

## **TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **EXECUTIVE – OCTOBER 19<sup>th</sup> 2005**

#### **Report Of The Forward Plan Manager**

**(This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Bishop)**

### **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

#### **1.0 Purpose of Report**

1.1 To seek Executive support for the content of the “second draft” Statement of Community Involvement” (Appendix 1) before embarking on a statutory six-week programme of public consultation, commencing Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and ending Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> 2005.

#### **2.0 Summary**

2.1 The SCI is a Local Development Framework (LDF) document that the Borough Council is obliged to produce. The SCI establishes the Borough Council’s proposals for involving the community in both the preparation of the LDF and the consideration of planning applications. The SCI also explains how we shall link the LDF with the Community Strategy, an important requirement of the new planning system.

2.2 The first draft SCI was prepared in association with the Local Strategic Partnership, who endorsed the document. The first draft was subject to widespread publicity and consultation during Summer 2005. Responses to that consultation raised matters of detail. There were no objections to the overall strategy. Government Office for the South West were pleased with the progress that TDBC are making, and commended many aspect of the draft SCI. Responses to the first draft have now been considered by the Strategic Planning, Transport & Economic Development Review Panel (SPTED), and the Local Strategic Partnership via their Spatial Planning Working Group (SPWG). The public response to the “first draft”, and the subsequent consideration of that response by both SPTED and SPWG, has led to the production of an improved “second draft” SCI (Appendix 1). Executive support for the “second draft” SCI is now sought, before we embark on a programme of further public consultation (as required by the appropriate regulations).

#### **3.0 Background**

3.1 The SCI is a fundamental component of the new planning system (for an explanation of the new system, refer to Section 2 of Appendix 1). The SCI proposes:

- Methods to integrate the LDF with the Community Strategy
- Consultation arrangements for the producing the LDF
- Consultation arrangements for the consideration of planning applications, with particular emphasis on pre-submission consultations

3.2 SPTED Review Panel considered the “first draft” SCI on April 12<sup>th</sup> 2005.

3.3 A key element of the new planning system is the integration of the LDF with the Community Strategy. The Local Strategic Partnership is responsible for developing

the community strategy, and has recently created a Spatial Planning Working Group (SPWG) tasked with considering all LDF material (to ensure that the spatial elements of the community strategy are being appropriately considered). SPWG have considered and advised the content of the first draft SCI at their meetings in February and April '05. The LSP subsequently endorsed the content of the SCI.

#### 4.0 **Consultation Arrangements**

4.1 Consultations on the “first draft” SCI occurred between late June and August 31<sup>st</sup> 2005, although informal consultations had commenced long before in order to advise the proposed strategy (for example, through SPTED, GOSW and SPWG). The “first draft” asked a series of questions (9 in total) to which response were sought. The questions were framed to produce responses that were of value to the development of the overall consultation strategy

4.2 The following methods were used to advertise the consultation period:

- Public notice in the Gazette (30<sup>th</sup> June)
- editorial in Wellington Weekly News
- TDBC Weekly Bulletin
- TDBC web site
- letters to Borough Councillors, County Councillors, all Parish and Town Councils (including parish and town councils adjoining the Deane boundary)
- letters to specific consultation bodies (Government departments, statutory undertakers etc)
- letters to all planning consultants on LDF database
- letters to agents acting for planning applications
- letters to all residents on LDF database
- letters to Community Groups on LDF data base
- advertising the SCI through business newspapers / e-bulletins prepared by the Taunton Chamber of Commerce, Business Link and the Federation of Small Businesses
- presentation to Taunton Chamber of Commerce
- article in the Talking Newspaper (for the blind or partially sighted)
- distribution of leaflets through Connexions
- attendance at meeting of the Taunton Deane Youth Action Group
- letters to the Wellington Economic Partnership and contact with rural businesses
- copies of the SCI, summary leaflets and posters distributed to all libraries and community offices in Taunton, Wellington and Wiveliscombe
- summary leaflets / posters distributed to all members of the LSP's SPWG, for forwarding and circulating.

#### 5.0 **Responses**

5.1 In total we received just 33 responses, which is disappointing given the amount of effort that was given to advertising the “first draft” SCI. However, this is fairly consistent with the experience of other local authorities. It is recognised that, whilst very important, the subject matter is not particularly exciting to the public audience, being about process rather than specific spatial proposals. The 33 responses can be broken down as follows:

- Specific consultation bodies (e.g. GOSW, Regional Assembly, SWERDA etc): 5
- Parish Councils: 6
- Agents and Developers: 11
- Interest / Pressure Groups: 6

- Education / Youth: 3
- Residents: 2

5.3 It's fair to say that the majority of responses refer to points of detail. We have received no responses criticising the overall strategy. We received a very complimentary letter from Government Office for the South West, welcoming the substantial steps that TDBC are making in this important area of work. GOSW commend the continuous process of engagement, the commitment to build capacity, the identification of underrepresented groups and developing the links to the community strategy.

## 6.0 **Amending The Draft SCI**

6.1 The detail of the consultation response to the "first draft" SCI, and the TDBC reaction to that response, is contained within the report to SPTED (dated 27<sup>th</sup> September 2005). That report also contains a series of recommended actions to improve the content of the SCI. SPTED approved these actions. A similar report was also presented to SPWG, who also endorsed the recommended actions. Some of the more significant actions were as follows:

- Relate different groups & groupings to consultation methods e.g. consider the consultation techniques that are most appropriate for each of the range of groups that are to be consulted (e.g. developers, parish and town councils etc)
- Consider and (where appropriate) introduce to the SCI the range of suggested additional consultation techniques
- Introduce greater recognition of the role of parish and town councils in the consultation process, and consider engaging the Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) within the Spatial Planning Working Group
- For Planning Control, introduce examples of developments that are of "local significance" and also identify "sensitive sites" – both of these definitions can then be used to help define a trigger to require pre submission consultations on planning applications

6.2 In addition to the above actions and resulting amendments, it is worth noting that alterations have also been made to the SCI capacity building programme (as set out within Section 4). The original programme (first draft SCI) related to 2005, and we have now considered the action required in 2006. We need to continue the work to try and engage communities within North and East Taunton, as well as ethnic minority groups. A new area of work is engagement with the youth audience, including schools and colleges. This appears to be an area that many individuals are keen to see addressed (see SCI responses). It's certainly a matter that has been raised at the recent LDF Briefing Sessions with parish and town councils. Accordingly, a commitment to develop an appropriate capacity building programme has been included.

## 7.0 **Issues for further consideration**

7.1 Not all attempts to engage the public were successful during the consultation on the "first draft" SCI. In particular, we failed to engage the voluntary sector and ethnic minority groups. This was due to a number of reasons beyond the control of Forward Plan Unit, and mainly relating to a lack of capacity within other organisations / groups to assist during the consultation period. Nevertheless, the Forward Plan Unit is still endeavouring to consult with such groups. Basic SCI information has now been translated in to a number of foreign languages that will be distributed via appropriate contacts. The Council for Voluntary Services have agreed to include an SCI article in their latest e-bulletin (which goes out to a large number of voluntary organisations

operating with the Deane). We are aiming to hold a meeting with the CVS to identify additional means of assistance. The aim will be to generate responses from such groups (and others) during the second stage of SCI consultations.

## **8.0 What Happens Next?**

8.1 A six-week statutory consultation period will be organised, commencing Friday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2005 and ending Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> 2005. Responses will be used to prepare a third and final consultation document, as required by the relevant ODPM regulations.

8.2 A third consultation period will then occur during the early Spring '06, when the SCI is submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for their consideration. This will be quickly followed by an Examination of the SCI, which is likely to occur towards the end of Summer / early Autumn '06.

## **9.0 Implementing The LDF Related Aspects Of The SCI**

9.1 The SCI establishes the broad strategy for LDF consultation. However, it is implementation of the strategy that is key to achieving success. During Late Autumn '05, the Borough Council will commence public consultations on a Core Strategy and Town Centre Area Action Plan. In addition, the LSP will soon begin the review of the Taunton Deane Community Strategy as well as preparing area based plans for North Taunton and Taunton East.

9.2 To assist this process, the Borough Council and the LSP will appoint a consultant to help develop and facilitate joint LDF / Community Strategy consultations (the LSP have provided £10k towards this commission, with the remainder being provided through Planning Delivery Grant money). A brief has been prepared setting out the outline of this project, with bids to be submitted by mid October 2005. We hope to appoint this consultant during late October 2005. The most important aspect of this commission is facilitation. The appointed consultant will be expected to act as an independent facilitator, particularly for those aspects of the consultation strategy that aim to engage under represented groups. This could include (amongst others) ethnic minority groups, groups representing those with physical and / or mental health problems or illness, the business community and the voluntary sector. The details of specific consultation activity will be developed and agreed during November 2005, with subsequent consultation activity occurring during December 2005, and January/February 2006.

## **10.0 Conclusions**

10.1 The SCI is a Local Development Framework (LDF) document that the Borough Council is obliged to produce. The SCI establishes the Borough Council's proposals for involving the community in both the preparation of the LDF and the consideration of planning applications. The SCI also explains how we shall link the LDF with the Community Strategy, an important requirement of the new planning system.

10.2 The first draft was prepared in association with the Local Strategic Partnership, who endorsed the document. The first draft was subject to widespread publicity and consultation during Summer 2005. Responses to that consultation raised matters of detail. There were no objections to the overall strategy. Government Office for the South West were pleased with the progress that TDBC are making, and commended many aspect of the draft SCI. Responses to the first draft have now been considered by the Strategic Planning, Transport & Economic Development Review Panel (SPTED), and the Local Strategic Partnership via their Spatial Planning Working

Group (SPWG). The public response to the “first draft”, and the subsequent consideration of that response by both SPTED and SPWG, has led to the production of an improved second draft SCI (Appendix 1). Executive support for the “second draft” SCI is now sought, before we embark on a programme of further public consultation (as required by the appropriate regulations).

## 11.0 **Corporate Priorities**

11.1 The priorities within the Borough Council’s Corporate Plan (ETCHED) are a direct reflection of priorities identified within the Community Strategy. The LDF is the means by which the land-use / spatial elements of the Community Strategy will be delivered, and the SCI explains how the community will be involved in the preparation of the LDF. As such, this matter is important with respect to all the Borough Council’s Corporate Priorities.

## 12.0 **Recommendations**

12.1 It is recommended that the Executive agrees the publication of the second draft Statement of Community Involvement for the statutory consultation.

## **List of Appendices**

Appendix 1: Second draft Statement of Community Involvement

## **Background Papers**

TDBC SPTED Review Panel, 27<sup>th</sup> September 2005: Agenda Item 5 – Statement Of Community Involvement

**Contact:** Mark Leeman, tel 01823 356484 or e-mail  
m.leeman@tauntondeane.gov.uk

## THE COUNCIL'S VISION FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

We consult residents and stakeholders to inform our decision-making. Your needs and concerns are used to improve and refine the content of our strategies and policies. The results of consultation and any decisions made based on those results are fed back to the community.

All consultation we do is guided by our Consultation Policy, which sets out our commitment to be a Council for the Community. We believe consultation is essential to good local government. We will therefore work toward full involvement of all members of the community in the consultation process.

For the purposes of this policy, "community" is defined as follows:

- People in a geographical area – for example, a district, a town and surrounding hinterland, a town or village, a neighbourhood or street, etc.
- People sharing a common interest or situation – e.g. conservation, health, pollution, youth issues, recycling, arts & heritage, business development, users of particular services, the development industry, disability action, socially excluded, voluntary sector partnership, etc.

We have an excellent track record of consulting the community using residents' polls, user surveys, non-user surveys, focus groups, in-depth interviews, exhibitions, workshops and visioning exercises. We also have an excellent record of consulting our residents' panel: Somerset Influence, and working with parish and town councils. However, there is always room for improvement.

Wherever possible the Council will work towards the following eight key principles:

1. We will aim for the highest standards of consultation
2. We will be honest and clear
3. We will have flexible and suitable approaches to seeking views
4. We will encourage new and diverse ways of consulting and involving the public
5. We will recognise different viewpoints, we will listen and be prepared to change our views
6. We will learn from our mistakes and past experiences
7. We will keep a record of all consultation and involvement carried out
8. We will monitor the effectiveness and results of activities to avoid duplication

# STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

## CONTENTS

**Summary**

**Making Your Comments**

- 1 Introduction**
- 2 The Local Development Framework**
- 3 Linking The Local Development Framework To The Taunton Deane Community Strategy**
- 4 Local Development Framework: Who Can Get Involved And How?**
- 5 Planning Applications**
- 6 Monitoring & Mechanisms For Review**

**Appendix 1 Testing The Soundness Of The SCI**

**Appendix 2 Community Strategies Within Taunton Deane**

**Appendix 3 Spatial Planning Working Group – Terms Of Reference**

**Appendix 4 Minimum Consultation Requirements For LDF Documents**

**Appendix 5 Specific Consultation Bodies**

**Appendix 6 General Consultation Bodies**

**Appendix 7 Consultation Techniques**

**Appendix 8 The LDF Consultation Database**

**Appendix 9 Planning Control – Neighbour Notifications**

**Appendix 10 Useful Contacts**

**Appendix 11 List Of Amendments to the SCI**

**Glossary**

## SUMMARY

A new town and country planning system was introduced during September 2004. This will eventually replace existing local plans with the Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF can be regarded as a folder containing various planning related documents. This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is an LDF document.

