

CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED WORKS TO REVISE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT: CONSULTATION RESPONSES & RECOMMENDED CHANGES

Ref.	Summary of Issue Raised	Issue Raised By	Officer Comment	Recommendation/Council's Response
01	<p>If SCI is to be given any credence by Planning Officers and Members, any requests, improvements, changes to a Planning Application following a SCI should be documented and reported to the Planning Committee.</p> <p>Any changes to the Planning Application because of the Community Involvement's input should also be available to Members and where suggestions from the public have not been actioned by the Developer then he should give the reasons why.</p>	Councillor Lee	<p>Comments noted. The developer applicant is required to submit details of community consultation carried out including any amendments made as a result of this consultation (paragraph 3.17) and therefore details of any community consultation is available to view. Suggest an additional note to indicate that any changes made as a result of engagement with communities and interested parties will be reported to members at any planning committee.</p>	<p>Minor change proposed. At end of section 3.17, add; 'any changes to the scheme made as a result of the community involvement carried out, will be reported to councillors at the Planning Committee meeting.'</p>
02	<p>Whilst the CAA do not wish to comment on local development plans, where officially safeguarded aerodromes lie within the Council's area of jurisdiction, we recommend that the Council considers the need of such aerodromes within your development plan and consult with the aerodrome operators / licensees directly. List of aviation related issues provided regarding safeguarding from adverse development, telecom installations, Wind turbines, high structures and venting and flaring.</p> <p>After discussion at the Executive Committee of December, it was decided that whereas the SCI is appropriate to local WI's it does not fill the remit for the whole of our county, so we therefore wish to decline your invitation in this case.</p>	Civil Aviation Authority	<p>Comment does not relate directly to community involvement.</p>	<p>No Changes proposed</p>
03	<p>On Page 24 'Commenting on a planning application – types of issues not to raise: Do not agree with item 2 'possible effects on property values' not being included as a planning matter. For example, in a rural situation a proposed wind farm development next to a property would significantly alter the property value and should be considered by a planning committee. I would therefore like this item to be added to the 'types of issue to raise'.</p>	Durham County of Women's Institutes	<p>Noted.</p>	<p>No changes proposed.</p>
04	<p>On Page 24 'Commenting on a planning application – types of issues not to raise: Do not agree with item 2 'possible effects on property values' not being included as a planning matter. For example, in a rural situation a proposed wind farm development next to a property would significantly alter the property value and should be considered by a planning committee. I would therefore like this item to be added to the 'types of issue to raise'.</p>	Alan D. Burrows (Retired)	<p>Comments noted, however the impact on property values cannot (as established by case law) be taken into account in the determination of a planning application and therefore it would be incorrect to encourage interested parties to raise these issues.</p>	<p>No changes proposed.</p>
05	<p>I'm not as knowledgeable as I would like to be on these issues. However, having read the document several times I understand it now. You would achieve much more by way of community involvement if the document writers, and administrators of this consultation process focussed on being more succinct and less wordy. This document takes several hours to absorb, which could have been simplified. The first paragraph on page three made me laugh – we will set out plans clearly, etc. etc. – it took me a minute to work out where the ext page began. When making first contact perhaps write a softer, shorter and more appealing introductory letter.</p>	Martin Landers (Red Hall Partnership)	<p>Comments noted. The document needs to be clear to all who have an interest whilst being worded robustly enough to withstand legal challenge. A thorough assessment of the language and clarity of the document to be carried out.</p>	<p>No changes proposed.</p>
06	<p>Chapter 2 – Local Development Documents – Para. 2.9 Table 3 Row 1 Specific organisation. The first row of table 3 under the heading of those to be involved sets out the specific organisations that the council will consult during the production of a number of listed documents.</p>	Nicholas Lawrence (Eko Planning (North) Limited. On behalf of County Durham and Darlington NHS	<p>Comments noted. PPS12 thoroughly read and research carried out. Agreed that as PPS12 specifies Acute Hospital</p>	<p>Minor change proposed. Row 1 Table 3 – Insert: the Acute Hospital Trust</p>

