

Spelthorne Borough Council

Statement of Community Involvement



Adopted October 2006

Spelthorne Borough Council
Statement of Community Involvement

October 2006

Planning Services
Strategic Directorate (Community)
Borough of Spelthorne
Council Offices
Knowle Green
Staines
Middlesex
TW18 1XB
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1. What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.1 The role of the planning system has always been to try and make where we live as pleasant a place as possible.
- 1.2 The best way of making this happen is to involve you, the 'community of Spelthorne' in deciding how your local community is planned. To involve you in planning we want to communicate with you in a way which you find helpful and convenient and at a time when your views can make a real difference in the decisions we make on your behalf.
- 1.3 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) explains –
 - a) How and when you and other interested parties can get involved in 'Development Plan' making for Spelthorne (explained in sections 2 to 7 of this document) and,
 - b) How you can find out about planning applications and make your views known on them (explained in section 8 of this document).
- 1.4 The SCI was adopted by the Council on 19 October 2006.

2. Involving you in a new plan for Spelthorne

A new plan for Spelthorne

- 2.1 The government made a number of changes to the planning system in 2004 (Appendix 1). As a result we are currently working on a new type of 'Development Plan' for Spelthorne. Instead of a single document the new plan will consist of a number of documents, together called the 'Local Development Framework' or LDF. We will be consulting you in preparing these documents and the table below lists the documents that will form Spelthorne's first ever LDF.

Table 1: Spelthorne's Local Development Framework – A folder of documents

	Type of document	What it does
	Local Development Scheme (LDS)	Sets out the timetable for the new plan. (Public document but not subject to consultation as it does not contain any planning policy)
Local Development Documents (LDDs)	Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Sets how we will involve you in preparing the new plan and consult you on planning applications.
	Development Plan Documents* (DPDs) – These are the key documents used in making decisions on planning applications. These DPDs form the statutory development plan together with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which in Spelthorne's case will be the South East Plan.	Strategy and Policies DPD – will set out the ' core strategy ' with vision and objectives for the area. It will also include all development policies
		Proposals DPD – will set out all site specific proposals (including proposed housing sites)
		Proposals Map – will show the policies and proposals on a map of Spelthorne.
	Supplementary Planning Documents* (SPDs)	Expands on policies already set out in DPDs. Unlike DPDs these are not subject to independent examination by a planning inspector. These are also important in assessing planning applications.
	Annual Monitoring report (AMR)	A document produced annually which will set out progress of plan making and implementing policies (Public document but not subject to consultation as it is a record of facts)

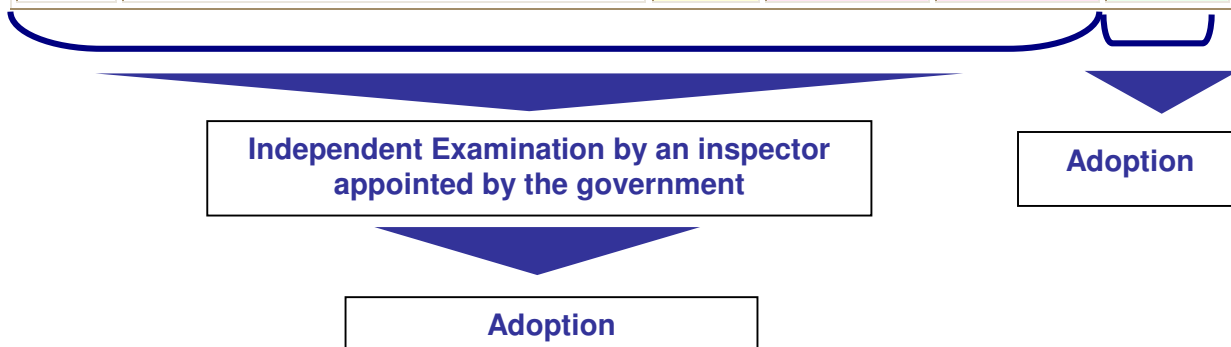
*These documents will be subject to a '**Sustainability Appraisal**' (SA). This means checking how well the policies and proposals set out in DPDs and SPDs do in environmental, social and economic terms.

3. When will you be involved in plan making?

- 3.1 A key element of the new planning system is to involve you at an early stage when your views can make a real difference in shaping the plan. To make sure that this happens there is opportunity for everyone to be involved before any documents are written and further opportunities at each stage of their preparation.
- 3.2 Plans must take account of local needs and circumstances but at the same time be consistent with national government guidance. A benefit of involving you early in the process is to find local needs and requirements and identify realistic options in line with national guidance.
- 3.3 The table below explains when you can be involved in the preparation of the various documents that have already been explained in Table 1. Appendix 4 sets out the timetable for key stages of involvement in Spelthorne's first LDF.

Table 2: When you will be involved in the preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs)

Key stages of Involvement		Type of Local Development Document			
		SCI	Strategy and Policies DPD*	Proposals DPD	SPDs
Pre-production	1. Initial Consultation to understand people's view before preparing any document	✓	✓	✓	✓
	2. Consultation on Issues and Options for the plan	NA	✓	✓	NA
Production	3. Public Participation on Preferred Options & Proposals for DPDs, Draft SPDs, Formal SA Reports and Draft SCI	✓	✓	✓	✓
	4. Representations on submitted documents	✓	✓	✓	NA



Note: The key stages of consultation indicated in the table above are as set out in government guidance. Tick in boxes means consultation at this stage.

- 3.4 **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** will be carried out for DPDs and SPDs at stages 2 and 3 in Table 2. A formal Sustainability Appraisal report will be produced at stage 3 which will be subject to consultation in parallel with the document that was appraised. A final Sustainability Appraisal report accompanies each DPD produced at stage 4 and is submitted for independent examination along with the DPD it appraised. Representations can be made on the DPD and final SA report at stage 4.
- 3.5 We are also required to produce a 'Scoping Report' as part of the Sustainability Appraisal. This sets out how the appraisal will be carried out. Consultation will take place with members of the 'specific consultation group' as set out in government guidance and other consultation groups (as detailed in section 5 of this document) in the preparation of the Scoping Report and the Final SA report. Information on the findings of the SA will be publicised and made available through the methods specified in section 4 of this document.