The SCI proposes a strategy for involving the community in:

- The preparation of the Local Development Framework
- The consideration of planning applications

### **For the Local Development Framework, the SCI establishes:**

- The statutory context for consultation
- The LDF documents that are going to be produced
- When the community will be consulted on each LDF document
- How the community will be involved and engaged (methods)
- Who will be involved (the procedures for identifying relevant groups)

The emphasis is upon early involvement, so that the community can help develop and shape each of the LDF documents.

The new planning system places emphasis on linking the LDF to the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy incorporates and coordinates the strategies of a range of organisations, including the police, health authority, voluntary sector and local authorities.

The SCI explains how TDBC shall work closely with the Local Strategic Partnership, who are responsible for preparing the Community Strategy.

### **For the consideration of planning applications, the SCI establishes:**

- The statutory context for consultation
- Existing Borough Council consultation practice, and how this can be improved
- The requirements for applicants to undertake pre application consultation on “significant” developments. The SCI recommends appropriate consultation methods.

### **Consultation on the SCI**

This SCI is a second draft (“pre-submission public participation draft”). It proposes a preferred strategy for community involvement. Responses to the consultation will be used to refine the SCI.

This consultation is open to everyone, but TDBC will be making additional effort to talk to those who traditionally are underrepresented in consultation.

The deadline for comments is 5.00pm Monday December 19<sup>th</sup> 2005. Comments can be sent by post, fax or e-mail.

A third draft (“submission” document) will be produced during early Spring 2006.

## MAKING YOUR COMMENTS

This is a second draft Statement of Community Involvement for public consultation. We welcome your views.

If you would like to make any comments please use one of the following methods:

- Send your comments to:  
Forward Plan Unit  
Taunton Deane Borough Council  
The Deane House  
Belvedere Road  
Taunton  
Somerset  
TA1 1HE
- Send comments by email to: [localplan@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@tauntondeane.gov.uk)
- Send comments by fax to: 01823 356444

Please clearly identify any specific paragraph(s) that you wish to comment on.

Please note that comments cannot be treated as confidential.

In making your comments, please provide the following information:

- Full contact details: Name / full address including postcode & telephone numbers (home & work) / fax number / e-mail address)
- Gender: Male / female
- Disability: please state whether you consider yourself to have a disability
- Age category: Please state whether you are:

Under 16 years of age	16 to 24 years of age
25 to 44 years of age	45 to 64 years of age
65 to 74 years of age	75 years of age and above

- Ethnicity\*: Please state whether you consider yourself to be:

White-British	White-Irish
White-any other white	
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	Mixed White and Black African
Mixed White and Asian	Mixed – Any other Mixed
Asian or Asian British – Indian	Asian or Asian British - Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	Asian or Asian British – Any other Asian
Black or Black British – Caribbean	Black or Black British - African
Black or Black British – Any other Black	
Other ethnic group – Chinese	Other ethnic group – Any other group

\*Ethnic monitoring is an important aspect of the Council's responsibility to ensure we are offering equality of opportunity and treatment to all living, working and visiting Taunton Deane. This form of monitoring allows us to pick up and tackle problems at an early stage and can therefore be used to highlight possible inequalities in our service delivery, investigate underlying causes and remove any unfairness or disadvantage.

## Document Availability

This document is available for public inspection at the following locations:

- Taunton Deane Borough Council, Deane House, Belvedere Road, Taunton
- Wellington Community Office (30 Fore Street, Wellington)
- Wiveliscombe Community Office (Wiveliscombe House, The Square, Wiveliscombe)
- All public libraries (Taunton / Wellington / Bishops Lydeard / Priorswood / Wellington / Wiveliscombe)

In addition, all parish and town councils have a copy.

An electronic copy is available on the TDBC website at:  
[www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/TDBCSites/local\\_plan/index.asp](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/TDBCSites/local_plan/index.asp)  
Alternatively, a CD version can be bought for £5.

Paper copies can be bought from Deane House (address given above) for the following fee:

Local residents: £5

All others: £20

Please note that these charges will be waived if you are representing local community interests, such as voluntary groups, residents associations etc.

**A summary of this document can be provided in Braille, large print, tape and disc. It can also be translated. Please contact us if you would like the summary document in any other format.**

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**All comments must be received by 5.00pm on December 19<sup>th</sup> 2005**

## **What Happens to the Comments Received?**

Comments sent by post or fax will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days. Comments received electronically will be acknowledged within two working days.

Any group, business or individual making comments on this SCI will be consulted automatically during future stages of SCI production.

We will use your comments to refine the content of the SCI. We will report a summary of all comments, together with our response to a meeting of the Borough Council's Strategic Planning, Transport & Economic Development Review Panel that meets on February 14<sup>th</sup> 2006. The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) will also consider your comments during February 2006. The reaction of both the Panel and LSP will be used to inform the development of a final "submission" document, which will be submitted to the Secretary of State and subject to further consultation during March / April 2006.

## **Glossary**

Please note that there is a pull out glossary at the back of this document that explains the majority of professional terminology used within the SCI.

## **Contact for Further Information**

Mark Leeman

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is a vital part of the Local Development Framework for Taunton Deane (the Local Development Framework is explained within Section 2). It provides a set of principles and commitments setting out when we will consult, what type of consultation we will use and how we will manage the consultation.
- 1.2 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) seeks a step change from “consultation” to “involvement”, and proposes a strategy that will enable all people to have an active role in planning for the future of their communities.
- 1.3 In particular, this SCI sets out the local authority’s strategy for involving the community in:
- Preparing planning documents (the LDF and its component parts); and
  - Considering planning applications
- 1.4 In doing so, the SCI defines the following:
- The Borough Council’s vision and strategy for community involvement and how this fits with the Community Strategy (the Community Strategy is explained within section 3)
  - The legal requirements for consultation and involvement
  - The broad categories of community groups and organisations that need to be involved
  - The arrangements and standards to achieve good practise in involving the community
  - Simple clear guidelines for the community to know with confidence when and how they will be involved:
    1. by the Borough Council when preparing new planning documents
    2. by the developer before submitting significant planning applications
    3. by the Borough Council in response to submitted planning applications
  - A benchmark for applicants for planning permission about what is expected of them
  - How the process of involvement is to be resourced and managed effectively

### PROGRESSING THE SCI

- 1.5 The Council will provide opportunities for continuous community involvement. Through an on going programme of consultation, we will aim to reach all sections of our society.
- 1.6 This document is a second draft. A first draft was published in June 2005, and the Borough Council received various responses throughout July and August 2005. All responses were subsequently considered both by the Borough Council and the Local Strategic Partnership. The public response has helped to shape the content of this second draft. A list of actions that were used to improve this second draft SCI is

included as a final appendix (Appendix 11). Unlike the first draft SCI, which asked a series of questions to help refine a community involvement strategy, this second draft SCI now formally proposes a preferred strategy. Following consideration of the public response to this second draft SCI, a further revision will follow in March / April 2006.

## **TESTING THE SCI: THE EXAMINATION PROCESS**

- 1.7 A Government appointed Inspector will assess the final version of this document for its overall “soundness” and to ensure that it satisfies the statutory requirements for its preparation. The criteria for assessing the soundness of the SCI are set by Government guidance and are attached at Appendix 1. The Inspector will assess the SCI on the basis of evidence submitted directly to an examination (including any representations made on the 3<sup>rd</sup> draft or “submission” SCI) and his or her wider knowledge and professional judgement. Where it would be helpful to the Inspector, he or she will be able to invite the submission of evidence on particular issues and will not be restricted to those who have made representations, although this is unlikely to happen other than in the most exceptional of circumstances. Should the SCI be found to be unsound, the Inspector will be able to make changes to the SCI to rectify this (on the basis of evidence assessed during the examination). The examination in to the Taunton Deane SCI is anticipated to be held in the Summer of 2006. Advice from the Planning Inspectorate indicates that most SCIs will be examined by means of written representations rather than oral hearings. Where an oral hearing is required, the examination process is expected to focus on the use of round table discussions and joint hearings.
- 1.8 Following the public examination, the Inspector will produce a report outlining the findings and any recommendations for changes to the SCI. These recommendations will be binding on the Council. This means that the Council is compelled to make the changes as proposed before adopting it. It is anticipated that the SCI will be adopted during the Autumn of 2006.

## **2. THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **A NEW TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING SYSTEM**

- 2.1 The Government has introduced a new town and country planning system, replacing Regional Planning Guidance and Structure Plans with the Regional Spatial Strategy, and local plans with Local Development Frameworks (LDF).
- 2.2 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) is being prepared by the Regional Planning Body which, for the South West, is the South West Regional Assembly (based at Middle Street, Taunton). The first RSS will cover a 15-20 year period (to 2026), and will identify the scale and distribution of new housing and employment provision. The first RSS will be submitted to the regional Government Office during March 2006, following which there will be a three-month consultation period. The LDF needs to be in conformity with the RSS.
- 2.3 The aim of the LDF is to streamline local planning and promote a proactive, positive approach to managing development. National planning advice sets out the various objectives for the LDF, and they include:
- quick response to changing local circumstances by enabling frequent review
  - early and effective community engagement
- 2.4 All new documents that are to contain planning policies (or “spatial” policies as they should now be known) and other spatial guidance will now be included within the Borough Council’s LDF. The LDF can be viewed as a filing cabinet, containing several documents, and these can be broken down in to two main categories:
- Spatial policy documents
  - Process documents

Figure 1 explains the relationship between the component parts of the LDF.

- 2.5 The Borough Council has produced a leaflet that helps to explain the new planning system entitled “A Guide to the New Local Development Framework”. This can be accessed via the Borough Council’s web site. Alternatively, you can telephone 01823 356528 to request a copy. More detail on the component parts of the new planning system is explained below.

### **LDF: SPATIAL POLICY DOCUMENTS**

#### **Local Development Documents (LDD)**

- 2.6 These are the spatial policy documents that will collectively deliver the planning strategy for the Borough Council’s area. There are three main elements:
- Development Plan Documents
  - Less formal Supplementary Planning Documents
  - Existing Adopted Local Plan

## **Development Plan Documents (DPD)**

- 2.7 Development Plan Documents will form the statutory “development plan” for the area, along with the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Borough Council must prepare the following Development Plan Documents:
- 2.8 *Core Strategy*: This will set out the spatial vision for Taunton Deane and the primary policies for meeting this vision. It will include strategic policies about housing and employment growth, transport infrastructure, protection of the countryside and the historic environment, town centres and sustainable development.
- 2.9 *Site-specific Allocations and Policies*: These will identify the sites proposed for development (outside areas covered by Area Action Plans – see below) to meet the Council’s vision and core strategy. This will also show designations of land such as conservation areas and green wedge.
- 2.10 *Development Control Policies*: This will contain general policies to guide to the consideration of planning applications. For example, it will include specific policies about the consideration of housing, retail, office and leisure developments.
- 2.11 *Area Action Plans*: These concern areas of significant change and areas of conservation where specific redevelopment/improvement schemes are proposed. They will set out the specific proposals for development or enhancement. Initially, the Borough Council will produce separate area action plans for Taunton town centre and a Taunton urban extension.
- 2.12 *Proposals Map*: The Proposal Map (with inset maps, where necessary) will show on an Ordnance Survey map the policies in the Development Plan Documents.

## **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**

- 2.13 These are also statutory documents. They are likely to take the form of development briefs / design briefs for particular sites, or supplementary guidance to a particularly complex area of policy. Supplementary Planning Documents will be prepared in support of the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan, and another is proposed to provide guidance on the delivery of affordable housing.

## **Existing Adopted Local Plan: The Taunton Deane Local Plan**

- 2.14 The first LDF document is the Taunton Deane Local Plan (TDLP), which Taunton Deane Borough Council adopted during November 2004. It provides comprehensive planning policy guidance for Taunton Deane to the year 2011. The TDLP will continue to provide the appropriate planning policy context until its content is gradually replaced by the various LDF documents. The Local Development Scheme (the timetable for producing the LDF - see below) explains which documents will gradually replace the various policies contained within the TDLP.

