

**INSPECTOR'S REPORT
DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

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Darlington Borough Council - Statement of Community Involvement (April 2005)

INSPECTOR'S REPORT

Introduction

- 1.1 An independent examination of the Darlington Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been carried out in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. Following paragraph 3.10 of Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks the examination has been based on the 9 tests set out (see Appendix A). The starting point for the assessment is that the SCI is sound. Accordingly changes are made in this binding report only where there is a clear need in the light of the tests in PPS 12.
- 1.2 A total of 22 written representations were received all of which have been considered.

Test 1

- 2.1 The pre-submission consultations statement sets out consultation carried out on the SCI.

Having regard to "DPD matters" and "proposals matters" (see Regulation 24 (4)) the Council should have included a statement regarding notification requests in earlier documentation.

- 2.2 Required Action: As this was not done the Council should rectify the position by notifying all those who have made representations of the publication of this report and the adoption of this SCI.

In future Development Plan Documents the Council must ensure that this part of the Regulations is complied with correctly.

Test 2

- 3.1 Paragraph 2.2 of the SCI explains that the Darlington Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership) will be at the heart of consultations with the local community. The Partnership's links with other groups will be used to involve a wide audience in the preparation of Local Development Documents. Appendix 1 of the SCI sets out this involvement in diagrammatic form. Appendix 2 of the SCI provides information on public and other involvement in evidence gathering for the Local Development Framework. Paragraph 2.10 of the SCI indicates the local authority's intention to link assessments of documents prepared simultaneously.
- 3.2 This test has been met.

Test 3

- 4.1 Bodies are set out in general terms in Table 3 of the SCI and there is a full, up-to-date list available on the website.
- 4.2 This test is met.

Test 4 and Test 5

- 5.1 These tests are considered together as they are interrelated. They have been met by the detail provided in Chapter 2 of the SCI.
- 5.2 Figure 2 of the SCI clearly sets out the main stages when the community will have an opportunity to get involved in the plan making process, including the involvement of the public at the Issues and Options stage at the start of the process. Table 1 of the SCI indicates how the Borough Council will specifically involve the community in plan-making and in carrying out the sustainability appraisal and strategic environmental assessment (SA/SEA). Further amplification is provided in the supporting text in Chapter 2.
- 5.3 Table 3 of the SCI provides detailed information on who will be consulted in the preparation of all new planning documents. A wide audience will have the opportunity to participate as appropriate. Figure 3 of the SCI details community involvement in assessing the environmental effect and sustainability of DPDs and SPDS.
- 5.4 These tests have been met.

Test 6

- 6.1 Chapter 4 provides general information about resources and management of the process. The SCI does not provide specific information on resource management but the Council is aware of the need to make resources available in terms of staffing arrangements and the costs of publicity and consultation, as well as the need for monitoring as work proceeds. The introductory paragraph 1.12 also refers to the need to consider issues such as available resources.
- 6.2 This test has been met.

Test 7

- 7.1 Chapter 2 of the SCI clearly explains how the results from the various community involvement techniques will be fed into LDD and DPD production. Amplification is provided in Tables 1 and 3 of the SCI.
- 7.2 This test has been met.

Test 8

8.1 Chapter 4 of the SCI provides general information on monitoring and review including the use of the Annual Monitoring Report.

8.2. This test has been met.

Test 9

9.1 Chapter 3 and appendix 3 detail the Council's approach to the publication and handling of planning applications.

9.2 This test has been met by the information provided.

Conclusion

10.1 The Darlington Borough Council Statement of Community Involvement (April 2005) is sound.

K. Holland
Inspector

APPENDIX A
TESTS OF SOUNDNESS

Examination of the soundness of the statement of community involvement

3.10 The purpose of the examination is to consider the soundness of the statement of community involvement. The presumption will be that the statement of community involvement is sound unless it is shown to be otherwise as a result of evidence considered at the examination. A hearing will only be necessary where one or more of those making representations wish to be heard (see Annex D). In assessing whether the statement of community involvement is sound, the inspector will determine whether the:

- i. local planning authority has complied with the minimum requirements for consultation as set out in Regulations;¹
- ii. local planning authority's strategy for community involvement links with other community involvement initiatives e.g. the community strategy;
- iii. statement identifies in general terms which local community groups and other bodies will be consulted;
- iv. statement identifies how the community and other bodies can be involved in a timely and accessible manner;
- v. methods of consultation to be employed are suitable for the intended audience and for the different stages in the preparation of local development documents;
- vi. resources are available to manage community involvement effectively;
- vii. statement shows how the results of community involvement will be fed into the preparation of development plan documents and supplementary planning documents;
- viii. authority has mechanisms for reviewing the statement of community involvement; and
- ix. statement clearly describes the planning authority's policy for consultation on planning applications.

From: Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks

¹ The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations, 2004.