	<p>The notes cell of the table sets out the basis upon which the Council will consult these organisations as: <i>These are the organisations that the regulations say we must consult if we think that the proposed subject matter of the document affects them.</i></p> <p>PPS 12 under the heading of engagement with delivery stakeholders critically comments at Para. 4.28 that without the agreement of key delivery agencies there is no point in proceeding with the Core Strategy. Para. 29 set out Acute Hospital Trusts as a relevant delivery agency. The County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (the trust) us a defined Acute Hospital Trust (www.nhs.co.uk).</p> <p>We require that the trust is included within the finalised SCI as a specific organisation for consultation purposes within the first row of table 3 for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The trust provides services from 3 main sites, and the primary site for healthcare provision within the borough of Darlington is the Darlington Memorial Hospital (DMH) at Hollyhurst Road, Darlington. The DMH has incrementally grown both in terms of development form and the clinical services for Darlington. It is also a major employer and as a large hospital it attracts a significant number of visitors. 2. Allowing for the fact that the trust, via the MDH is a key delivery agency, coupled to its role as a major employer and social infrastructure provider within the administrative district of the Council it is considered that the trust should be included within the list of specific organisations to be consulted as a matter of good governance and administrative practice. In addition, a significant number of matters considered within the LDF documents will have a direct impact upon the service provision and also socio-sustainability issues within the borough. 3. The basis for consultation is set against the test of <i>we think that the proposed subject matter of the document affects them</i>. As the listed documents involve aspects of land use that will impact upon the use and delivery of healthcare matters across a broad spectrum of areas (e.g. new healthcare development, developments that will increase the use of healthcare facilities, transportation matters, promoting wellbeing, employment provision, healthcare usage and provision as part of a sustainability impact assessment of the proposed development) the trust should form one of those bodies to be consulted on the listed documents. 	<p>Foundation Trust.</p> <p>Nicholas Lawrence (Eko Planning (North) Limited. On behalf of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.</p>	<p>Trust, this should be noted in the relevant row of the document. Each of the agencies / organisations in PPS12 is included in the Table. Noted that County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust is the Acute Hospital Trust and included on the LDF consultation database</p>	<p>06</p> <p>Chapter 2 Local Development Documents – Para 2.9 Table 3 Row 16. Part of the requirement of any document that will form the basis of informing the policy direction of the decision making authority is the need for such a document by reason of its adoption process to demonstrate that it follows the rule of natural justice and thereby instills the requisite level of robustness.</p> <p>In this instance Row 16 of Table 3 under the heading of <i>Those to be consulted</i> merely states health and the foundation upon which this ill defined group is to be consulted is set against the test of <i>where there are clear health links</i>.</p> <p>This aspect of Table 3 lacks any form of either a systematic, robust or substantive approach in identifying a health body, organisation or agency that should be consulted on the identified documents.</p>	<p>Minor Change proposed. Amend Row 16 to 'Other health Organisations' and Include consultation on Environmental and Sustainability Assessment Scoping reports and Environment and Sustainability reports.</p> <p>Comments noted. The health organisations indicated in Para 4.29 of PPS12 under social infrastructure delivery agencies are included in rows 1 and 3 of table 3 and both include consultation on all documents with the exception of the LDS. It is proposed that the reference to 'health' in row 16 be changed to 'other health organisations', and that the scope is changed to all documents other than the LDS</p>
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	<p>Aside from the above matters, the unidentified health cohort is not to be consulted on both the Environmental and Sustainability scoping report or the Environment and Sustainability report(s). Sustainability is a two-faced coin. It is not just restricted to focussing on the reduction of carbon emission or the general use of physical resources, but critically involves aspects of social cohesion and the use of social resources (e.g. improving quality of life, reducing the risk of crime and anti-social behaviour, improving health and well being, promoting the concept of green infrastructure and networks and contributing to economic growth) and the interactions between aspects of human development upon land use proposals and designations.</p> <p>The trust for the above reasons requests that the following changes are made to the revised SCI.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The health cohort is defined and the trust is included within the Health section as a consultee. 2. The documents that the non-defined health cohort is to be consulted upon should include the Environmental and Sustainability assessment scoping report and the Environment and Sustainability report(s). 		<p>to acknowledge the links between health and sustainability.</p>	