## **LDF: PROCESS DOCUMENTS**

### **Local Development Scheme (LDS)**

- 2.15 The Local Development Scheme is a rolling three-year work programme for producing spatial policy documents and the SCI. It is updated on an annual basis (within the Annual Monitoring Report – see below), with more formal review every three years. It

is subject to scrutiny and approval from the Government Office for the South West (GOSW). There is no requirement to subject the Local Development Scheme to any form of public consultation, although the Borough Council has engaged the Local Strategic Partnership to ensure the appropriate linkages to the Community Strategy are realised (refer to Section 3). The Borough Council's Local Development Scheme can be viewed at:

[http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/TDBCSites/local\\_plan/LDF.asp](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/TDBCSites/local_plan/LDF.asp).

### **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**

- 2.16 The SCI sets out the various consultation techniques we will undertake for when preparing planning policy documents and in response to planning applications. The SCI will detail when we will consult, how we will manage the consultation, and will identify underrepresented groups and the need for planning related education and training exercises with the local community (capacity building). It also explains and develops the linkages between the LDF and Community Strategy, and identifies coordination of consultation between the two processes (where appropriate and practical).

### **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**

- 2.17 The Annual Monitoring Report assesses progress on the proposals outlined within the LDS. This must be submitted to the local Government Office by December of each year.

### **Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment (SA / SEA)**

- 2.18 The preparation of each spatial policy document must involve a Sustainability Appraisal. Sustainability Appraisal assesses the significant effects of strategies and proposals upon identified environmental, economic and social criteria. It applies throughout the preparation and progress of each individual spatial policy document. The Sustainability Appraisal will be subject to public consultation as it develops. Most spatial policy documents will also require Strategic Environmental Assessment under the European "SEA Directive" 2001/42/EC. This is very similar to Sustainability Appraisal but focuses on environmental considerations only. The Borough Council will produce Sustainability Appraisal reports for spatial policy documents that meet the requirements of the Directive, and thereby effectively combine the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Appraisal process.

Figure 1

### **3. LINKING THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK TO THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

- 3.1 The purpose of the new planning system is to deliver “sustainable communities”. In other words, “*communities that will stand the test of time, where people want to live, and which will enable people to meet their aspirations and potential*”. The delivery of sustainable communities requires the Borough Council to adopt a “spatial planning” approach to the preparation of the LDF.
- 3.2 Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning. It brings together and integrates policies for the development and use of land, with other policies and programmes that influence the nature of places and how they work (e.g. the community strategy). The Local Planning Authority must have regard to the issues and priorities emerging from within the local communities, and seek to reflect those within its planning decisions.
- 3.3 Similarly, spatial planning recognises that granting planning permission does not necessarily guarantee that development will occur. For example, the intervention of other agencies may be required in order to provide financial assistance or physical infrastructure. Accordingly, it is important to have regard to the strategies and where relevant the investment priorities of other key agencies (e.g. the Environment Agency, the South West Regional Development Agency etc).

#### **COMMUNITY STRATEGIES**

- 3.4 The Government has placed much emphasis on the need to link the LDF to the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy incorporates and coordinates the strategies of a range of organisations that have direct influence on the local community, including the police, health authority, voluntary sector and local authorities. These organisations are brought together within the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), which provides the steer and final approval to the district wide community strategy, identifying local issues and priorities for action and investment.
- 3.5 The Community Strategy consists of a hierarchy of plans, one feeding in to the other. At the lowest tier there are parish plans that are prepared by the local community, often with the assistance (advice / financial) of independent expertise, such as the Somerset Community Council. Parish Councils can play an important role in developing parish plans, providing leadership, detailed knowledge and volunteers. Parish plans feed into the community strategy hierarchy, advising the content of higher tier strategies.
- 3.6 The Government view the LDF as a key part of the community strategy. It should reflect the vision of the community strategy and enable the delivery of those parts that relate to the development and use of land.
- 3.7 A key aim for this SCI is to forge the linkages between the Community Strategy and the LDF.
- 3.8 The various elements that comprise the Community Strategy within Taunton Deane is explained at Appendix 2.

## **THE BENEFITS OF LINKING THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY TO THE LDF**

3.9 The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has identified a wide range of benefits to be realised through linking the Community Strategy to the LDF\*. These are:

- Greater understanding of community needs in the LDF process
- A more integrated approach towards future development in local authority areas
- A joined up approach to community planning at the strategic and local levels
- Recognition of the LDF as a wide-ranging delivery mechanism, particularly with its greater flexibility and speed compared to the existing development plan arrangements
- Economies of scale by sharing resources; and
- Potential to resolve conflicting objectives by engaging with a wide range of stakeholders

\* Entec UK Limited. The Relationships between Community Strategies and Local Development Frameworks (October 2003)

3.10 Figure 2 shows how the LDF fits with the Community Strategy. All elements of the community planning process will impact on the LDF. The LDF will need to consider the spatial content of such plans.

## **FORGING THE LINKAGES: ACTION**

3.11 The Taunton Deane LSP and the Borough Council (as Local Planning Authority) have considered the process of linking the LDF to the Community Strategy. Two important actions have been agreed:

1. The terms of reference of an existing TDBC officer group - the Community Planning officer Working Group (CPWG) - has been expanded to include consideration of all LDF related material. CPWG was originally established to coordinate the Council's involvement in the development of community strategies, and to ensure that the outcomes of community planning influence the Council's corporate priorities, budget, key plans and strategies. This groups consists of representation from all key Council departments that impact on the community planning process, including community planning staff, corporate policy, economic development and regeneration, housing, planning, heritage and landscape and leisure.

2. The LSP has set up a themed sub-group entitled the Spatial Planning Working Group (SPWG). The membership of this group currently consist of representation from:

- LSP
- CPWG (see above)
- Each of the Area Based Partnerships
- The Community Council for Somerset (in its coordinating role for parish and village plans)
- Taunton Town Centre Partnership
- North Taunton Partnership
- Taunton East Development Trust
- Other LSP partners as and when appropriate
- Local Planning Authority

3.12 The Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) has also been invited to join SPWG. SALC is the representative (membership) body for the City, town and parish councils in the administrative county of Somerset.

- 3.13 SPWG was established in February 2005 and meets quarterly. SPWG considers the LDF and other spatial plans (for example, relevant aspects of the Local Transport Plan), and acts in a coordinating role, ensuring the output from the community planning process is considered within LDF preparation. Eventually we hope to reach a position whereby we prepare the LDF and the Community Strategy in tandem, providing opportunities for joint consultation and progression. SPWG will also explore more effective methods of community involvement. All LDF material will go to SPWG before final consideration by the Borough Council as local planning authority. The terms of reference for SPWG are detailed at Appendix 3. SPWG agendas and minutes will shortly be available to view on the LSP website ([http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbc sites/LOCAL\\_STRAT\\_PART/index.asp](http://www.tauntondeane.gov.uk/tdbc sites/LOCAL_STRAT_PART/index.asp))
- 3.14 Officers from Forward Plan Unit have met both CPWG and SPWG, and have undertaken education and training programmes on the nature of the LDF. We have now reached a position where both working groups can actively engage in LDF preparation.
- 3.15 There are also other measures that we will use to ensure the integration of the Community Strategy and LDF. Specific short-term actions include the preparation of a Strategy Audit and Spatial Reports.

#### Strategy Audit

- 3.16 The LPA has begun work on a strategy audit. This will ensure that all relevant strategies (national / regional and local) have been identified before beginning work on specific LDF documents.

Timescale: Ongoing, looking to complete by November 2005.

#### Spatial Report

- 3.17 The Borough Council will produce a spatial report. This will assess the relevant land use/spatial actions emerging from various strategies included within the Strategy Audit. The principle focus will be on the relevant community strategies (Somerset Vision / Taunton Deane Community Strategy, area based strategies and parish plans). This exercise will evaluate how the actions within the community strategies can be progressed through the LDF. A spatial report will be produced for each strategy. This report will identify which particular LDF document will be the most suitable for taking forward the specific spatial actions. The next step will be to coordinate this work into a spatial report for each LDF document. For example, the Core Strategy Spatial Report will pull together and coordinate all the community strategy actions (from the various strategies) that relate to the Core Strategy into a single document. This will assist the LPA / LSP to identify the areas of priority action for each LDF document.
- 3.18 In addition to the above, the LPA will also assess the strategies of key agencies such as the Primary Care Trust, Connexions, Learning & Skills Council etc. Again, the spatial aspects of these strategies will be assessed and then considered within LDF preparation.
- 3.19 Similar work will be undertaken for the various regional strategies produced by the Regional Assembly, Regional Development Agency etc; and also Planning Policy Statements (and extant Planning Policy Guidance notes) produced by the ODPM.

Timescale: Ongoing, looking to complete during Spring 2006

**Figure 2**  
**Community Planning and Linkages to the LDF**



LDF Local Development Framework  
LSP Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership  
SSP Somerset Strategic Partnership

## **4. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: WHO CAN GET INVOLVED AND HOW?**

### **PHASES & MINIMUM STANDARDS**

- 4.1 When preparing LDF documents, the Borough Council will aim for a process of continuous community involvement. However, there are several distinct phases or “milestones” within the involvement process:

#### **Development Plan Documents (including the SCI): three phases of involvement:**

- Pre-submission Consultation – This is the first involvement phase. It is designed to identify relevant issues and inform discussion of possible options (issues and options phase).
  - Pre-submission Public Participation – This second phase is a six week “statutory” consultation period on a preferred option (preferred option phase)
  - Submission – The third stage is a six week “statutory” consultation period on a final proposal (submission phase)
- 4.2 Minimum consultation requirements for these phases are set out within the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (Regulations 25, 26 and 28). The relevant detail is provided at Appendix 4.
- 4.3 The first stage of involvement is an informal approach within a rolling programme of various consultation activities. This is the most important phase, enabling the community to become fully involved in shaping proposals at an early stage. The Regulations identify (as a minimum standard) the bodies that should be involved at this and other stages. The Regulations do not set a formal time period for the initial involvement stage, although the Local Development Scheme (refer to paragraph 2.15) does identify the duration of this involvement period for each individual DPD and the SCI. The second and third involvement stages are more formal. A six-week consultation period is required within which the Regulations specify minimum standards for distributing and advertising relevant documentation.

#### **Supplementary Planning Documents: two phases of involvement**

- Informal – the first involvement phase is based on an informal approach designed to identify relevant issues and inform the following consideration of options and proposals
  - Public participation on draft SPD – statutory four to six week consultation period
- 4.4 The approach to preparing SPD is similar to that required for Development Plan Documents and the SCI, except for that after the initial involvement phase, there is only one formal “statutory “ consultation period. The Regulations do not specify any minimum standards for involvement and engagement during the initial phase of SPD preparation. The Borough Council will adopt a rolling programme of relevant consultation and engagement activity that is based upon the minimum standards required for pre-submission consultation for DPDs.

#### **Additional Note On Undertaking Supplementary Planning Document Preparation**

- 4.5 The fact that there are two phases of SPD preparation, and three phases of development plan document preparation, could be an issue where the SPD is being prepared at the same time and in support of a development plan document. In such circumstances, the principle will be that the adoption of the SPD by the Borough Council should await the consideration of the Examination (by the appointed Planning Inspector) into the development plan document. The Borough Council will provide

clear guidance on this matter as it commences the preparation of each individual SPD.

## **WHO SHOULD WE BE INVOLVING?**

- 4.6 In undertaking consultation the Borough Council will go beyond that which is required as a minimum standard within the Regulations. The rest of this section explains how we will do this.
- 4.7 The Government requires local authorities to involve and engage a range of official bodies and “general consultation bodies” (refer to Appendix 5 and 6). General consultation bodies include voluntary bodies, ethnic minority groups, religious groups, groups that represent the disabled and groups that represent business interests. The Borough Council will work actively to engage such groups at the very start of DPD and SCI production, and will work with relevant experts to ensure that this achieved.
- 4.8 However, the Borough Council recognises that its consultation processes must engage all relevant sections of the community. We need to be smart about our approach to community involvement. Before we begin to engage the community on any LDF document, we will do the following:

**Area Profile:** An exercise that will inform the Council about the current demographics of a particular area, and current local issues. We shall use a range of available data as follows:

- Most recent Census data
  - Taunton Deane Profile and Ward Profiles (the Borough Council’s Research and Consultation Team are currently preparing these)
  - Community Profiles (where available, prepared as “health checks” to support the community planning process)
  - Consultation with the Community Planning Work Group and the LSP Spatial Planning Working Group (to provide information and advice on local issues and the output of relevant community planning exercises)
  - Reference to the Strategy Audit and Spatial Report (refer to paragraph 3.13).
- 4.9 We will use the information we gather to help identify the individuals and groups/businesses that TDBC needs to engage, having regard to the subject matter of the LDF document. Some of these will be under-represented groups.