4. The ways we will involve you

- 4.1 In October/November 2004 we asked you how you would like to be consulted on the emerging “Spelthorne Development Plan” and on “Major Planning Applications”. This was the first stage of consultation in preparing this document. We asked this in a variety of different ways including all those listed in Table 3 under ‘Initial Consultation’. In response to this we received some 140 replies. When asked “How would you like to be consulted on the emerging Development Plan?” your response was as follows -
1. Letter (53.2%)
 2. E-mail (31.4%)
 3. Borough Bulletin (9.6%)
 4. Local Meetings (4.4%)
 5. Council’s Website (1.2%)
- 4.2 You also suggested using the local newspaper and telephone as other modes of contact. Full results of this initial consultation are presented at Appendix 2.
- 4.3 In addition staff in the Council’s Policy and Performance section carried out research on what Spelthorne residents think generally about the Council’s current arrangements for communicating with them and how they would like to be consulted in the future. This research was carried out in December 2004 and more details are also available at Appendix 2.
- 4.4 The results of these two pieces of work form the basis of suitable methods of consultation suggested in this document. Government regulations set out the minimum requirements we must meet on consultation. The level of consultation suggested in this document exceeds the minimum government requirements. Table 3 indicates the methods suggested at each stage of involvement in plan making. Appendix 2 further discusses the benefits and disadvantages of using the various methods suggested.
- 4.5 In the case of Area Forums and Borough Bulletin, except where a special Bulletin is produced for the LDF, the timing of meetings and publications may not coincide or fall within consultation period. Therefore these methods will be used for feedback and general updates on consultations.
- 4.6 In addition to the methods listed in Table 3 we will also consider
1. **One-to-one meetings** – on request when it would help address an issue in plan making (this can also include meetings with community groups).
 2. **Press Release** – a useful supplement to highlight the start of the consultation process
 3. **Notice Boards** – there are 25 public notice boards in Spelthorne. We will make use of these to provide people with updates and information at various stages of plan making.
- 4.7 We will always have a **named contact** with telephone number on any consultation material. We are also continuously looking to take advantage of any improvements in technology to further improve the way we communicate with you for example via the internet.
- 4.8 We want to ensure as wide a readership as possible for our documents and we will make special efforts to write all the LDF documents in simple, clear English. The documents will be made available on request in large print, Braille or audio. We can also provide help with a translation service.

Table 3: The ways we will involve you in various plan-making documents

Key Stages of involvement and on-going engagement	Council Website	Letter or email to everyone on contacts list as appropriate ^x	Letter to people with an interest in specific sites*	Article in Borough Bulletin	Notice in Local Newspaper	Documents made available at Council Offices	Documents made available at other locations like Libraries and Day Centres	Meetings with special groups like LSP etc as appropriate	Presentations to Area Forums as appropriate
Initial Consultation ⁺ SCI, Strategy and Policies DPD, Proposals DPD	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	✓
Issues and Options Consultation - Strategy and Policies DPD, Proposals DPD (includes a 6 week consultation)	✓	✓	Only for Proposals DPD	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓
Preferred Options & Proposals – draft SCI, Strategy and Policies DPD, Proposals DPD, Formal SA Reports, draft SPDs (6 week consultation)	✓	✓	Only for Proposals DPD	Only Strategy and Policies DPD and Proposals DPD	✓	✓	✓	Only Strategy and Policies DPD, Proposals DPD and Draft SPDs	-
Representations on submitted documents - SCI, Strategy and Policies DPD, Proposals DPD (6 week consultation)	✓	✓	Only for Proposals DPD	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-

^x Includes all groups and organisations which regulations require the Council to consult (known as Specific and General consultation bodies)

* People with an interest in specific sites are considered to be owners/occupiers of proposed sites and owners/occupiers of adjoining properties. In certain cases people from a wider area may be affected by a proposal depending on the scale and nature of the proposal. The extent of consultation in such cases will be of a similar nature to planning applications of the same level. Consultation arrangements on planning applications are set out in section 8 of this document.

+ In case of Supplementary Planning Documents at the Initial Consultation stage we will write letters to people with an interest in that specific SPD.

5. Who will be involved and how?

- 5.1 Our aim is to enable every resident of Spelthorne and others who are likely to be interested in Spelthorne's Development Plan to be involved in the preparation of the plan. We recognise that both individuals and groups may prefer to be involved in different ways. To reach as many people as possible we have identified several different groups of people. **Table 4** sets out the methods we think would be most suitable to reach each of these groups.

Consultation Groups

1. **Specific Consultation Group** – Clearly specified in government guidance. Includes all adjoining local authorities, utility providers e.g. gas, electricity companies etc., regional and central government offices etc. (a full list is provided at Appendix 3)
 2. **Residents of Spelthorne** including individuals on our contacts list
 3. Groups representing interests of **the Community**
 - i. Amenity Societies
 - ii. Educational Organisations
 - iii. Groups representing interests of elderly
 - iv. Groups representing interests of people with disabilities
 - v. Groups representing interests of women
 - vi. Health/Social Care
 - vii. Local businesses and business organisations
 - viii. Race/Ethnic Groups (national)
 - ix. Religious Groups
 - x. Resident's Associations
 - xi. Sports/Leisure
 - xii. Youth Council
 4. **Other groups** with a direct interest in planning issues
 - i. Developers, Planning agents and others interested in development sites within Spelthorne
 - ii. Environmental groups
 - iii. Housing Associations/Organisations
 - iv. National organisations like – CABI, English Partnerships, transport groups etc
 - v. Infrastructure providers e.g. National Grid
 - vi. Other local authorities
 5. **Voluntary and Charity Groups**
 6. **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** – Known locally as Local Spelthorne Partnership. A list of representatives on the LSP is presented at Appendix 3
 7. **People with an interest in specific sites** - Owners/Occupiers of proposed sites and owners/occupiers of adjoining properties. In certain cases people from a wider area may be affected by a proposal depending on the scale and nature of the proposal. The extent of consultation in such cases will be of a similar nature to planning applications of the same level. Consultation arrangements on planning applications are set out in section 8 of this document.
- 5.2 We have a contacts list which has the names and addresses of representatives from each of the consultation groups. A "long list" of the types of groups on our contacts list and how it was developed is presented at Appendix 3.