06	<p>Chapter 3 Planning Applications – Sub-heading – What we expect from developers – page 16, Para 3.9.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.9 deals with the matter of publicity and presentation material and follows the preamble from paragraph 3.8 that pre-application consultations are the responsibility of the developer. The final sentence of 3.9 states that:</p> <p><i>We (sic the Local Planning Authority) can) help assess any material you wish to use.</i></p> <p>Whilst it is accepted that the Local Planning Authority can assist on this matter in terms of contact details of possible interested parties to a particular development proposal the Local Planning Authority should not assess the material. As noted above, the onus on such a presentation rests with the advocate of the scheme and not the Council as the authority under the pre-application discussions may have taken a position on the proposal contrary to the applicants and assessment of the material may be deemed as bias based upon an adopted pre-determination position.</p> <p>To avoid a potential alleged breach of natural justice on the basis of being made against the Local Planning Authority by a third party or parties the trust would wish the above sentence to be omitted from the revised SCI. It the Local Planning Authority are minded to pursue some form of 'control' the trust would wish that a form of scoping exercise is incorporated within the revised SCI. It would be for the applicant developer to demonstrate that the engagement material is for the task within the planning applications Community Involvement Statement.</p>	<p>Nicholas Lawrence (Eko Planning (North) Limited. On behalf of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The purpose of this sentence was to avoid any bias in presentations that are given and to concentrate on facts. Suggest deleting the reference to bias and the offer for the Council to assess any material better focuses that paragraph 3.9.</p>	<p>Minor change proposed. Deletion from paragraph 3.9 of 'and avoid any bias. We can help assess any material you want to use'.</p>
06	<p>Chapter 3 Planning Applications – Involving the Public at events or exhibitions – page 16 – Para 3.10e.</p> <p>The third sentence of point e to paragraph 3.10 requires of the applicant developer that <i>At some time during the exhibition a verbal presentation of the proposals should be given by staff to aid the understanding of those in attendance.</i></p> <p>Allowing for the requirement of the SCI that engagement with the community, depending upon the nature of the proposed development, should be of such a period to ensure that <i>as wide a cross of the public to attend</i> it is considered that a verbal presentation is open to abuse</p>	<p>Nicholas Lawrence (Eko Planning (North) Limited. On behalf of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The purpose of a public exhibition is to provide information on a proposed development to as wide a cross section of communities as is possible, therefore there is the potential for only one verbal presentation not to achieve this. Suggested that the wording is changed to</p>	<p>Minor change proposed. Deletion of sentence 'At some time during the exhibition a verbal presentation of the proposal should be given by staff to aid the understanding of those in attendance'. Add additional sentence</p>

	<p>and is entirely impractical. Experience has shown that an engagement event over a period of time involves a series of rolling informal verbal presentations to those attending that usually involves outlining the proposal, issues addressed, seeking comments / concerns and taking questions. A verbal presentation as prescribed defeats the object of an open engagement event and portrays the form of a presentation based upon what could be perceived as a frozen development form rather than one which is open to dialogue, debate and potential revision. For the above reasons we request the deletion of the third sentence of section e to paragraph 3.10.</p>		<p>reflect this and to encourage as much dialogue with attendees as possible and distinguishing between meetings and public drop in events.</p>	<p>depending on the type of event, every opportunity should be made to engage with attendees, either through rolling informal presentations or availability of staff for answering questions about the development proposal.</p>
06	<p>Chapter 3 Planning Applications – Contacting Community representatives and others – page 17 – Paragraph 3.10h. The third sentence to point h to paragraph 3.10 requires of the ‘applicant developer’ that they should contact <u>all</u> (emphasis added) <i>community groups and other organisations, for example service providers and government agencies, which may also have a specific interest in a proposal.</i> It is evident that a development proposal may not have an impact upon all local community groups and that it would be unreasonable for the developer applicant to consult all such groups. The proposed approach to be adopted within the SCI looks for the applicant developer to bear all the costs for such an engagement process and the requirement to notify all groups would place an unreasonable financial burden upon the applicant developer. It should therefore be up to the applicant developer to demonstrate that their engagement mechanism has addressed and consulted with what are considered the appropriate local groups. Having regard to the above comments the trust would wish for the SCI to adopt either of the following approaches.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To reword point h to read – It will be up to the applicant developer to demonstrate by way of their public engagement document, which will form part of the application submission (subject to the nature of the proposed development) that the relevant local community groups and other organisations (e.g. service providers and government agencies) who will have an interest in a proposal have been consulted as part of the planning application submission process. Table 3 can be retained to provide guidance in terms of setting out a list of local community groups and other organisations. 