## **UNDER-REPRESENTED GROUPS**

- 4.10 Some groups are underrepresented in formal consultation. They are least likely to give their views or even be asked for their views. However, it is important that we seek to actively engage such groups, so that we can address any relevant issues within the LDF. Experience from recent consultations suggests the following people may be considered as under represented:
- Young people, children, families and lone parents
  - People with physical and/or mental health problems or illness
  - People from ethnic/faith minority groups
  - People whose first language is not English
  - People on low incomes
  - People living in rural areas
  - Individuals living on the district boundaries

- The homeless
- Gypsies and travellers

4.11 We shall employ the following expertise to help advise and co-ordinate involvement for under represented groups:

- TDBC Database of Under Represented Groups (The Borough Council has created a database of useful contacts for under represented groups)
- TDBC Equalities Officer\*
- CPWG/SPWG (refer to paragraph 3.11)
- Community Council for Somerset\*
- Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC)
- Council for Voluntary Service (CVS)

\*refer to Appendix 10 for contact details

4.12 The Council will note the broad categories of individuals that respond to consultation exercises, and will learn from each consultation (LDF and others). We will feed the results into later reviews of the SCI.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING**

4.13 We recognise that identifying each under-represented group is just the start of a process. A targeted work programme providing training and education may be required before people within an under represented group feel they can actively take part in the LDF process. Such targeted action is often referred to as “capacity building”.

4.14 A local example of a “capacity building” exercise is the development of the West Deane and Brendons Community Plan (refer to Appendix 2). The process started by bringing together key organisations, community activists and groups to discuss what community planning was and how it could benefit the area. This was followed by some targeted activity to discuss the work and how people could get involved. A local steering group was developed to shape the work within the resources available (people and financial). Once all the consultation was carried out local people then came together under specific themed areas of activity and interest. These groups were given briefing information on project management (evaluating data and identifying key priorities). The results of this work were then subject to further consultation. The local community are now being supported in the setting up of working groups for key projects and themes in order to ensure that priority action is taken forward.

4.15 The SCI will focus capacity building activity on two areas:

- helping under-represented groups engage in consultation (and will identify their preferred methods of engagement); and / or
- helping communities to understand and engage with the new planning system.

4.16 The Forward Plan Unit will coordinate capacity building with the Borough Council’s Equality Officer and community planning colleagues. This will help to avoid consultation overload.

4.17 LDF capacity building began in 2005 with action targeted at Taunton Deane and Somerset County Council Members, Parish and Town Councils, and members of SPWG and CPWG. This was mainly undertaken through briefing sessions and workshops (full details are provided in the Pre-submission Consultation Draft SCI

(June 2005). This work is now largely complete, but we will continue to monitor the success of this programme and introduce further events if and when necessary.

4.18 It is important to target capacity building at those areas that are a priority for LDF document production. The first LDF documents we will progress will be the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan (TCAAP) and the Core Strategy.

4.19 Having regard to available resources (staff and financial), the following programme of capacity building is proposed for 2006:

- Community Groups within North and East Taunton

Reason: These are deprived areas benefiting from Government funding as a result of Enterprise Area status/Sure Start activity. The benefits of the town centre redevelopment need to be filtered through into these areas. There has been much consultation activity within these communities over the past two years. It is important to understand the results of this consultation before embarking on any further engagement. To assist, the Borough Council appointed a consultant to provide a baseline assessment for both North Taunton and Taunton East. This work was completed in the Summer 2005. Further work is now underway to identify priority actions and areas where further work / consultation is necessary. The need for any additional capacity building will have regard to this work (due to be completed Autumn 2005), and will be coordinated by contacting the relevant community field workers.

Timescale: Autumn 2005 to Spring 2006

- Ethnic Minority Groups

Reason: The Borough has a growing ethnic minority population largely concentrated within the Taunton urban area. It is important that development of the TCAAP has regard to the needs and requirements of a diverse population. There are various Council departments that wish to engage ethnic minority groups. As such, the Forward Plan Unit is currently working closely with the Borough Council's Equalities Officer, who will coordinate approaches.

We will produce a summary leaflet of the SCI in the four main minority languages within Taunton Deane (Bengali, Chinese, Portuguese and Hindi) and distribute it through appropriate contacts. We shall also provide translated summary leaflets for the Core Strategy and the Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan. We will work with the Multi Cultural Forum and discuss projects with appropriate community leaders as and when appropriate to do so.

Timescale: Autumn 2005 and beyond

- Youth Audience

Reason: It is recognised that the youth audience can bring fresh and innovative ideas to a variety of debates. This was very noticeable during the development of the Taunton Vision. Accordingly, it is important to work with this underrepresented audience. The Forward Plan Unit met with the Taunton Deane Youth Action Group during July 2005 as part of the engagement process on the Pre-submission Consultation Draft SCI. This group were very keen to become involved with LDF matters, via the use of appropriate consultation methods and techniques. We have also received other comments (from various education and training establishments) supporting the concept of greater involvement of the youth audience. We shall work with a variety of such organisations over the coming months to develop an appropriate capacity building programme / process of engagement.

Timescale: Autumn 2005 and beyond

- Partner Agencies

Reason: We shall seek to work with important partners who have front-line responsibilities within the local community, and use their expertise to encourage more

effective involvement for all with the planning process. This could include, for example, Connexions, Primary Health Care Trust etc.  
Timescale: Autumn 2005 to Spring 2006 (and beyond)

- 4.20 We will do an annual review of capacity building (as part of the annual review of SCI). This will identify areas of success and areas where further work is needed. The annual review will enable us to target new activity alongside the development of new LDF documents.

## **INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY: CONSULTATION TECHNIQUES**

- 4.21 There are various ways in which we can involvement the community, from the simple provision of basic information through to extensive consultation techniques that seek to develop active working relationships. Generally, the more extensive forms of engagement are resource intensive (both financial and personnel) but the results are often of great value.
- 4.22 Examples of different engagement and involvement techniques are given below. These range from the simple to the more complex. The examples chosen are suitable for consideration when preparing LDF related consultation. An explanation of each of the methods, as well as an example of how each method has previously been used locally, is provided at Appendix 7.

**(A) Inform:** To provide the public with balanced and objective information to aid them in understanding the problem, alternatives or solutions.

- Letters/email
- Press Notice
- Newspaper Articles & Parish Magazines / Newsletters
- Radio
- Leaflets & Posters
- Web Site

**(B) Consult:** To get public feedback on analysis, alternatives, or decisions.

- Video Box / Voice recorder
- Mobile Phones
- Touch Pad Technology
- Questionnaires & Surveys
- Public Meetings
- Static & Travelling Exhibitions
- Surgeries
- Web Forums

**(C) Involve & collaborate:** To involve is to work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that we consistently understand and consider public and private concerns. To collaborate is to work together with the public during the decision-making process including developing alternatives and identifying the preferred solution.

- Meetings with existing groups – Parish & Town Councils, Neighbourhood Forums & Resident's Panels etc
- Workshops & Stakeholder Meetings
- Focus Groups & Consultation Groups
- Planning Days ("Planning For Real" type exercises)

- Enquiry By Design

## MATCHING TECHNIQUES TO GROUPS

4.23 It is important that individuals and groups have a better understanding of how they will be involved with the engagement process i.e. the range of techniques that will be used. However, the need for both capacity building and further research suggest that it is not possible to be wholly specific, as we are still uncertain as to how certain groups wish to be engaged, and there will be differences between sub groups with the same interest. However, responses so far have indicated the types of techniques that are suitable for certain groups. These are listed below in table 1. However, this table must be read in the knowledge that it will be impossible to use all of these consultation methods for each LDF document or at each stage of LDF production, as resources will not permit this. A strategy is required. This matter is discussed in the next section.

<b>Table 1: Matching Engagement Techniques To Groups</b>	
<b>Technique</b>	<b>Group</b>
Letters / email	All
Press Notice	All
Newspaper articles / Parish magazines	Residents within an area
Radio	Residents within an area
Leaflets and posters	Residents within an area
Web site	All (those with access to the Internet)
Video box / voice recorder	Residents within an area. Voice box attractive to youth audience
Mobile phones	Youth audience
Touch pad technology	Youth audience
Questionnaires and surveys	All
Public meetings	Residents within an area
Static and travelling exhibitions	Residents within an area
Surgeries	Residents within an area
Web forums	All, but especially useful for developers and interest groups
Meetings with existing groups	Parish councils, neighbourhood forums, residents panels, interest groups, voluntary sector, business community
Workshops and stakeholder meetings	Parish councils, developers, those representing or involved with a specific interest
Focus groups and consultation groups	Residents within an area, those representing or involved with a specific interest
Planning Days	Residents within an area (suitable for the preparation of area action plans)
Enquiry By Design	Residents within an area (suitable for the preparation of area action plans)
Production of consultation material in variety of formats (foreign languages / brail / audio / large print)	Ethnic minority groups, those who are blind or partially sighted

## INVOLVING THE COMMUNITY: PROPOSED STRATEGY

4.24 As a general rule, the Council will seek to introduce more intensive forms of engagement at the start of the process (as well as various more simple methods). By undertaking this approach we hope that we can achieve wide publicity and ensure that most of the issues are understood and hopefully resolved at an early stage. We can then move to less intensive methods of engagement as the individual LDF document progresses. Therefore, TDBC resources (and those of other stakeholders) will be focussed on the early stages of document preparation. This can be summarised as follows:

- First Phase: Development of Issues and Options – high intensity consultation activity
- Second Phase: Preferred option – medium intensity consultation activity
- Third Phase: Final submission – minimum intensity consultation activity

4.25 Obviously, not all techniques will be suitable to everyone. We recognise this above in the sections concerning “under represented groups” and “capacity building”. A range of techniques will be needed at each stage.

4.26 We propose that the types of relevant consultation activity will be chosen based on:

- Feedback on early SCI consultations
- The nature of the LDF document. These will either be topic based (dealing with specific general issues such as affordable housing, strategy for retail development etc) or area based (focussing on a particular site or community)
- If area based, we will seek local community preferences (i.e. consultation with parish / town councils, other community representatives and field workers)

4.27 We will need to use some consultation methods at all stages. For example, TDBC will use its web site and press notices for both the early and latter stages of consultation.

4.28 Tables 2 to 4 detail the proposed consultation options for preparing LDF documents, based on the following two basic principles:

- Consultation activity will be focussed at the start of LDF document preparation; and
- Consultation activity should be based on the type of LDF document (topic based, area based or the SCI)

<b>Table 2: Proposed consultation methods for TOPIC BASED LDF DOCUMENTS, including the Core Strategy, Development Control Policies and Affordable Housing SPD</b>	
<b>Consultation Phase</b>	<b>Methods (minimum requirements)</b>
Issues & Options	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, leaflets & posters and web site. Travelling exhibition and web forum. Emphasis on topic based workshops and stakeholder meetings.  Targeted consultation methods to be informed by Area Profiling (refer to paragraph 4.8). This could involve a variety of methods within <i>categories (A) to (C)</i> (refer to paragraph 4.22).
Preferred Option	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, leaflets & posters and web site. Travelling exhibition and web forum. Continued dialogue/meetings with stakeholders identified at the

	Issues and Options phase.
Submission	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, leaflets & posters and web site.

**Table 3: Proposed consultation methods for AREA BASED LDF DOCUMENTS, including the Town Centre Area Action Plan & supporting SPD, Urban Extension Area Action Plan & supporting SPD, and Allocations & Policies**

Consultation Phase	Methods (minimum requirements)
Issues & Options	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, leaflets & posters and web site. Static exhibition and web forum Meetings with appropriate existing community groups and/or representatives, workshops and stakeholder meetings, consideration of the establishment of focus groups / consultation groups.  Community will be consulted in situ. Targeted consultation methods to be informed by Area Profiling (refer to paragraph 4.8). This could involve a variety of methods within <i>categories (A) to (C)</i> (refer to paragraph 4.22).
Preferred Option	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, leaflets & posters and web site. Static exhibition and web forum. Continued discussion/meetings with community groups and stakeholders identified at the Issues and Options phase.
Submission	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, leaflets & posters and web site.