6. How will you know if your comments have made a difference?

- 6.1 Representations made following a consultation will be carefully considered and a summary of key issues raised in the representations along with the Council's response will be published. The Executive Committee makes final decisions on the Council's response. Members of the public are welcome to attend the Council's Executive Committee meetings and listen to the elected councillors who represent their interests. These summaries will be available both as printed documents and also through our website. The printed documents will be available at our offices and documents published following 'Issues and Options' consultation stage (Table 3) will also be placed in public libraries. In addition we will write to everyone on our contacts list to let them know that a feedback report has been published and how they can view a copy.
- 6.2 Our Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the detailed programme for plan making. The LDS should be referred to, for a general indication of the time scale in which we will consider responses to a LDF consultation.

7. Link with other strategies

Corporate Policy

- 7.1 The Council has adopted a number of policy guidelines and corporate standards to ensure that all community engagement exercises are undertaken to a consistently high standard. The corporate policies for consultation are as follows –
- Carrying out full and open consultation with all sections of the community
 - Using methods of consultation that are appropriate to the issue under consideration and the section of the community being consulted
 - Carrying out research in a way that meets appropriate industry guidelines and codes of practice
 - Reporting back the results of any research to those consulted and to the wider community as a whole
 - Making full use of engagement exercises to inform the decisions made by the Council.
- 7.2 The Council has also produced a ‘Consultation Toolkit’ which provides practical tips for staff on how to meet the above policies.
- 7.3 This SCI follows the Council’s overall approach on consultation.
- 7.4 Where appropriate consultation on plan making may be combined with other Council consultations such as the Community Strategy to ensure resources are used effectively.

Community Strategy

- 7.5 The Local Spelthorne Partnership (LSP) produced Spelthorne’s Community Plan which was adopted by the Council in July 2005. The Community Plan identifies six key priorities for Spelthorne. The Development Plan will play a key role in delivering some of the priorities of the Community Plan. The LSP is kept informed on a regular basis about the progress in preparing the Development Plan.

Joined up approach within the LDF process

- 7.6 The timetable of producing the ‘Strategy and Policies DPD’ and the ‘Proposals DPD’ together in the LDF process enables us to link consultations on the two documents together. This results in a more effective use of resources and contributes towards reducing ‘over-consulting’.

8. Involving you in Planning Applications

- 8.1 The following pages explain how we propose to consult on planning applications and how you can have the opportunity to have your say on them.

Key stages of involvement on Planning Applications

- 8.2 There are a number of opportunities for you to be involved in the planning application process. These are - pre-application, application, decision and post decision stages. Government legislation sets out minimum requirements of consulting with local residents that we must meet on receipt of an application. However there are no formal requirements we must meet on pre-application consultations.
- 8.3 We receive over a 1000 planning applications a year and some of them generate greater interest as compared to others. These applications are described below.

Applications that may create greater public interest

- 8.4 These include applications related to –
1. Conservation Areas
 2. Listed buildings
 3. Applications which are out of line with policies in the Local Plan or LDF
 4. Major applications – these include;
 - In the provision of dwellings where -
 - (i) The number of dwellings to be provided is 10 or more; or
 - (ii) The development is to be carried out on a site having an area of 0.5 hectare or more.
 - The provision of a building or buildings where
 - (i) The floor space to be created by the development is 1,000 square metres or more; or
 - (ii) Development carried out on a site having an area of 1 hectare or more;
 5. Applications for particularly large-scale developments
 - These include –
 - (i) Applications which require an Environmental Statement. (Environmental Statements are prepared by the applicant and contain detailed information about the likely main environmental effects of the proposal. This helps to ensure that the importance of the predicted effects, and the scope for reducing them, are properly understood by the public and the Council before any decision is made)
 - (ii) Large-scale developments which could potentially create wide-spread interest.
 6. Other applications not included above but which could create wide spread concern because of their scale, design, location, impact of the development on natural/built/historic environment or any other factors. In such applications we may consult a wider area but we may not use mandatory site notices and statutory notice in local newspaper as the means of publicity.

Consultation Methods

- 8.5 As part of our 'Initial Consultation' in October/November 2004 we asked you – “how you would like to be consulted on major planning applications”. We received 115 responses back to this question and your choices in order of your preference are –
1. Letter (77.5%)
 2. Notice in local newspaper (6.6%)
 3. E-mails (5.8%)
 4. Information on Council's website (4.1%)
 5. Local meetings (4.1%)
 6. Site Notice (1.6%)
- 8.6 We currently use all the methods above as set out in **Tables 5a and 5b** and our consultation arrangements on planning applications are over and above the minimum government requirements. At the time of the above consultation we could not notify people by e-mails as we had no way of finding out e-mail addresses of everyone affected by a planning application. Since then we have launched '**PublicAccess**' on our website. PublicAccess is a tool which makes live information on planning applications available on our website. It allows users to comment on current planning application electronically. Users who comment through Public Access can fill in an optional field to provide us with their email address for future contact.
- 8.7 As further commitment to make planning available on the web we have all submitted plans and supporting documents available for planning applications made since December 2005. This forms part of an improved '*PublicAccess*' system.
- 8.8 In addition to the consultation arrangements shown in Tables 5a and 5b the Council publishes the contact details of all its Councillors on its website and at its offices so people can find out how to contact their local Ward Councillor to discuss planning issues.
- 8.9 We also have a planning officer available to answer people's concerns on any planning application during working hours. Further 'one to one meetings can be arranged if the officer dealing with the application agrees on the phone or by email that it would be beneficial to do so.
- 8.10 The results of any such consultation will be reported and taken into account in decisions made by, and on behalf of, the Council.

