive and also relates to successor bodies where re-organisations occur.**

- Government Office for the South West
- South West Regional Assembly (Regional Planning Body)
- Dorset County Council
- West Dorset District Council
- Portland Town Council
- Highways Agency
- Chickerell Town Council
- Osmington Parish Council
- Broadmayne Parish Council
- Winterbourne St. Martin Parish Council
- Poxwell Parish Council
- Chesil Bank Group of Parish Councils (Portesham)
- Winterbourne Farrington Group of Parish Councils
- South West Regional Development Agency
- Environment Agency
- Countryside Agency
- Natural England
- English Heritage
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
- Strategic Rail Authority
- Arts Council England, South West
- South West Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (SWMLAC)
- Public Art South West
- Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment
- Dorset and Somerset Strategic Health Authority
- Electronic communications companies/owners or operators of telecommunications apparatus: British Telecommunications plc; '3' mobile; Hutchinson 3G UK Ltd; Vodafone Ltd; O2 (UK) Ltd; Orange Personal Communications Ltd; Crown Castle; Dorset Police; NTL Group Ltd; MLL Telecom Ltd; Telewest Ltd
- Licence granted under the Electricity Act 1989: Scottish and Southern Electric
- Licence granted under the Gas Act 1986: Transco, British Gas
- Sewerage Undertaker: Wessex Water
- Water Undertaker: Wessex Water

**General (Non Statutory) Consultation Bodies:**

Government Departments:

- Department for Constitutional Affairs
- Department for Culture Media & Sport
- Department for Work & Pensions
- Department of Health
- Department of Trade & Industry
- Ministry of Defence
- Office of Government Commerce

Examples of Other Local Authorities:

- North Dorset District Council
- Purbeck District Council
- West Dorset District Council

Examples of bodies who represent services within Weymouth & Portland:

- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Dorset Ambulance Service
- Dorset Fire & Rescue Service
- Dorset Police
- Dorset Social Services
- First Southern National Bus Company
- HMP The Verne

Examples of local bodies (some voluntary), some or all of whose activities benefit any part of Weymouth and Portland:

- Caring for Chapelhay
- Chesil Community Trust
- Culture South West
- Dorset Community Action
- Dorset Strategic Partnership (County LSP)
- Greenway Homewatch
- Littlemoor Community Action Forum
- Maltings Residents Association
- Portland, Island Volunteers for you
- SureStart
- Sutton Poyntz Society
- Waterside Weymouth Community Forum
- Westham Community Group
- Weymouth and Portland Partnership (Local LSP)
- Weymouth and Portland Residents Association
- Weymouth Civic Society
- Weymouth Community Volunteers
- Womans Institute

Examples of bodies who represent planning, property & housing in Weymouth and Portland:

- Barton Willmore Planning Partnership
- Brimble Lea & Partners
- Cluttons
- Colin Buchanan
- Defence Estates
- Goadsby & Harding
- Goadsby & Harding (Commercial)
- Housing 21
- Knightstone Housing Group
- Lennon Planning Ltd

- Level Ltd
- Local Dialogue
- Magna Housing Association
- Malcolm Judd & Partners
- National Housing Federation
- Palmer Snell Commercial
- Paul Dance Ltd
- Penrilla Consultants
- Persimmon Homes
- Planning & Countryside Advisor on behalf of DEFRA
- Planning Issues
- Property & Accommodation Services Ltd
- Raglan Housing Association
- Rapleys LLP
- Roger Tym & Partners
- Rural Planning Policy
- Savills
- SecondSite Property
- Signpost Care Partnerships
- South West Housing Body
- South West RSL Planning Consortium
- Strategic Land Partnerships
- Terence O'Rourke
- The Planning Bureau Ltd
- Westbury Homes (Holdings) Ltd
- Weymouth & Portland Housing
- Weymouth & Portland Private Landlords
- White Young Green Planning

Examples of bodies which represent the interests of health and disability in Weymouth and Portland:

- Age Concern
- Dorset Association for the Disabled
- Mental Health Services
- Social Care & Health
- Weymouth & Portland Community Mental Health Trust
- Weymouth & Portland Healthy Living Centre
- Weymouth and Portland Access Group

Examples of bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in Weymouth and Portland:

- Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Economic Partnership
- Business Link Wessex
- Forum for Private Businesses
- Open4Business
- QinetiQ
- Southern Tourist Board
- Southwell Business Park Ltd
- Weymouth and Portland Chamber of Commerce and Industry

- Weymouth Town Centre Management Group

Examples of bodies which represent the interests of education in Weymouth and Portland:

- Bournemouth, Dorset & Poole Learning & Skills
- Chesil Education Partnership
- Connexions
- Cygnet Training

Environmental Groups:

- Association for Portland Archaeology
- CPRE Dorset
- Dorset Industrial Archaeological Society
- Dorset Wildlife Trust
- Dorset Friends of the Earth
- Regeneration South West
- RSPB
- Woodland Trust
- National Wind Power

Transport Groups:

- Dorset Cyclists Network
- Sustrans

Leisure Groups:

- Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy
- Royal Yachting Association
- Sport England

Harder to reach groups:

- HM Young Offenders Institute
- Shelter
- Samaritans
- Waves
- Weymouth and Portland Youth Council

Religious Groups:

- Emmanuel Church
- New Covenant Church
- South West Regional Committee for Jehovah's Witnesses

Groups of a different race or ethnicity

Arts/culture groups:

- Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra
- Creative Industries Task Group

- Creative Coast Group
- Dorset Arts Advisory Group
- Dorset Arts Promoters Group
- Dorset Arts Weeks
- Dorset Museums Association
- Park History Club
- The Theatres Trust
- Weymouth Arts Centre/Southill Community Centre
- Wyke Regis Horticultural Society

## **ANNEX B – Weymouth and Portland Local Development Framework**

### **Weymouth & Portland Local Plan Review**

- AB1 The Local Plan sets out policies and proposals for the use of land, major highway proposals, the provision of land for housing, employment and community uses and detailed consideration of the extent of the built up area for the period to 2011. A Local Plan Inquiry was held in 2004 and Proposed Modifications were published for consultation in June 2005 together with a set of Further Proposed Modifications in September 2005. When adopted in December 2005, the Local Plan will be saved for a period of 3 years until eventually superseded by the new Core Strategy and other Development Plan Documents. There are no further opportunities for public involvement in this document.

### **Core Strategy DPD**

- AB2 The Core Strategy will be the principal document in the LDF and will contain the Council's vision and strategy for the future development of the Borough. It will indicate the broad location of new housing, employment and community facilities and major infrastructure proposals. It will not be site specific but will consider appropriate levels of greenfield and brownfield development and phasing of development. It will also set out policies for the protection of the Borough's environmental assets, including its landscape, coastline, nature conservation and geological interests, green/biodiversity links, historic and built environment. The opportunities for your input to help develop this strategy will start early in 2007.

### **Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area Action Plan**

- AB3 In September 2005 the Borough Council resolved to delay work on the AAP for Melcombe Regis and to incorporate this work to a new Conservation AAP for the whole of Weymouth Town Centre to be progressed as a new Development Plan Document. Work on this new Weymouth Town Centre Conservation Area Action Plan is to commence Spring/Summer 2006, which will also assist in meeting Best Value performance targets for character appraisals and published management proposals for this key conservation area.

### **Pavilion Masterplan**

- AB4 In September 2005, the Borough Council agreed to include the redevelopment of the Pavilion/Ferry Terminal as a Masterplan/Supplementary Planning Document amongst the other documents in a revised LDS. The Borough Council is also considering a number of joint documents with other Dorset Planning Authorities to cover such issues as Affordable Housing, Planning Obligations and Travel Plans.

### **Annual Monitoring Report**

- AB5 Progress on achieving elements of the Local Development Framework for the Borough will be set out in an Annual Monitoring Report to be published in December 2005. This will also set out the reasons for changing the programming of the documents to be produced.

AB6 All Local Development Documents will be subject to a sustainability appraisal, including, where appropriate a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) required by EU Directive 2001/42/EC. Sustainability appraisal and SEA are now regarded as an integral part of the plan preparation process, informing and assisting the development of Local Development Documents. You will be able to consider SA/SEA, which may help you to comment on some LDDs.

**Table 6. Programme of Consultation on Local Development Documents**

Document Title	2006				2007				2008				2009			
	Q1	Q2 RSS	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
SCI	Sub ☺ □		Pre Exam	B	A											
Core Strategy DPD					P ☺ □			Sub ☺ □		Pre Exam		B		A		
Pavilion/Ferry Terminal SPD							☺ □ D		A							
Weymouth Town Centre Conservation AAP					P ☺ □	Sub ☺ □	Pre		A							

**Milestones:**

- P – Pre-submission**
- Sub – Submit to SOS**
- Pre – Pre Examination Meeting**
- Exam - Examination**
- B – Binding Inspectors Rep**
- A – Adoption**

**D – Draft SPD**

**RSS – Draft RSS Consultation**

**☺ □ Opportunity for Consultation**