**Table 4: Proposed consultation methods for the STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

Consultation Phase	Methods (minimum requirements)
Issues & Options	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, radio, leaflets & posters and web site. Hopefully a web forum, but this is dependant upon the technology being prepared in time. Workshop sessions if demand arises.  Targeted consultation with ethnic minority groups, voluntary sector, groups representing the disabled, religious groups and the business community.
Preferred Option	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, leaflets & posters and web site. Web forum. Continued discussion / meetings with targeted groups.
Submission	Letters, e-mail, press notice, newspaper articles / parish magazine, leaflets & posters and web site.

### Coordinating consultation activity

4.29 A significant advantage of the new system is that it enables us to timetable and stagger producing the various elements of the LDF. The basic elements for the next three years are as follows:

**1. Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan and supporting SPD, &  
2. Core Strategy**

Issues and options consultation Sept 2005 to March 2006. Consultation on preferred option June 2006. Consultation on Submission document January 2007.

**3. Development Control Policies,  
4. Allocations And Policies, &  
5. Urban Extension Area Action Plan and supporting SPD**

Issues and options consultation June 2007 to November 2007. Consultation on preferred option January 2008. Consultation on Submission document June 2008

**6. Affordable Housing SPD:** Early stakeholder engagement January 2006 to May 2006. Consultation on draft SPD January 2007.

**7. Statement of Community Involvement:** Issues and options consultation May 2005 to August 2005. Consultation on preferred option November 2005. Consultation on submission document March 2006.

- 4.30 The first LDF documents we will progress will be the Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Core Strategy. We will progress these in tandem. However, a different approach to consultation will be required for each (see paragraph 4.26 and Tables 2 and 3).
- 4.31 To reduce consultation fatigue and to share resources, it is important to assess whether consultation on LDF documents can be tied in to any relevant community planning consultation.
- 4.32 Through working with SPWG, the Borough Council and the Local Strategic Partnership have been working towards joint consultations on the following:
- LDF: Core Strategy & Town Centre Area Action Plan
  - Community Strategy: Community Strategy Review / Development of area based plans for North Taunton and Taunton East
- 4.33 The review of the community strategy will provide a framework for the future of the Borough, including regard to the Vision for Taunton and Somerset Local Area Agreement. The development of area-based plans for North Taunton and Taunton East will provide an Action Plan for partnership working in the Local Area, including Enterprise Area status. Work on the Core Strategy and the Town Centre Area Action Plan is of direct relevance to the review of the Community Strategy. Similarly, the development of area based plans for North Taunton and Taunton East will raise “spatial” issues that must be considered within the context of the LDF as the appropriate delivery mechanism. Joint Consultations will commence during late November 2005. We are employing independent expertise to assist with this process. The detail of the precise consultation arrangements will be announced during late Autumn 2005.
- 4.34 The issue of coordinating consultation is a matter that will require on-going debate and will be an item for continuing discussion with both CPWG and SPWG.
- 4.35 The LDF work programme will be reviewed annually through the Local Development Scheme (paragraph 2.15). We will detail any revisions in later revisions to the SCI (paragraph 6.2).
- 4.36 The overall proposed LDF consultation strategy is summarised in Table 5.

## TOOLS TO SUPPORT CONSULTATION

- The Consultation Toolkit
- 4.37 The Borough Council's Research and Consultation Team have prepared a Consultation Toolkit. This document advises TDBC staff on best practice for consultation. It seeks to ensure that consultation across the Council is: consistent; of a high standard; used in a timely manner, with suitable methods; effectively coordinated to promote sharing of information and good practice; and effectively evaluated.
- 4.38 The SCI develops various themes within the Toolkit and specifically seeks to raise the standard of consultation related to LDF documents, and to coordinate consultation wherever appropriate. However, there are many aspects of planning for consultation that it is not appropriate for the SCI to examine in detail. This supporting detail is provided within the Toolkit. As an example, the Toolkit provides detailed advice on breaking down the language barriers to consultation, and recommends various methods to achieve this (including external resources). It also provides detailed advice on how to analyse the consultation response. The FPU will have regard to the Toolkit when planning all forms of consultation.
- LDF Consultation Database
- 4.39 The Forward Plan Unit (FPU) is putting together a LDF Consultation Database. This database will be designed to enable effective targeted consultation (refer to Appendix 8). It will greatly help with identifying individuals/groups that may be invited to form themed or area specific focus groups.
- 4.40 All respondents to SCI consultations will be included on the new consultation database, and will be automatically notified of all future LDF related consultation.
- Facilitators
- 4.41 The FPU needs facilitators to assist with consultation. There are several recognised facilitators within Taunton Deane Borough Council. However, we shall look in to accessing a "facilitator's network", to have potential access to extra support. For example, the Community Council for Somerset (member of SPWG) has staff trained as facilitators.
- Planning Aid
- 4.42 South West Planning Aid is a voluntary service linked to the Royal Town Planning Institute offering free, independent and professional advice on town planning matters to community groups. Planning Aid enables local communities, particularly those with limited resources, to take part effectively in planning matters. The current remit of Planning Aid involves advising community groups in negotiations with the local planning authority and, if necessary, representing these groups at Inquiries/Examination. As part of the expansion of Planning Aid promoted by the Government, a proactive community planning service will be developed within the South West. This would target "underrepresented" groups and might include training on aspects of the planning system (capacity building) and helping communities to develop their own strategies for shaping their areas. It aims to give people the confidence to help themselves and to become involved in planning issues. The Borough Council will work with the South West Planning Aid to explore ways in which they can help in promoting community engagement. The Borough Council is currently considering membership of the Planning Aid Concordat (a commitment to Planning Aid through practical action).

Component	Stage Of Production	Consultation		When	Links to community strategies with possible opportunity for joint consultation
		Intensity	Methods*		
Core Strategy	Issues & Options	High	Table 1	Sep-05	1. Taunton Deane Community Strategy Review (2006) 2. Development of community strategies for North Taunton and Taunton East
	Preferred Option	Medium		Jun-06	
	Submission	Low		Jan-07	
Taunton Town Centre Area Action Plan	Issues & Options	High	Table 2	Sep-05	As above
	Preferred Option	Medium		Jun-06	
	Submission	Low		Jan-07	
Taunton Town Centre SPD	Issues & Options	High	Table 2	Sep-05	As above
	Preferred Option	Medium		Jun-06	
Urban Extension Area Action Plan	Issues & Options	High	Table 2	Jun-07	
	Preferred Option	Medium		Jan-08	
	Submission	Low		Jun-08	
Allocations & Policies	Issues & Options	High	Table 2	Jun-07	This will link to a series of community strategies, particularly at the local level e.g. commencement & review of area based strategies / parish plans
	Preferred Option	Medium		Jan-08	
	Submission	Low		Jun-08	
Development Control Policies	Issues & Options	High	Table 1	Jun-07	This will link to a series of community strategies, particularly at the local level e.g. commencement & review of area based strategies / parish plans
	Preferred Option	Medium		Jan-08	
	Submission	Low		Jun-08	
Statement of Community Involvement	Issues & Options	High	Table 3	May-05	Relevant to all community strategies
	Preferred Option	Medium		Nov-05	
	Submission	Low		Mar-06	
Urban Extension SPD	Issues & Options	High	Table 2	Jun-07	
	Preferred Option	Medium		Jan-08	
Affordable Housing SPD	Issues & Options	High	Table 1	Jan-06	Taunton Deane Community Strategy Review (2006)
	Preferred Option	Medium		Jan-07	

**Table 5: Summary of Proposed Consultation Strategy for the LDF**

\* cross reference to Tables 1 to 3 which detail consultation methods

4.43 Planning Aid can help individuals and communities to:

- Comment on planning applications;
- Get involved in preparing the LDF;
- Draw up your own community plan;
- Apply for planning permission or appeal against the refusal of permission.

More details about Planning Aid, including contacts and the Concordat can be found on the Planning Aid Website (refer to Appendix 10)

### **CONSULTATION MATERIAL: FORMAT OPTIONS**

4.44 All consultation material will be made available in a variety of formats, including large print and CD. Upon request, a summary of all consultation material will be made available via audio, brail and translations into other languages.

### **CONSULTATION: APPROPRIATE POLICY CONTEXT**

4.45 All consultations will be presented within the appropriate policy context, identifying the relevant national and regional policies, as well as linkages to the community strategy.

### **REPORTING BACK**

4.46 During each consultation exercise, the Forward Plan Unit will respond as follows:

- Comments sent by post / fax will be acknowledged in writing within 5 working days.
- Comments received by electronic means will be acknowledged via e-mail within two working days.

4.47 These letters and e-mails will identify the process for considering responses, and identify how we will use these responses to inform the development of the document. In particular, these letters/e-mails will state:

- The possible opportunities for further continuing involvement (between the submission of the response and formal consideration of the response by the Borough Council)
- The date when the Forward Plan Unit's response to consultation and further proposed amendments to the LDF document are to be considered by the Borough Council

4.48 In considering responses to the LDF consultations, the Borough Council will listen to all views and opinions. The Borough Council is also prepared to change its view or policies where valid reasons for doing so are presented. However, there will be times when we will not be able to accept a request to change a view or policy. In such circumstances, the Borough Council is committed to providing reasoned explanations.

### **RESOURCES**

4.49 The proposed consultation strategy will undoubtedly place an increased demand on staff and financial resources. To some extent, the preparation of the SCI itself has minimised this by identifying opportunities for joint consultation on separate LDF documents. Also, the development of closer working practises with community

planning colleagues will provide opportunities to share resources, as we will take forward joint consultations on LDF and community strategy related items.

4.50 The available resource is as follows:

- 7.5 staff in Forward Plan Unit (7 full-time and 1 part-time)
- Planning Delivery Grant<sup>1</sup> allocation of £10k towards SCI implementation (2005 / 06)
- LSP Grant of £10k towards SCI implementation (2005 / 06)

<sup>1</sup> Planning Delivery Grant is awarded annually from Central Government to assist with improving LDF and Planning Control related services. A block sum is provided. TDBC then allocates of proportion of the overall sum towards various specific projects

4.51 We will use the financial resource (£20k) as follows:

- We will employ consultants to help with consultation on the Town Centre Area Action Plan and the Core Strategy. We will ask the consultants to advise on the precise details of the consultation arrangements and how this fits continuing and proposed community planning activity. We will also ask them to help with facilitating consultation activity
- Accommodation hire (for community consultation)
- Assisting with the costs of translating summary leaflets into other languages/brail etc

4.52 In addition to the above, the Borough Council will appoint a Community Involvement Officer, hopefully before the end of 2005. This officer will be appointed within the Borough Council's Economic Development Unit, and will assist with:

- SCI implementation (particularly over Autumn 2005 & Winter 2006); and
- Community Planning Implementation

## 5. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

### INTRODUCTION

- 5.1 As well as the LDF, the Borough Council (as Local Planning Authority) also considers all planning applications<sup>1</sup>. This is the Planning Control process. We are required to consult the local community and other key stakeholders. Traditionally, consultation occurs after a planning application has been submitted. However, there are benefits to both local people and developers in involving the community at an earlier stage. For developers, it will ensure that issues are identified and addressed before the application is submitted. Local people will be able to have an input before proposals reach an advanced stage. Once a planning application is submitted, it is difficult to ask developers to make significant changes. Therefore, this SCI seeks to identify a framework for securing consultation before the submission of a planning application. However, the SCI needs to identify which types of application should be subject to pre-application consultation, and appropriate consultation techniques.

<sup>1</sup>not including applications for waste, minerals and major highway schemes. Somerset County Council considers these.

### STATUTORY CONTEXT

- 5.2 There are statutory requirements for publicity of planning applications<sup>2</sup>. These require the local planning authority to publicise planning applications, either by a site notice or by notification to neighbours. In addition, a local press advertisement may be required for applications that are defined as “major development”. In addition, there are statutory publicity requirements for applications for listed building and conservation area consent<sup>3</sup>, as well as for applications for planning permission affecting the setting of a listed building or conservation area<sup>4</sup> requiring both a site notice and press advertisement in all cases.

<sup>2</sup>Article 8 of the Town & Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 1995 (as amended) [the “GDPO”]

<sup>3</sup>Regulation 5 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Regulations 1990 (as amended)

<sup>4</sup>Section 67 and section 73 of the Planning (Listed Building and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 (to be amended by the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004)

### EXISTING PRACTICE

- 5.3 As well as any statutory requirements to advertise specific categories of proposal, the Council's normal practice is to either display a site notice or to notify the occupiers of abutting properties by letter. In areas where there is doubt over which means will be more effective, it is sometimes thought necessary to do both. Where a proposal may have impact on more than one street it may also be appropriate to display more than one site notice. Whilst it is often difficult to ring fence those who may be interested in a proposal, existing practice requires wider consultation on those applications that may affect more than individual amenity. More detail is provided at Appendix 9. We produce a weekly list of all applications submitted and the local press generally publishes this. It is also available on the Borough Council's web site. The web site also enables access to all submitted planning applications, including submitted forms and plans. You can also see copies of final committee reports and resulting decisions. Improvements to the Council's website currently being introduced will also enable access to all representations and other correspondence. Representations are already accepted in writing, by e-mail or via the website.