Involvement at Pre-application stage

- 8.11 As good practice we want to encourage applicants to engage in pre-application discussions and consultations with the public. Although we cannot make applicants take these initiatives there would be benefits to all parties involved – the applicant, you and us.
- 8.12 At the pre-application stage we propose to encourage applicants to engage in the following-

Pre-application discussions – these would involve discussions between the applicant and the Council before any application is submitted. The objective would be to confirm whether the principle of development is acceptable and to clarify the format, type and level of detail required by the Council to determine the application. Some of the benefits of doing this are better quality applications, resolving problems

before an application is put in and savings in time and resources of both the applicant and Council as this can minimise the need to revise plans at a later stage.

Pre-application consultations – we will encourage applicants to undertake early community involvement with people likely to be affected by their proposals. We would like applicants to agree with the Council beforehand how they propose to consult key groups. Likely means of doing this where applications may cause significant public interest are by sending letters, organising meetings, workshops, exhibitions etc. By doing this, the applicant would be able to get local opinion before putting in the application to the Council. This should help reduce areas of public concern when the application is submitted and also result in savings in time and resources of both the applicant and the Council.

Some recent examples of good practice

Kempton Park, Sunbury

The consultants working on a planning application on behalf of Kempton Park to develop a new all weather race track with associated floodlighting, had meetings with resident's association before submitting the planning application. They explained the proposals at this meeting and then took the resident's views on board. This effort was commended when the application was considered by the Council's Planning Committee.

Redevelopment of Shepperton Studios

Following discussions with planning officers the applicants arranged an exhibition at Shepperton Studios and invited local residents. All the plans were displayed and refreshments provided. The applicant's Planning Consultants were present at the venue to answer any questions. When the Council sent adjoining owners/occupiers letters notifying them of a planning application that would affect them, they were already aware of the proposed development.

Table 5a: The Council’s Consultation and publicity arrangements at different stages of planning applications

	Type of application	Type of Consultation
Pre-application	All applications	Encourage applicants to discuss their proposals with adjoining owners or occupiers.
	Applications that may create greater public interest	In cases where applications may cause significant public interest, we encourage developers to undertake early community consultation by writing letters to or organising meetings with those affected (although we cannot make them to do so). In the case of particularly large scale developments exhibitions/workshops may be the more suitable methods of consultation.
Application	All applications	Write to adjoining owners or occupiers
		Weekly list of applications publicised in local newspaper and on our website
		Website – PublicAccess on our website allows internet users to view progress of every planning application made to us and send their comments on-line on current applications.
		Plans and applications are available to view at Council Offices
Applications that may create greater public interest or where additional consultation is required by regulations (in addition to the above)	Site Notice – these are sent to owners to display on a voluntary basis. We encourage owners to display them but cannot make it a requirement.	
	Statutory Notice in local newspaper	
	Site Notice – Mandatory to display site notice and it is the Council’s responsibility to put it in place.	
	For major applications – a wider area is consulted which depends on the scale and nature of the application.	
		In addition to the above, in the case of particularly large-scale developments - plans and environmental statements are made available on our website and Council Offices.

Note: Please see paragraph 8.4 for an explanation of applications that may create greater public interest.

Table 5b: The Council’s Consultation and publicity arrangements at different stages of planning applications

	Type of application	Type of Consultation
Decision	All applications	Committee Reports – contain the recommendation written by a planning officer which is considered by the planning committee. They set out a summary of all comments received on the planning application. The reports are available a week before the date of the planning committee to view on our website or at our offices.
		Public Speaking – We write back to people who have sent representations to let them know when an application is going to committee. This gives them a chance to make a request to speak at committee for or against the application. One person can speak in support and one against the application at planning committee. This is decided on a ‘first come first serve’ basis. We have an adopted policy on public speaking which is available on our website.
		Delegated Report – In addition to decisions made by planning committee, small-scale proposals can be delegated to a senior planning officer for decision. The case officer writes the report and these reports are available to view at Council Offices.
Post Decision	All applications	Minutes of Committee meetings and Committee reports are available on our website and at Council Offices
		Website - planning decisions on all applications are available through ‘PublicAccess’.
		We write to applicants and objectors to inform them about the decision

8.13 In addition to the above consultation arrangements, depending on the scale and location of the planning application, the Council is required to consult ‘statutory consultees’* like the Environment Agency, English Heritage etc. We will also encourage applicants and developers to consult ‘statutory consultees’ at pre-application stage.

Consultation on amended plans

8.14 When plans are amended and the scale of development is increased or there are significant changes in the design we re-consult people who are affected by the application. However we generally do not re-consult if amended plans reduce the scale of development.

* In accordance with the General Development Procedure Order 1995 (as amended), The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and other government guidance.

Other special services we provide for consultation

- 8.15 Where someone has a genuine difficulty in coming to the Council Offices to view the application e.g. because they are disabled or elderly, special arrangements will be made for them to be able to see the application.

What is the period of consultation?

- 8.16 It is 21 days for all types of applications and 14 days for amended plans. However provided a representation is received before the decision is made, it is normally still taken into account. In addition bodies such as English Nature will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation.

Appeals

- 8.17 Applicants can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate against the Council's decision on an application. If that happens we copy all the representations we received on that application and send them to the Planning Inspector. We also write to the people who sent the representations and explain the appeal process to them, including how they can comment on the appeal.

9. Resources to manage community involvement

In Plan making

- 9.1 The Planning Policy team will be responsible for undertaking the community involvement on the new development plan. The Planning Policy team also draws on the expertise of the Council's Communication section and Policy and Performance section in preparing material for consultation. We also have temporary staff who can be brought in at short notice as need arises.
- 9.2 The resources required in analysing information will vary depending on the number of responses received. The resource implications of the suggested consultation methods are an important consideration in the discussion on the range and types of methods to use – these are explained in more detail at Appendix 2. We have attempted to employ techniques that will be highly effective but at the same time which are within the constraints of existing resources.

