
PROPOSED ESTABLISHMENT OF A PLANNING FORUM

**Responsible Cabinet Member(s) – Councillor David Lyonette,
Regeneration and Planning Portfolio**

Responsible Director(s) – John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment

Purpose of Report

1. This report is to seek the Council's agreement that a Planning Forum be established and to agree the terms of reference for the Forum.

Background

2. The proposal to establish a Planning Forum was included in the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), agreed by Cabinet in September 2004 (Min ref. C81(3)(a)), and in the revised draft SCI approved by Council on 11 April 2005 (Min ref. 91(7)(a)). Forums may be established under the provisions of Article 10 of the Council's Constitution.
3. The desirability of a forum arises because the Council has begun work to prepare a series of new development planning policy documents that together, will replace the existing Borough of Darlington Local Plan. Under the new planning system, stakeholder and public involvement must take place at several stages in the preparation of each document. The proposed Planning Forum would meet about three times a year, at important stages when documents for the Local Development Framework are prepared
4. The proposed terms of reference of the Planning Forum are set out at **Appendix 1** of this report. It is also proposed that the meetings of the Planning Forum be publicly advertised and open to any members of the public to attend, though specific invitations will be issued to representatives of groups or organisations with an interest in the matters the meeting is to discuss. The Members of the Forum drawn from the community will include representatives of the Community Partnership, Darlington Association of Parish Councils, older people, young people, local interest groups such as the Darlington Civic Trust and local developers and business interests.

Outcome of Consultation

5. No adverse comments to the proposal to establish a Planning Forum were received during consultations on the draft SCI or the revised draft SCI.

Legal Implications

6. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

7. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

8. The issues contained within this report are required to be considered by Council.

Conclusion

9. The proposed Planning Forum would provide an effective permanent mechanism for consulting and involving local people and organisations at all the key stages in the preparation of each of the new planning documents being prepared for the Local Development Framework.

Recommendation

10. Council are requested to agree to the establishment of a Council consultation forum for development planning according to the terms of reference set out at **Appendix 1**.

Reasons

11. The recommendation is supported by the following reasons :-
 - (a) To inform the preparation of the new Local Development Framework
 - (b) To implement a commitment set out in the Council's revised draft statement of Community Involvement in Planning.

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

No background papers were used in the production of this report.

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Proposed Planning Forum Terms of Reference

Darlington Planning Forum (6)(4x1x1)

Membership Protocols

Suggested membership of the Forum is to include:

1. Cabinet Member with Regeneration and Planning Portfolio
2. Cabinet Member with Highways and Transport Portfolio
3. Chair of Environment Scrutiny Committee
4. Chair of Planning Applications Committee
5. Conservative Member
6. Liberal Democrat Member

Quorum

Six, provided that at least one of their number is a Councillor appointed as a Member of this Forum (or his/her nominee).

Terms of Reference

To provide a Forum

- a) to consult and involve the public, service providers and other interested local groups and organisations in planning policy matters;
- b) to consider and debate options and emerging strategies and policies for the new Local Development Framework;
- c) to put forward ideas, suggestions and proposals regarding Darlington Borough Council's new Local Development Framework;
- d) to raise awareness of planning policy issues and seek improvements to how we involve all sections of the community.

Chair and Vice-Chair

- a) The Chair shall be the Cabinet Member with the Regeneration and Planning Portfolio.
- b) The Vice-Chair of the Forum shall be appointed annually from the representatives of outside bodies.
- c) In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, a member of the Forum shall be appointed to the Chair for that meeting only.

Other Matters

- a) Minutes will be recorded and will be first considered by Environment Scrutiny Committee.
- b) The meeting will be held in public.