- 5.4 Parish Councils are consulted on all applications other than those that are determined by the Parishes themselves under the Borough Council's parish delegation scheme. Where the views of the Parish Council conflict with those of the Planning Control Manager, an application is referred to the Borough Council's Planning Committee for a decision.

#### **WHICH APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO PRE SUBMISSION CONSULTATION?**

- 5.5 The Borough Council is proposing a tiered approach, where the type of consultation relates to the significance of the individual proposal:

- Tier 1: Applications where there are considerable issues of scale and controversy, or the application is contrary to or out of line with the Development Plan policy (a "departure" application). Also included are applications broadly in accordance with Development Plan BUT raising controversial issue or detail and "other" departures not covered by Regulation 3 (a)-(c) in Annex 1 of Circular 07/99
- Tier 2: Applications of a scale or development area for which the LPA requires wider community involvement: applications that fall within sites that are "sensitive" to development pressures and allocated sites that may not have generated significant objection through the local plan process

- 5.6 The following are included as examples:

##### Tier 1

- Development Plan departures – proposals contrary to the policies within the adopted Structure Plan and Taunton Deane Local Plan, and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy and the LDF
- Schedule 1 development – as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations i.e. development that raises strategic environmental concerns
- Schedule 2 development – as defined by the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations
- Town and Country Planning (Shopping Development) Direction – applications involving very large amounts of new retail floorspace
- Development proposals which fall within the Town and Country Planning (Residential Development on Greenfield Land) Direction
- Development proposals that fall within The Town and Country Planning (Residential Density) (London, South East England, South West England, East of England and Northamptonshire) Direction 2005
- Development proposed on playing fields as set out in the Town and Country Planning (Playing Fields) direction
- Applications which require a Full Transport Assessment

##### Tier 2

- Applications of a "local significance" that the LPA considers to require wide community involvement
- Applications that fall within sites that are "sensitive" to development pressures
- Allocated sites that may not have been subject to extensive consultation in the development plan process, such as allocations that were not objected to and consequently may not have been considered in depth in the independent scrutiny and any public examination.

- 5.7 The consideration of whether a proposal falls within Tier 2 is more subjective than it is for Tier 1 (Tier 1 is being largely guided by appropriate regulations). For example, how should we define “local significance” and sites that are “sensitive” to development pressures? An example of “local significance” could include where the proposal impacts on a local landmark, or the proposed loss of a community facility, for example a public house or post office. A “sensitive” site could be that it is within a conservation area, AONB or SSSI.
- 5.8 The Borough Council encourages all developers to enter into early discussion with the local planning authority. At this pre-application stage, planning officers can advise developers of whether there is a need to undertake community involvement. Developers should consider the benefits of involving the community in developments, which are considered likely to have an impact on the community, even though the proposal may fall below the thresholds referred to above.

## PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION METHODS

- 5.9 The ODPM provided guidance on consultation methods in the recently published “Statements Of Community Involvement & Planning Applications”. It suggests the following methods are worth considering (with explanation provided at Appendix 7):
- Public Meetings
  - Public Exhibition
  - Surgeries
  - Development Briefs
  - Workshops/Stakeholder Meetings
  - Enquiry by design (more intensive form of workshop) / Planning Days
  - Consultation Panel/Groups
  - Parish & Town Councils
  - Media
  - Web sites
- 5.10 Not all of these methods will be suitable for each pre- submission consultation. It is essential to match the consultation methods with the individual planning proposal and, in particular, how the proposal fits within the proposed tiers (paragraphs 5.5 to 5.6). So, for example, more contentious proposals will be subject to more intensive forms of consultation.
- 5.11 A proposed strategy for pre-submission consultation on planning applications is set out in Table 6 below.

## PROPOSAL

<b>Method</b>	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2</b>
Public meetings	?	?
Public exhibition	✓	?
Surgeries	?	✗
Development briefs	✓	✓
Workshops / Stakeholders	✓	?
Enquiry By Design / Planning Days	?	✗
Consultation Panel /	?	?

Groups		
Parish / Town Councils	✓	✓
Media: Local publicity within the community	✓	✓
Website	✓	✓

**Key**

- ✓ Positively recommended
- ? May be suitable depending on the type of proposal, resources and community preferences. Discussion is recommended between all parties
- ✗ Not recommended

**THE ROLE OF TAUNTON DEANE BOROUGH COUNCIL AND APPLICANTS IN PRE-APPLICATION COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

5.12 The role and responsibilities of applicants and the Borough Council need to remain distinct. The onus is on the applicant to undertake community consultation. The Borough Council will adopt a “watching brief” role, and will limit itself to advising the applicant of relevant issues and consultation advice. Advice from the Borough Council will be “without prejudice” to an eventual decision on a planning application. Applicants will need to provide the Borough Council with reasonable access to all information relating to community involvement undertaken to ensure the procedures in this Statement of Community Involvement are followed. We will ask developers to submit with their planning application a statement of the community involvement that they have undertaken (see paragraph 5.17 below).

5.13 Members who wish to attend pre-application discussions and/or community involvement activities will not be permitted to give an opinion, as this would prejudice them from taking part at the planning committee.

**IDENTIFYING RELEVANT COMMUNITIES AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS**

5.14 There are several ways in which the relevant communities and stakeholder groups can be identified.

- Liaison with local parish and town council/community field workers
- Liaison with Forward Plan Unit and reference to the Local Development Framework Consultation Database (refer to paragraph 4.39)
- Liaison with members of the LSP’s Spatial Planning Working Group – for links to the Community Strategy
- Liaison with the Borough Council’s Equalities Coordinator – for advice on under-represented groups

5.15 We advise applicants to enter early discussions to establish the target audience for consultations.

**PRE APPLICATION COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: APPROPRIATE POLICY CONTEXT**

5.16 As with LDF related consultations, it is important that all pre application consultations are presented within the appropriate policy context, identifying the relevant national, regional and local policies, as well as linkages to the community strategy.

## **REPORTING BACK**

- 5.17 Alongside submitting their planning application, the applicant must submit to the Borough Council a statement that outlines how they have involved the community at pre-application stage. This statement will be made available for general public inspection. This statement must summarise the community response, and explain how the developer has amended their scheme to take account of any issues raised. It must also be sent to all those who took part in the consultation (those that were happy to leave names / addresses for future contact). Applicants must do this at the same time as submitting the planning application. The list of respondents to pre-application consultations must be submitted to the Borough Council, who will then ensure that all respondents are formally notified of the submission of the application.

## **TDBC GUIDANCE ON INFORMATION IN SUPPORT OF A PLANNING APPLICATION**

- 5.18 The Council already provides written guidance on the level of information that needs to accompany a householder application. We hope to issue a checklist for all other types of applications from November 2005, including advice on the need for pre application community involvement.

## **IMPROVING EXISTING CONSULTATION PRACTICE ONCE AN APPLICATION IS RECEIVED & PROMOTING BETTER UNDERSTANDING**

- 5.19 While already meeting minimum legal requirements, the Borough Council is keen to encourage wider community involvement in the planning application process. It therefore intends to amend it's guidance to case officers to encourage wider notification of local residents in response to proposals that may have an impact greater than merely on the adjacent residents. We will develop this over the next three months, and it will be completed by early 2006.
- 5.20 As well as ensuring interested parties are notified, it is also essential they understand their role in the process. The Planning Control section therefore intends to prepare a summary leaflet that explains the Planning Control system and the community's role in it. This leaflet will be automatically translated into the four main ethnic minority languages in the area (Bengali, Hindi, Portuguese and Chinese), and will be available in other languages on request. A second leaflet is also being prepared which will explain the Planning Committee process and how individuals are able to make representations at such meetings.

## **RESOURCES**

- 5.21 The onus is on the developer to undertake pre-submission consultations. Therefore, the impact on TDBC staff and financial resources should be minimal. Extra staff time will be taken in advising applicants of appropriate consultation procedures, but we consider this will be absorbed within existing levels of resource. However, we will monitor the impacts of the SCI over the forthcoming months.
- 5.22 Extra financial resources will be needed to enable us to develop explanatory leaflets to be translated into various languages. Again, we should be able to do this within existing budgets. However, it is not possible to know at this stage the demand for various translations. This matter will be monitored and kept under review.

## **6. MONITORING AND MECHANISMS FOR REVIEW**

- 6.1 Once adopted, we will review the SCI annually. We will submit the review to the LSP's Spatial Planning Working Group and then the Borough Council's Strategic Planning, Transportation & Economic Development Review Panel.
- 6.2 Annual review will seek to address the following:
- Whether the general programme of consultation activity is being met
  - Review the programme of capacity building
  - Coordinating the production of the LDF with the community planning process (to be undertaken alongside the review of the Local Development Scheme)
  - Consider the current available staff and financial resources for SCI implementation
- 6.3 Any significant failure against the first bullet (above) will trigger a full review of the SCI. Otherwise, full review (with supporting community consultation) will occur every three years from adoption.
- 6.4 Any changes arising from the considering bullets two, three and four will be included as an addendum to the currently adopted SCI.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Criteria for testing the soundness of the Statement of Community Involvement**

The Inspector will decide whether the:

- Borough Council has complied with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in the regulations;
- Borough Council's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the Taunton Deane Community Strategy;
- Statement Identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;
- Statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
- Methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents;
- Resources are available to manage community involvement effectively;
- Statement shows how the results of the community involvement will be fed into the preparation of the development plan documents and supplementary planning documents; and
- Borough Council has mechanisms for reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement; and
- Statement clearly describes the Borough Council's policy for consultation on planning applications.

Source: Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (ODPM / 2004)

## Appendix 2

### Community Strategies Within Taunton Deane

#### Taunton Deane Community Strategy

Following an active programme of consultation, the Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) developed A Community Strategy for Taunton Deane (2003 – 2005), entitled Our Place – Our Future.

The Taunton Deane Community Strategy sets out six priorities as follows:

- Economy:** Improving people's livelihoods and job opportunities
- Transport And Access:** Delivering more accessible services and a better transport system
- Crime:** Developing safer communities
- Health:** Encouraging healthier lifestyles
- Environment:** Protecting and improving our environment
- Delivery:** Making the Strategy happen and keeping it under review

These six priorities are supported by a number of objectives and action points.

A copy of the TD Community Strategy can be accessed via "www.somerset.org", or a copy can be sent to you by post. Refer to Appendix 10 for contact details

The community strategy coordinates and prioritises the actions of a number of partner agencies, including the Avon & Somerset Constabulary, Community Council for Somerset, Connexions, the Taunton Deane Primary Care Trust (and many others). The current community strategy will be subject to review during 2006. The Community Strategy review will aim to incorporate and coordinate a number of strategies, including the following: housing strategy, economic development strategy, cultural strategy and the biodiversity action plan.

The Taunton Deane Community Strategy is but one strategy within a hierarchy of community based strategies.

#### A Vision For Somerset

The community strategy for Somerset, "*A Vision For Somerset*", is produced by the Somerset Strategic Partnership (SSP – equivalent to the LSP, but working at the County level).

The Somerset Strategic Partnership brings together local government, other public services, the voluntary and community sector and the business sector. This partnership is developing a vision for Somerset that will cover the next 25 years and beyond. The overall Vision for 2025 is of a dynamic, successful, modern economy that supports, respects and develops Somerset's distinctive communities and unique environment. More information can be found at "www.somerset.org".

#### Area Based Community Strategies

To complement the approach taken to develop the Taunton Deane Community Strategy, the LSP has been working with local parishes, communities and interest groups to produce six area based community strategies as follows:

**West Deane & Brendons:** Following extensive community consultation, an approved Action Plan has been published, covering the years 2003 –2010. The process is overseen by The Wiveliscombe Area Partnership and a Community Planning Steering Group. A summary of the Action Plan can be accessed via "<http://wiveliscombe.com/markettowninitiative/>".

**Wellington & Area:** This work is being overseen by the Wellington & Area Community Planning Steering Group. A number of consultation processes were undertaken during 2004. The intention is to have an agreed strategy and action plan by Spring 2006, covering the period 2006 to 2010.