In planning applications

- 9.3 Planning Officers dealing with an application will be involved in pre-application discussions with the applicants and will encourage developers to undertake pre-application consultations. The administration team within the development control section plays a key role in implementing consultation arrangements. We also operate a 'duty rota' system so that a planning officer is available during working hours to answer people's enquiries and concerns on planning applications.

10. Reviewing the SCI

10.1 In developing the SCI we hope to build agreement on suitable methods to effectively communicate with you. This should enable the adopted SCI to remain in place and work effectively for several years. However we will monitor the effectiveness of the proposed consultation methods. The indicators we will use are –

- The number of responses we receive by using different consultation methods – this will indicate which methods are more successful.
- If new ‘Hard to Reach’ group emerge as a result of change in demography of Spelthorne or because a groups is less well represented through the various consultation groups listed in the SCI (Appendix 3 has a brief discussion on ‘Hard to Reach’ groups).
- If any new ways of consulting people emerge which are not catered for in the SCI.

10.2 The results of monitoring these indicators will trigger a review of the SCI. The success and effectiveness of the SCI will also be reviewed through the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

Appendices

Appendix 1: The planning system

- 1.1 The government introduced a new planning system through the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Under the new system local authorities are required to produce Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) instead of the Local Plans. LDFs are made up of various documents. The new system is designed so that authorities can decide which combination of documents best suits their circumstances. The documents that would make up Spelthorne's LDF are explained in the main text of this document. This appendix further explains what is set out in national guidance and how it will be reflected in Spelthorne's LDF.
- 1.2 The following paragraphs explain the components of LDFs as set out in national guidance.

Local Development Documents (LDDs) – These include the following

1. **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)**
2. **Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** – These will be subject to independent examination and include
 - i) **Core Strategy** – setting out the spatial vision, spatial objectives and core policies for the development of the local authority area.
Spelthorne's 'Strategy and Policy DPD' will set out the Core Strategy.
 - ii) **Site Specific Allocations** of land
Spelthorne's 'Proposals DPD' will set out site specific allocations of land.
 - iii) **Area Action Plans** (where needed) – these should be used to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed.
Area action plans are not considered to be needed as part of Spelthorne's LDF.
 - iv) **Other Development Plan Documents** – These could include thematic documents for example, housing, employment and retail development.
Spelthorne's 'Strategy and Policy DPD' will set out policies on various themes.
 - v) **Proposals Map** – this will illustrate the geographical extent of policies.

These DPDs form the statutory development plan together with the relevant Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which in Spelthorne's case will be the South East Plan.

3. **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** – These are non-statutory documents approved by the Council following public consultation but not subject to independent examination. However, SPDs are a material consideration in decision-making on planning applications.

As part of the first LDF, Spelthorne will produce the following SPDs

- *Development Control Supplementary Planning Document*
- *Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document*

- *Elmsleigh Centre Western and Southern Extension Planning Brief*
- *Council Offices, Knowle Green Planning Brief*
- *Bridge Street Car Park Staines Planning Brief*

1.3 Important related documents, also part of the LDF include –

Local Development Scheme (LDS) – It is a public statement identifying the programme for preparing the LDF. Spelthorne's current LDS was effective from 15 March 2005.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) – will set out progress in producing LDDs and implementing policies. It will be published every autumn.

Appendix 2: Findings of surveys on consultation methods and Evaluation of consultation methods

2.1 This appendix includes –

- a) Relevant conclusions of research carried out by the Council's Policy and Performance section on community engagement.
- b) Findings of 'initial consultation' on preferences for involvement.
- c) An evaluation of various methods of involvement suggested in this document.

a) Research by the Council's Policy and Performance Section

Community Engagement Focus Groups

2.2 In November 2004 the Council commenced a Best Value Review of 'Community Engagement' to gain a better understanding of how successful residents thought the Council currently was at engagement and how they would like to be engaged in the future.

2.3 The Council commissioned consultants Conquest Research to carry out five two-hour focus group discussions with local residents. The groups were held in a variety of locations and segmented according to gender, socio-economic characteristics and age. The research also probed a range of other areas like people's awareness of Council's responsibility and issues that generate greater interest. Summarised below are the conclusions which refer to how residents like to be consulted –

- Residents supported the idea of engagement.
- In reality they were only interested in issues which affected their daily lives.
- Residents awareness of the Council's information sources is shown below –

Higher awareness		
	Borough Bulletin	Delivered to home
	Local Newspapers	
	Website	Can be accessed at home or work
	Exhibitions	Seen as they carry out daily life
Lower awareness	Road Shows	

- The importance of using language they could understand was stressed.
- Residents tend to expect information from the Council to come to them without any effort on their part.
- They expect information to come to them in the form of (not in any order of preference) –
 - Borough Bulletin
 - Local Paper
 - Website
 - Letter from the Council
- They stressed the importance of feedback on the results of a consultation exercise.

b) Findings of 'initial consultation' on preferences for involvement.

2.4 An 'initial consultation' on the Spelthorne Local Development Framework (LDF) was carried out between 4 October 2004 and 15 November 2004. Part of this included

getting views on consultation methods for the emerging LDF and major planning applications.

How did we consult?

Borough Bulletin

- 2.5 The September 2004 issue of the Borough Bulletin contained a 4-page insert entitled – ‘Spelthorne, a question of vision, have your say’. An excerpt of the relevant page relating to the SCI is presented at the end of this appendix.

The Council’s website – The Bulletin was made available on the Council’s website.

Direct mail

- 2.6 A letter and a copy of the four-page insert was sent to:

- All specific consultation bodies identified in Government planning guidance (Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12)) and in legislation (Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004).
- All general consultation bodies identified in Government guidance (PPS12) and in legislation (Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004).
- Other organisations or bodies representing the local community.
- Individuals or organisations that had previously requested information on the LDF

In total 918 letters were sent.