**Blackdown Hills:** Action Plan published for the years 2004-2009 (the Blackdown Hills Plan). This incorporates a management plan with a community strategy, and is overseen by the Blackdown Hills Rural Partnership (BHRP). A copy of the Action Plan can be accessed via "[www.blackdown-hills.net/](http://www.blackdown-hills.net/)".

**Quantocks / The Somerset Levels:** Due to cross-boundary issues, these two area based strategies need to be developed in conjunction with other district partners. Work will commence during 2006.

**Taunton:** Taunton is a very diverse community. Therefore, an area-based approach to community planning is needed within Taunton. Initially, it is proposed that community plans will be developed for North Taunton and Taunton East (steered by the LSP and assisted by the work of the North Taunton Partnership and the Taunton East Development Trust). Work will begin during the Autumn of 2005.

## **A Vision for Taunton**

The existing *Vision for Taunton* seeks to clarify Taunton's role as a County Town and one of eleven Principle Urban Areas in the South West. While not strictly a community strategy, its content is highly relevant to the developing LDF.

A "Vision for Taunton" was developed in 2002 by a special commission comprising TDBC and SCC Members who took evidence from hundreds of local people and groups with an interest in Taunton's future role as a County Town and one of eleven Principal Urban Areas within the South West region. The resulting Vision Statement was published in 2002, and looks to the year 2025 and beyond. Further work has been underway for the past two years to develop the land use strategy that will support and realise the key components of the Taunton Vision. The spatial elements of this work will now be developed as part of the Local Development Framework. More information on the Taunton Vision can be found at [www.taunton-vision.co.uk](http://www.taunton-vision.co.uk).

## **Parish And Village Plans**

Parish and Village Plans enable the local community to identify localised priorities and actions, through a series of village appraisal techniques and active consultation. The LSP and its partner organisations are supporting several groups to develop parish and village plans within the Deane. These include: Bishops Hull (on-going); Bishops Lydeard (completed and published); Chipstable (completed and published); Lydeard St Lawrence (on-going); Norton Fitzwarren (on-going); Nynhead (completed); Pitminster (on-going); Stoke St Gregory (completed); Stoke St Mary (on-going); Trull (on-going); West Bagborough (on-going). These plans have been developed as stand-alone entities, but their content needs to be considered as part of the spatial planning process and the eventual review of the Community Strategy.

## **Other Relevant Strategies And Plans**

There are several other important strategies that are relevant to the LDF. Some of these, such as the biodiversity action plan, the housing strategy and the economic development strategy will be incorporated within the Taunton Deane Community Strategy. However, there are other important strategies (not community based) that need to be considered by the LDF. These include the Local Transport Plan (prepared by Somerset County Council), the Integrated Regional Strategy and the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (both prepared by the South West Regional Assembly) and the Taunton Town Centre Strategy (prepared by the Taunton Town Centre Partnership).

## **Appendix 3**

### **Spatial Planning Working Group – Terms Of Reference**

- To provide TDBC as Local Planning Authority (and the Vision Delivery Team) with meaningful input into the development and spatial planning policy process from a community perspective, having regard to the output from the community planning process and the key principles of sustainable development (locally and nationally defined)
- To represent the views of, and to feedback to, other members of the LSP (including the area-based partnerships) in relation to development and spatial planning policy matters
- To contribute to spatial planning policy development, plan making and strategy formulation
- To facilitate enhanced levels of communication, consultation and liaison between the LPA, the Vision Delivery Team and the LSP in relation to the preparation of all documents that relate to spatial planning policy and community planning.
- To facilitate wider community engagement in the preparation of all documents that relate to spatial planning policy and community planning
- To facilitate better understanding of the LDF and community planning processes amongst all parties.

## Appendix 4

### MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CONSULTATION

Minimum Consultation Requirements as set out within the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. They are as follows:

#### Development Plan Documents (DPD) and Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

##### 1. Pre-submission consultation (Regulation 25)

Consultation with:

- “Specific Consultation Bodies” (defined within Appendix 3) that are affected by the subject matter of the DPD. For the SCI, this is satisfied by consultation with the Regional Planning Body, Relevant Authorities (defined within Appendix 3) and the Highways Agency
- Such of the “General Consultation Bodies” (defined within Appendix 4) as the Borough Council consider appropriate

##### 2. Pre-submission public participation (Regulation 26).

A six week consultation process with the following defined minimum standards:

- Make “pre-submission proposals documents”<sup>1</sup> and a statement of the “proposals matters”<sup>2</sup> available for inspection at the principle office (Deane House) and other suitable places (e.g. libraries and appropriate community offices) during normal office hours
- Publish on the Borough Council’s web site the pre submission proposals documents, the proposal matters and a statement providing details of where and at what times the relevant documents can be inspected
- Send to the “DPD bodies”<sup>3</sup> the authorities proposals for a DPD, supporting documents (as relevant to the specific DPD body), notice of the proposals matters and a supporting statement providing details of where and at what times the relevant documents can be inspected
- Give notice by local advertisement of the proposal matters and the places and times at which the pre submission proposals documents can be inspected

1 “Pre submission proposals documents” means the authority’s proposals for the DPD and such supporting documents as in the opinion of the authority are relevant to those proposals

2 “Proposal matters” are defined as: the proposed title of the DPD, the proposed subject matter and the area covered by the DPD, the consultation period and address for responses, a statement that any responses may be accompanied by a request to be kept informed of future progress with the DPD

3 “DPD bodies” means the bodies consulted by the Borough Council under pre submission consultation (Regulation 25)

##### 3. Submission public participation (Regulation 28)

As soon as reasonably practicable after the Borough Council submit a DPD to the Secretary of State they must arrange for a six week consultation process with the following defined minimum standards:

- Make copies of the “DPD documents”<sup>4</sup> and a statement of the “DPD matters”<sup>5</sup> available for inspection during normal office hours at the same places at which the pre-submission proposals documents were made available (under Regulation 26)

- Publish on the Borough Council’s web site the DPD documents, the DPD matters and a statement providing details of where and at what times the relevant documents can be inspected
- Send to the DPD bodies copies of the DPD, the sustainability appraisal report, the “pre-submission consultation statement”<sup>6</sup> and supporting documents (as relevant to the specific DPD body), notice of the DPD matters and a supporting statement providing details of where and at what times the relevant documents can be inspected
- Give notice by local advertisement of the DPD matters and the places and times at which the DPD documents can be inspected
- Give notice to those persons who requested to be notified of the submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State that it has been so submitted

4 “DPD documents” means the DPD, the sustainability appraisal report, the pre submission consultation statement, and such supporting documents as in the opinion of the authority are relevant to the preparation of the DPD

5 “DPD matters” means the title of the DPD, the subject matter and the area covered by the DPD, the consultation period and address for responses, a statement that any responses may be accompanied by a request to be notified of the recommendations arising from the appointed Inspector’s consideration of the DPD or the adoption of the DPD or both.

6 “Pre-submission consultation statement” means a statement setting out which bodies were consulted at the pre-submission consultation stage (Regulation 25), how such bodies (and other persons) were consulted, a summary of the main issues raised in those consultations and how the main issues were addressed within the DPD

### **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)**

#### Public Participation (Regulation 25)

Before the Borough Council adopts a SPD, a four to six week public participation period must be arranged with the following minimum standards:

- Make “SPD documents”<sup>7</sup> and a statement of the “SPD matters”<sup>8</sup> available for inspection during normal office hours at the Deane House and other suitable places
- Publish on the Borough Council’s web site the SPD documents, SPD matters and a statement providing details of where and at what times the relevant documents can be inspected
- Send to relevant Specific Consultation Bodies (refer to Appendix 3) and relevant General Consultation Bodies (refer to Appendix 4) the SPD, the sustainability appraisal report, a consultation statement (setting out the names of persons consulted in the preparation of the SPD, how the persons were consulted, a summary of the issues raised in the consultations and how the issues have been addressed in the SPD), relevant supporting documents, notice of the SPD matters and supporting statement (providing the consultation details and procedures)
- Give notice by local advertisement of the SPD matters and the places and times at which the proposals documents can be inspected
- Consult with RPB to ensure conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy

7 “SPD documents” are defined as the SPD, the sustainability appraisal report, the consultation statement and such supporting documents as are relevant to the preparation of the SPD

8 “SPD matters” are defined as: the title of the SPD, the subject matter and the area covered by the SPD, the consultation period and address for responses, a statement that any responses may be accompanied by a request to be notified of the adoption of the SPD

## **Appendix 5**

### **Specific Consultation Bodies**

**(as defined within Regulation 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004)**

- Government Office for the South West
- Regional Planning Body (RPB) – South West Regional Assembly
- Regional Development Agency – SWERDA
- Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs – DEFRA
- Relevant Authorities – Somerset County Council, Sedgemoor District Council, South Somerset District Council, West Somerset District Council, Devon County Council, Mid Devon District Council, East Devon District Council, all Town and Parish Councils
- Highways Agency
- The Environment Agency
- The Countryside Agency
- English Nature
- Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England
- Strategic Rail Authority
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- Strategic Health Authority
- Relevant electricity and gas companies
- Relevant sewerage and water undertakers

In addition to the above, the Borough Council is strongly advised to consult any Government Departments or agencies where those departments or agencies have large land holdings in the area covered by a specific local development document.

## **Appendix 6**

### **General Consultation Bodies**

**(as defined within Regulation 2 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004)**

A. Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the Borough Council's area;

B. Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the Borough Council's area;

C. Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the Borough Council's area;

D. Bodies which represent the interests of disabled person's in the Borough Council's area;

E. Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the Borough Council's area

## Appendix 7

### Consultation Techniques

#### Local Development Framework

Consultation Technique	Previous Local Example
<p><b>Letters / emails:</b> Communication (paper or electronic) sent to all on a consultation list, providing brief details of the consultation activity and how to get involved.</p>	<p>Letters were sent to all who wished to be kept informed of progress on the Taunton Deane Local Plan. Addresses were logged on a database. A similar system will be used for the preparation of each LDF document, but also extending to the use of e-mails.</p>
<p><b>Press Notices:</b> A formal advertisement in the local press, usually under the “Public Notices” section.</p>	<p>Press notices were used to advertise the commencement of statutory consultation periods on the Taunton Deane Local Plan.</p>
<p><b>Newspaper articles &amp; Parish magazines / newsletters:</b> Working with local newspapers and parish magazines to ensure that appropriate attention is drawn to consultation activity via editorials / short articles.</p>	<p>A series of newspaper articles were used as an aid to consultation on the Taunton and Wellington Town Centre Enhancements (1997 and 2002), as well as the Taunton Transport Strategy Review (2004). The Wiveliscome Messenger has previously contained an article on the SCI.</p>
<p><b>Radio:</b> Advertisements and / or interviews on local radio that draw attention to local issues that are subject to consultation. Interviews enable more detailed analysis.</p>	<p>Not recently used by TDBC as an aid to consultation.</p>
<p><b>Leaflets &amp; Posters:</b> Publication highlighting the key issues of a particular consultation. Provides details of relevant contacts and how to respond. Should be distributed to a wide variety of community locations, including parish / community notice boards, local shopping centres, libraries, health centres etc</p>	<p>Local Development Framework summary leaflet (2005). SCI posters (Pre-submission Consultation Draft)</p>
<p><b>Websites:</b> Publication of proposals / comment forms on a website enables easy access to documentation. Access for those with dial-up connection (not broadband) is a recognised issue that needs careful consideration. Associated e-mail facilities enable quick and easy response.</p>	<p>An early draft of the SCI has been available on the TDBC web site since mid April 2005, to which responses were invited.</p>
<p><b>Video box / Voice recorder:</b> Video box: A room is provided with a “settee” and video camera. A person is on hand to operate the video equipment. Provides an opportunity for individuals to “air” their views. A form of consultation that is often popular amongst youths and school children. For those not comfortable sitting in front of a camera, a voice recorder can be used as an alternative.</p>	<p>Used to assist community planning consultation within Wiveliscombe and Wellington.</p>
<p><b>Mobile Phones:</b> The Council has access to text voting equipment. which allows</p>	<p>Not previously used by TDBC, but technology available.</p>