Presentations

- 2.7 In addition to the above the Council gave presentations on the LDF to the following groups:

- Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) (25 October 2004)
- The Student Council (20 September 2004)
- Spelthorne Committee for Access Now (SCAN) (22 September 2004)
- Spelthorne Chamber of Commerce (7 September 2004)

- 2.8 Information about the LDF was also distributed in the SCAN and Voluntary Action In Spelthorne (VAIS) newsletters and via e-mail to all members of the Spelthorne Chamber of Commerce.

- 2.9 As a result of the consultation 177 responses were received. Of these 177 responses, 140 have indicated their preferred methods of consultation on the LDF and 115 on major planning applications. People were asked to indicate in priority order the top two means of contact they preferred from a list of five methods plus an ‘other’ category in which they could state any other method. The responses we received as a result of this consultation are presented in the following tables.

Table A1: Preferences for involvement in LDF

Consultation Method	1 st Priority	1 st Priority (%)	2 nd Priority	2 nd Priority (%)	3 rd , 4 th and 5 th Priority
Letter	83	(53.2)	25	(27.4)	1 response as 3 rd priority
E-mail	49	(31.4)	31	(34.0)	
Borough Bulletin	15	(9.6)	14	(15.3)	3 responses as 3 rd priority
Council's website	2	(1.2)	5	(5.4)	2 responses as 4 th priority
Local meetings	7	(4.4)	16	(17.5)	2 responses as 5 th priority
Total	156		91		
Other	Local Paper: 1 response, Phone: 1 response				

Table A2: Preferences for involvement in major planning applications

Consultation Method	1 st Priority	1 st Priority (%)	2 nd Priority	2 nd Priority (%)	3 rd , 4 th and 5 th Priority
Letter	93	(77.5)	4	(5.2)	1 response as 3 rd priority
Notice in the local newspaper	8	(6.6)	19	(25.0)	2 responses as 3 rd priority
Information on the Council's website	5	(4.1)	21	(27.6)	
Site Notice	2	(1.6)	12	(15.7)	2 responses as 4 th priority
Local Meetings	5	(4.1)	17	(22.3)	1 response as 3 rd priority and 1 response as 5 th priority
Other: E-mail	7	(5.8)	3	(3.9)	
Total	120		76		
Other	E-mail – 10 responses (listed above), As existing – 1 response, Only when we contact you first – 1 response, Local Press – 1 response				

2.10 The findings of the two surveys above back the methods of involving people on LDF documents suggested in this document. An evaluation of the suggested methods is presented in the following pages.

c) Evaluation of Consultation Methods for the LDF

Council Website

Objective:	Give information in the form of consultation documents and feedback reports and invite comments back through on-line surveys.
Minimum government requirement?	At preferred options and submission documents stage (Regulations 17, 26 and 28) ¹ .
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Information can be gained by people at home. ✓ People can use it when it is convenient to them. ✓ Cost and resource effective. ✓ Wide reaching.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Excludes people who do not use the web.

Letter or email to everyone on contacts list as appropriate

Objective:	Give information in the form of consultation documents and feedback reports and invite comments back.
Minimum government requirement?	At issues and options, preferred options and submission documents stage (Regulations 17, 25, 26 and 28) ¹ . Regulations specify who should be consulted.
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is at the top of preferred consultation methods indicated in the surveys discussed above. ✓ Makes sure that regular and up to date information is received by interested people/stakeholders. ✓ Quick way of reaching a variety of individuals and organisations. ✓ Allows time for respondents to reflect on questions.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Can be costly and resource intensive.

Letter to people with interest in specific sites

Objective:	Give information in the form of consultation documents and feedback reports and invite comments back.
Minimum government requirement?	At issues and options, preferred options and submission documents stage (Regulations 17, 25, 26 and 28) ¹ . Regulations specify who should be consulted.
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Makes sure that people likely to affected by a proposal are kept informed right from the initial stages of consideration. ✓ Makes sure that people likely to affected by a proposal can voice their opinions.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Can be resource intensive.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, SI No. 2204

Article in Borough Bulletin

Objective:	Give information and invite comments back.
Minimum government requirement?	No
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Features fairly high in people's preferences of consultation methods and is a source of information people seem to be most aware of as indicated by focus groups above. ✓ Is circulated to every household and business in Spelthorne – circa 44,000 copies. Some copies are also placed in supermarkets. ✓ Has potential for regular updates.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Can be time-consuming to produce. ✗ Has a long lead time. ✗ Where timings of consultations do not coincide with publication dates, the Bulletin will be used to provide feedback and advance notice of the next stages of the plan making process.

Notice in Local Newspaper

Objective:	Give basic information on timing of consultations.
Minimum government requirement?	At preferred options and submission documents stage (Regulations 17, 26 and 28) ¹ .
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Is one of the sources of information people seem to be most aware of. ✓ Can reach a wide audience. ✓ Cost and resource effective.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ May not always be seen or read by target audience.

Documents made available at Council Offices

Objective:	Give information.
Minimum government requirement?	At preferred options and submission documents stage (Regulations 17, 26 and 28) ¹ .
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Low cost and resources. ✓ Available for people without web access.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Only suitable for those prepared to travel to the Council offices.

¹ Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, SI No. 2204

Documents made available at other locations like libraries and day centres

Objective:	Give information.
Minimum government requirement?	No
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Makes information available at convenient locations ✓ Low on cost and resources. ✓ Available for people without web access.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Only suitable for those who use libraries and day centres.

Meetings with special groups like LSP, Youth Council etc.

Objective:	Give information and invite comments back.
Minimum government requirement?	No
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allows direct contact between participants ✓ Can be used to target organisations the Council is keen to hear from either because they can provide useful information or represent groups that are otherwise hard to reach.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Can be resource intensive.

Presentations to Area Forums as appropriate

Objective:	Give information and invite comments back.
Minimum government requirement?	No
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allows direct contact between participants ✓ Can be used to seek committed involvement from local people ✓ Enables focus on specific issues of the area concerned. ✓ Low on cost and resources.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Attendees are self selected and may not represent the views of the whole community ✗ Forums are held every 6 months and dates are planned up to 18 months ahead. Therefore coinciding consultation with the dates may not always be possible (they can be used for feedback and advance notice of future consultations)

2.11 Additional methods which will be used when appropriate depending on stage of plan making and resource availability

One-to-one meetings – on request when it would help address an issue in plan making

Objective:	Resolve issues or provide explanation with group or individual.
Minimum government requirement?	No
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Enables focus on a specific issue or concerns of a particular group.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Resource intensive

Press Release – a useful supplement to highlight start of a consultation process

Objective:	Give information
Minimum government requirement?	No
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can reach a wide audience. ✓ Cost and resource effective. ✓ Can be used to highlight particular issues.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ May not always be read by target audience. ✗ Press may not use the story or all the information provided.

Council Notice Boards

Objective:	Give information
Minimum government requirement?	No
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Visible means of communication in the community.
Disadvantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✗ Needs to be regularly updated. ✗ Not a primary source of information for the community.

Excerpt from September 2004 Borough Bulletin

Bulletin



Your views on the Spelthorne Development Plan

Please use this form to let us know if you would like to be added to our contacts list; how you would like to be consulted and what you think the new plan should include.

1. Contact Details

Please include my name on your contact list

Name: _____

Organisation (as appropriate): _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

e-mail: _____

In the future I would prefer to be contacted by (please tick box):

letter e-mail

2. How do you want to be involved in the future?

Please indicate in priority order the top two means of contact you prefer and any other suggestions you may have. (1 for top priority and 2 for second priority).

Spelthorne Development Plan		Major Planning Applications	
	Letter		Letter
	E-mail		Notice in the local newspaper
	Borough Bulletin		Information on the Council's web site
	Council's web site		Site notice
	local meetings		local meetings
	Other _____		Other _____

Your views - I have the following suggestions about the issues I would like the new Spelthorne Development Plan to consider (if necessary please continue on a separate piece of paper):

Please return this form to:

Sarah Oliver, Planning Policy Section, Spelthorne Borough Council, Council Offices, Knowle Green, Staines TW18 1XB by 15 November 2004.

You can also respond online by going to: www.spelthorne.gov.uk/bulletin



Appendix 3: Details of stakeholder groups

- 3.1 Spelthorne is geographically a relatively compact administrative area with a population of around 90,000. There is generally a fairly balanced social mix across much of the Borough.
- 3.2 There are a large number of community and amenity groups in the Borough and some 700 of these are affiliated to an organisation supported by the Council called Voluntary Action in Spelthorne (VAIS). Their offices are based within the Council offices. There are long established links with a large number of groups and the Council's approach to community engagement both corporately and in relation to planning reflects feed back from these groups and means of engagement which have operated over a number of years.
- 3.3 This appendix explains in more detail who the Council will seek to engage with and in particular –
- a) An explanation of how we have identified the stakeholders on our contacts list and,
 - b) A 'long list' of the types of groups on our 'contacts list' who we propose to involve in the LDF preparation process.

a) Identification of stakeholders on our contacts list

- 3.4 Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, SI No. 2204 set out those bodies authorities must consult with on LDF documents. Planning Policy Statement 12 (PPS12) on LDFs also sets out a wider list of bodies authorities should consider consulting. This formed the starting point of our 'contacts list'. We have identified other lists of relevant groups and organisations. The sources we have used to identify other groups or organisations on our contacts list are –
- i) The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) contacts list.
 - ii) Voluntary Action in Spelthorne (VAIS) contacts list - A Partnership Compact was made between Spelthorne and the Voluntary and Community sector in 2003. VAIS is the main communication link and means of developing closer working relationships with voluntary/community groups who cover Spelthorne.
 - iii) Contacts used by Council departments like – organisations who are sent the weekly publicity schedule by development control, addresses of those applicants whose planning proposals are pending appeal decisions and the Council's Leisure directory.
 - iv) Business Forum address list.
 - v) As part of the initial consultation in September 2004 we asked people to join our contacts list. Those who indicated that they wished to be on our contacts list have been added. We also get general enquiries on the progress of the LDF by phone or email and we offer people to join our contacts list to receive regular updates.
- 3.5 The above sources of identifying stakeholder groups, organisations and individuals along with the consultation bodies specified in the Regulations and government guidance have given us a wide range of contacts.

Groups generally considered as 'Hard to Reach'

3.6 There is no one definition of 'hard to reach' groups, as groups under represented in consultation exercises may differ. Groups that are generally considered 'Hard to Reach' by the Council include - minority ethnic communities, disabled people, young people, people living in areas of deprivation or on low income, travellers and gypsies, travelling showpeople etc.

i) Ethnic Minority Community

3.7 The 2001 census indicates 5.7% of Spelthorne's population belongs to an ethnic minority community. The Council's Policy and Performance team carried out research in January 2005 to explore the views of those from an ethnic minority background towards life in the Borough and communicating with the Council. Their research concluded that residents from minority ethnic groups in the community share many of the same concerns as the Spelthorne community as a whole, and do not wish to be targeted by specific communication channels. Therefore the SCI does not suggest a specific method to target Spelthorne's ethnic minority community.

3.8 There is no local group in Spelthorne that represents the interests of particular ethnic minorities. However we will consult national organisations representing interests of ethnic minorities as well as religious groups in neighbouring authorities which may represent interests of ethnic groups.

3.9 We make a particular effort to meet with and seek the views of following groups as they represent traditionally 'hard to reach' groups.

ii) Disabled People

3.10 Spelthorne Committee for Access Now (SCAN) - is an independent group of volunteers living in Spelthorne with an interest in accessibility issues for people with visual, hearing and mobility disabilities.

iii) Young People

3.11 Youth Council - represents interests of young people. In addition also have all the schools and colleges in Spelthorne on our contacts list.