Consultation Technique	Previous Local Example
consultation via mobile phone text messages and receive replies directly from a person's mobile phone. People are asked to vote either for or against an option or a limited number of options. Allows you to get the answer to one question.	
<b>Touch Pad Technology:</b> Similar to that used on TV game shows. An audience is provided with a touch pad and are then asked a series of questions, the answers to which are registered on a touch pad. Provides instant reaction and opinion to set questions. Very popular with the youth audience.	TDBC Budget Consultations, engagement of Taunton Deane Youth Action Group
<b>Questionnaires and Surveys:</b> Paper or electronic, used to get answers to specific questions, or to gauge opinion on a particular matter.	Pedestrian and retailer surveys were undertaken to inform the content of the Taunton Town Centre Vitality & Viability Study (2001).
<b>Public Meetings:</b> Historic and traditional form of local plan consultation. Meetings usually held in the evenings. Usually involves an officer / councillor fielding questions from an audience. No longer considered to be a representative form of consultation, but may still be of value as part of a suite of consultation techniques.	Undertaken extensively throughout the development of the Taunton Deane Local Plan (e.g. meetings at Norton Fitzwarren Village Club, Monkton Heathfield Primary School, Courtfield School etc.
<b>Public Exhibitions (static or travelling):</b> Exhibition material is presented on display boards. The material is designed so as to explain a subject matter and prompt questions. Usually staffed (but not always necessary) by relevant officers or councillors. Can be static (in one location) or travelling, moving from one site to another. Often located at local libraries, village halls, leisure centres and other public places.	Exhibitions (static / travelling) were used to assist consultation on the Wellington Community Plan and the Taunton Vision.
<b>Surgeries:</b> Enables "one to one" meetings between residents / groups and officers / councillors etc.	A "bus users surgery" was held in Taunton town centre during March 2005, providing the opportunity for the travelling public to meet the bus operators and those funding local services.
<b>Web forums:</b> An on-line discussion that enables individuals to post questions on a web site that are then responded to by a relevant individual. The questions and answers remain open to public view throughout the consultation period.	Not previously used by TDBC.
<b>Meetings with existing groups, e.g. Parish &amp; Town Councils, Neighbourhood Forums &amp; Resident's Panels etc</b> Enables the local authority to discuss issues directly with relevant local groups.	Parish council workshop sessions were used extensively during 1997 to assist with identifying local issues and priorities for consideration within the development of the Taunton Deane Local Plan. Recent TDBC Housing Stock Options appraisal process has sought regular engagement with relevant

<b>Consultation Technique</b>	<b>Previous Local Example</b>
	neighbourhood and tenant forums.
<b>Workshops / Stakeholder Meetings:</b> Allows key stakeholders and community groups to engage together at an early stage of the process. Should be considered as forming part of a continuing process of community involvement.	Stakeholder meetings were used regularly to assist with the preparation of the Taunton Vision and the Urban Design Framework.
<b>Focus Groups / Consultation Groups:</b> Made up of local people and key community stakeholders to allow interactive discussion on planning issues.	Somerset Influence is a consultation group that is used extensively to assist with the development of the Somerset Vision.
<b>Planning Days:</b> A way of involving communities in developing ideas. Uses a 3D model of the area (or plans if models too expensive), people attach ideas or comments using flags or objects.	None yet undertaken within Taunton Deane.
<b>Enquiry By Design:</b> An intensive urban or rural design exercise that is facilitated by design experts, usually in the format of a series of workshops that involve relevant stakeholders. An exercise that requires a good degree of technical input and can take place over a several days.	None yet undertaken within Taunton Deane.
<b>Planning Aid:</b> Planning Aid is an organisation that exists mainly to help individuals or communities to participate in the planning process. They can provide the link between a community and the local authority. More details is provided on page 4.39.	Not yet used within Taunton Deane.

#### Planning Control

<b>Consultation Technique</b>
<b>Public Meetings</b> – explained above
<b>Public Exhibition</b> – explained above
<b>Surgeries</b> – explained above
<b>Development Briefs:</b> Applicant prepares a development brief that identifies the key objectives and constraints of a particular site, and how these shape the proposed development. A draft document is then subject to consultation via a range of appropriate methods, including workshops and exhibition.
<b>Workshop / Stakeholder Meetings</b> – explained above.
<b>Enquiry By Design / Planning Days</b> – explained above.
<b>Consultation Panel:</b> Made up of local residents, Parish / Town Councils, local schools and the local authority and can be used to discuss key issues emerging from major development proposals.
<b>Parish &amp; Town Councils:</b> A fundamental tier of Local Government and are democratically elected, very accountable to electors, cost effective and offer a continuity of representation at grass roots level. They are able to influence a wide range of services.
<b>Media (Local Community Publicity):</b> The use of local newspapers (particularly community

papers) and radio to carry articles and stories about proposed development would have the benefit of reaching and engaging the wider community. Articles could include plans, photos and text explaining the proposal.

**Website** – explained above.

## **Appendix 8**

### **Local Development Framework Consultation Database**

The LDF database will be developed to enable easy access to contact information for the groups listed below. To aid consultation, the listed groups may be invited to form themed or area specific sub groups, in connection with specific areas of policy development (refer to chapter 4).

#### **1. Community Groups / Representatives**

- All TDBC members / SCC Members representing TDBC / Local MP
- Parish & Town Councils
- Taunton Deane Local Strategic Partnership
- Area Based Partnerships & Parish Planning Groups
- Somerset Strategic Partnership
- Community Groups / Residents Associations / local Voluntary Sector and charitable organisations, to also include:
  - Ethnic Minority Groups
  - Local Disability Groups
  - Older Persons Groups
  - Religious Groups
  - Youth Groups, Schools and Colleges

#### **2. Other Local, Regional and National Stakeholders**

- Countryside / Conservation
- Economic Development / Business (including Tourism)
- Health Care
- Housing
- Leisure and Recreation
- Planning
- Regeneration
- Rural
- Transport
- Utilities

#### **3. Local Residents who have asked to be kept informed**

#### **4. Planning and other consultancies, agents, developers, landowners etc**

## Appendix 9

### Planning Control - Neighbour Notifications

The advice below is issued to TDBC Planning Control Officers:

The Government and the Borough Council place a great deal of importance on publicity for planning applications so that the community and those potentially affected may comment.

Government Regulations require that the Local Planning Authority notifies every property which has a boundary abutting the property to which the application relates. Alternatively a site notice may be displayed where there is uncertainty over the ownership or occupation of abutting property. In many case it will be preferable to notify abutting properties and display a site notice so that the wider community is informed.

The minimum legal requirement is to display a site notice.

#### **BEST PRACTICE**

- Always issue a neighbour notification if the abutting property(ies) can be identified.
- Where there is uncertainty display site notice, but still notify those properties which abut the site.
- Always display a site notice where the owner/occupier of abutting property is unknown, including farmland.
- If other properties are likely to be affected by a planning proposal (e.g. across the street or further down the road) then notify them also.
- Make sure that the site notice is posted where people can easily see it.
- Make sure that the notice is displayed for at least 21 days.
- Don't make a special journey to remove site notices but take them down the next time you are in the area.

## Appendix 10

### Useful Contacts

Taunton Deane Community Strategy: Alison Templeton (TDBC/Policy & Performance Unit), tel 01823 356568 or e-mail [a.templeton@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:a.templeton@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Area Based Community Strategies/Parish Plans: Hattie Winter (TDBC/Economic Development Unit), tel 01823 356485, or e-mail [h.winter@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:h.winter@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Parish Plans & Village Appraisals: Andrew Freeman (Community Council for Rural Somerset) tel 01823 331222 or e-mail [Andrew@somersetccc.org.uk](mailto:Andrew@somersetccc.org.uk)

Taunton Vision: Ralph Willoughby Foster (TDBC/Forward Plan Unit), tel 01823 356480, or e-mail [r.willoughby-foster@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:r.willoughby-foster@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

LDF related consultation: Mark Leeman (TDBC/Forward Plan Unit), tel 01823 356484, or e-mail [m.leeman@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:m.leeman@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Planning application related consultation: Tim Burton (TDBC/Planning Control Unit) tel 01823 356464, or e-mail [t.burton@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:t.burton@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

TDBC Equalities Coordinator: Harry Connery, tel 01823 356553, or e-mail [h.cannery@tauntondeane.gov.uk](mailto:h.cannery@tauntondeane.gov.uk)

Somerset Association of Local Councils: Victoria House, Victoria Street, Taunton, TA1 3JZ. Tel 01823 252515

Planning Aid: Please visit [www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk)

## Appendix 11

### List Of Amendments To The SCI

The public response to the first draft SCI resulted in the following changes being introduced to this second draft document:

#### General

- Reduced use of acronyms / introduction of plain English
- Inclusion of a Member Foreword
- Use of consistent terminology (consult / engage)
- Cost of LDF documents to local residents reduced
- Introduce advice on the role of parish councils within the parish plan process (section 3)

#### The Council's Vision For Community Involvement (page i)

- 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph, 2<sup>nd</sup> sentence add “and working with parish and town councils”
- “the development industry” added to the definition of community

#### Chapter 1: Introduction

- More detailed explanation of the Examination process and the role of Inspectors

#### Chapter 2: The Local Development Framework

- Appropriate references to the Regional Planning Body / Regional Spatial Strategy have been included
- The reference to the TDLP states that the Local Development Scheme describes the process for replacing TDLP policies within the LDF

#### Chapter 3: Linking The LDF TO The Taunton Deane Community Strategy

- Examples given of the various strategies incorporated within the Community Strategy
- Parish council representation on SPWG to be sought by inviting SALC to be a member of SPWG
- Commitment to publishing SPWG agendas and minutes
- Consideration of various regional strategies now included within the strategy audit process
- The prioritisation of community planning actions now considered within the development of the Spatial Report

#### Chapter 4: LDF – Who Can Get Involved And How?

- Somerset Association of Local Councils (SALC) now referenced as a body that can advise on consulting underrepresented groups / possible provision of facilitators
- Comprehensive review of Capacity Building programme introduced
- Additional consultation methods included
- Commitment introduced to presenting all consultations within the appropriate policy context
- Groups / groupings linked to specific consultation methods
- Tables 2 to 4 amended to refer to the titles of the various LDF documents
- Commitment introduced to making consultation material available in a variety of formats
- Commitment introduced to pursuing TDBC membership of Planning Aid Concordat
- Further advice introduced on the opportunities for joint LDF and Community Strategy consultations
- Additional advice introduced on consultations to develop action plans for North Taunton and Taunton East and how these relate to LDF consultations
- Advice given on SPD preparation in relation to “master document” preparation

- Commitment given to explaining areas where we disagree with comments received

#### Chapter 5: Planning Control

- Reference made to a checklist of information that should accompany applications for non-householder development
- Additional detail provided on the range of information (representations / consultation responses) that will soon be available via the TDBC website
- Tiers 1 and 2 now merged to add simplicity and to assist with concerns over definition
- Some definitions of “local significance” and “sensitive sites” now introduced

#### Appendix 2: Community Strategies Within Taunton Deane

- Explanation provided of the various strategies incorporated within the Community Strategy

#### Appendix 7: Consultation Techniques

- Additional consultation techniques introduced, with explanation

#### Appendix 8: LDF Consultation Database

- Minor amendments introduced to the LDF database structure

## Glossary

Abbreviation	Title	Function
No abbreviation	Community Strategy	A forward-looking document that identifies a local community's vision and aspirations, including key issues that require action. Incorporates and coordinates the strategies of a range of organisations that have direct influence on the local community, including the police, health authority, voluntary sector and local authorities. Developed through extensive community consultation.
CPWG	Community Planning Working Group	TDBC officer group that (amongst other things) considers linkages between the LDF and the community strategy
DPD	Development Plan Document	An LDF document that contains planning policies.
FPU	Forward Plan Unit	Office within TDBC responsible for preparing the LDF
LDD	Local Development Document	Generic title for documents containing planning policy content (i.e. refers to both DPD and SPD).
LDF	Local Development Framework	Folder containing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• documents that comprise the planning policy coverage for the local authority area</li> <li>• documents that explain the process of preparing the planning policies.</li> </ul> Incorporates LDS/SCI/LDD/DPD/SPD
LDS	Local Development Scheme	The timetable for LDF document production
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	Body responsible for guiding the preparation and delivery of the Community Strategy. Consists of representation from key public, and voluntary services, and those representing business concerns.
SCI	Statement Of Community Involvement	An LDF document that details how consultation will occur for the both the preparation of the LDF and the consideration of planning applications.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document	An LDF document that provides detailed guidance in support of a particular DPD or a specific policy within a DPD.
SPWG	Spatial Planning Working Group	A sub group of the LSP that considers all LDF documents and linkages to the community strategy
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	Government Department responsible for preparing national planning policy strategies and advice
TCAAP	Town Centre Area Action Plan	An LDF document relating to Taunton Town Centre, to be prepared over 2005 and 2006
TDBC	Taunton Deane Borough Council	Local Planning Authority, responsible for preparing the LDF and considering planning applications
TDLP	Taunton Deane Local Plan	Document that contains the statutory planning policies for Taunton Deane, adopted Nov' 04