3.12 We also have the 'Gypsy Council', 'The Showmen's Guild of Great Britain' and other traveller groups on our contacts list. The Council also has a Traveller Liaison officer who is consulted.

b) 'Long List' of the types of groups on our contacts list

Specific Consultation Bodies as per Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, SI No. 2204 and PPS12

- The Countryside Agency - South East Regional Office
- Environment Agency – Thames Region
- English Heritage (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England)
- English Nature
- Strategic Rail Authority
- Highways Agency
- All relevant adjoining authorities
 - Surrey County Council
 - Greater London Authority (GLA)
 - Elmbridge Borough Council
 - London Borough of Richmond Upon Thames
 - London Borough of Hounslow

- London Borough of Hillingdon
 - Runnymede Borough Council
 - Slough Borough Council
 - The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
 - Wraysbury Parish Council
 - Horton Parish Council
 - Berkshire Joint Strategic Planning Unit
- Government Office for the South East (GOSE)
 - South East England Development Agency (SEEDA)
 - South East England Regional Agency (SEERA)
 - Thames Water
 - Three Valleys Water Plc
 - British Gas Plc (North Thames)
 - Relevant Electronic Communications Companies
 - Surrey and Sussex Strategic Health Authority

Government Departments

- Home Office
- Ministry of Defence
- Department of Constitutional Affairs
- Department for Culture, Media and Sports
- Office of Government Commerce

GOSE who is one of the 'specific' contacts is also the first point of contact for the following government departments

- Department for Education and Skills
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Transport
- Department of Health
- Department of Trade and Industry
- Department of Work and Pensions

General Consultation Bodies as per Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, SI No. 2204 and PPS12

Individuals on consultation list

- Mainly residents of Spelthorne but can include anyone who wishes to join our contacts list.

Groups representing interests of the Community

- Amenity Societies
- Educational Organisations – all schools and colleges in Spelthorne, Learning and Skills Council
- Groups representing interests of elderly
- Groups representing interests of people with disabilities
- Groups representing interests of women
- Health/Social Care – includes hospitals, Primary Care Trust, medical centres etc.
- Local businesses and business organisations
- Race/ethnic groups – at national level
- Religious groups in Spelthorne, adjoining areas, regional and national level representing Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Sikh and Jewish faiths
- Residents Associations

- Sports/Leisure groups/organisations
- Youth Council and other groups representing interests of young people in Spelthorne

Other Groups with a direct interest in planning issues

- Developers, Planning agents and others interested in development sites within Spelthorne
- Environmental Groups with interests in conservation of natural or historic environment.
- Housing associations/organisations
- National organisations with interest in architecture, urban design, transportation etc. – like CABI, English Partnerships etc.
- Infrastructure providers e.g. National Grid
- Other local authorities
 - Epsom and Ewell Borough Council
 - Guildford Borough Council
 - Mole Valley District Council
 - Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
 - Surrey Heath Borough Council
 - Tandridge District Council
 - Waverley Borough Council
 - Woking Borough Council

Voluntary and Charity Groups – at local, regional and national level

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) – Locally known as the Local Spelthorne Partnership, Spelthorne's LSP executive includes - Business representatives, Housing group representative, Police, Educational representatives, Health representatives, local Church representative, Amenity Society representative, Residents Association representative, Youth representatives, Government Office for South East, Surrey County Council, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service, Voluntary Action in Spelthorne Now (VAIS), Age Concern and Spelthorne Borough Council.

People with interest in specific sites – Owners/occupiers of proposed sites and owners/occupiers of adjoining properties. In certain cases people from a wider area may be consulted depending on scale and nature of the proposal.

Keeping the list up to date

- 3.13 This list relates to successor bodies where reorganisation has occurred. We will also keep our 'contacts list' up to date by including requests in all our letters to contacts to tell us if details have changed. We will use articles in the Borough Bulletin to provide feedback on progress in preparing the Plan and repeat invitations to people to join the contacts list.

Reference Documents

Documents available on ODPM's (now DCLG) website

www.communities.gov.uk

- 1) Community Involvement in Planning: The Government's Objectives (2004)
- 2) Planning Policy Statement 1: Creating Sustainable Communities (2005)
- 3) Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks (2004)
- 4) Creating Local Development Frameworks – A Companion Guide to PPS12
ODPM Guide to Planning (2004)
- 5) Statement of Community Involvement and Planning Applications

The underlined Spelthorne Documents below are available on Spelthorne Council's website www.spelthorne.gov.uk

- 1) [Community Engagement Focus Groups – November 2004](#)
- 2) Council's Consultation Toolkit
- 3) [Findings of the Initial Consultation on Public Preferences for Community Involvement in Planning – March 2005](#)
- 4) [Initial Consultation October/November 2004 – February 2005](#)
- 5) [Local Development Scheme - March 2005](#)
- 6) [Population and Social Characteristics of Spelthorne – February 2005](#)
- 7) [Research with Ethnic Minority Residents & their Children – February 2005](#)
- 8) [Spelthorne Community Plan 2005 - 2015](#)

Planning Legislation available on Office of Public Sector Information website

www.opsi.gov.uk

- 1) [Town and Country Planning \(Local Development\) \(England\) Regulations 2004, SI No. 2204](#)
- 2) [Town and Country Planning \(General Development Procedure\) \(as amended\) 2005 SI – 2087 – Article 8](#)
- 3) [Town and Country Planning \(General Development Procedure\) Order 1995 SI – 419](#)

List of Abbreviations

AMR	Annual Monitoring Report
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DPD	Development Plan Document
GOSE	Government Office for South East
LDD	Local Development Document
LDF	Local Development Framework
LDS	Local Development Scheme
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
PPS	Planning Policy Statement
SCAN	Spelthorne Committee for Access Now
SA	Sustainability Appraisal
SCI	Statement of Community Involvement
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
VAIS	Voluntary Action in Spelthorne