2. Delete in its entirety the third sentence to point h. 	<p>Nicholas Lawrence (Eko Planning (North) Limited. On behalf of County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The purpose of this part of the document is to ensure that, as many people who would be affected by the development are involved in the process as possible. The SCI does not wish to place any unreasonable demands on developer applicants and it is suggested that the word relevant, will leave the selection of groups open to some interpretation with the retention of the offer of assistance in contact details from the Council.</p>	<p>Minor change proposed. The insertion of the word ‘relevant’ before ‘local community groups’ in point h of Para 3.10.</p>
07	<p>We welcome the retention of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Table 3’s identification of Sport England and local sports clubs as being consulted at a number of key junctures in the LDF process; • Para. 3.10 is a simple reminder that users of land (such as sports teams) will also need to be made aware of development proposals. <p>Both the Playing Pitch Strategy and Sports and Physical Activity Facilities Strategy are now adopted documents. Given that both documents form part of the LDF evidence base, and have been the subject of public engagement, then Appendix 2 of the SCI should be updated accordingly.</p>	<p>Sport England</p>	<p>Comments noted. The former appendix 2 was not included in the draft Revised SCI as background data and evidence base is being updated continuously and so the Appendix would be out of date very quickly. Details of all background studies, etc. are included on the website, including links to the actual documents.</p>	<p>No changes proposed.</p>

08	Sadberge Parish Council supports the idea – as described in Chapter 3 of the Draft Revised SCI, or giving developers with 'significant' proposals an opportunity to present their schemes to Planning Applications Committee Members, Ward Councillors and other consultees (including parish Councils) at an early stage in the planning application process.	Sadberge Parish Council	Comments noted.	No change proposed.
09	<p>Re Chapters 1 and 2: Could more advance information of forthcoming (eg over the next 6 months) local development document consultations be placed on the Council's website, on the same page as current consultations, to help those potentially involved to anticipate and prepare? This could link with and add to the information on the statutory stages outlined in the Local Development Scheme. Would like to see an additional bullet point under Guiding Principle 2, and additions to Table 1, Stage 1.</p> <p>Re Chapters 1 and 3: Could basic details (e.g. proposal description, developer contact details) of current and expected future developers' pre-application consultations on significant planning applications be placed on the Council's website? This would help to raise public awareness before the application stage and help those potentially involved to anticipate and prepare. Would like to see an additional bullet point under Guiding principle 2 and an additional paragraph in 'What we expect from developers'.</p>	Graham Farr, resident	<p>Comments noted. The timetable of the preparation of documents is contained within the (Local Development Scheme (LDS). The document refers to the LDS for this information in paragraph 2.5 therefore no change proposed. With regards to pre-application events organised by the Council, a formal procedure will be put in place to ensure that any forthcoming events are advertised on the website as soon as dates and details are available. Suggest referring to this in the document.</p>	<p>Minor change proposed. After Paragraph 3 of 3.1, add 'The Council will publicise the date, time and venue of the meetings on the website. At the end of Paragraph 3.11 add 'In addition to the publicity carried out by the event organiser, the Council will also publish details of event dates, times and venues, when these details are known. However, it remains the responsibility of the event organiser to publicise their own event'.</p>
10	<p>Section 3, para. 3.10b This section states that applicants 'must place an advert in a local newspaper'. We feel that for consultation events it is best to send a press release to the newspaper and ensure that they include an article to publicise it. Placing an advert would be costly and arguably would be less likely to be read. Statutory notice adverts cost around £500 and in any event we are not aware of any wording for a statutory notice relating to consultation on a proposal. Suggested alternative wording: 'You must ensure that the development proposal is reported in a local paper (usually the Northern Echo)'.</p>	Banks Developments (Justin Hancock)	<p>Comments noted. Agree that 'advert' can include publicity in the editorial of the local press. However, there are times when publicity of this kind does not make it to the final edition of the paper, due to other, perhaps more interesting stories coming up. It is recommended that this is therefore qualified with a requirement for an advert no less than 5 days before the event, if an article has not appeared in editorial in the 2 weeks prior to that.</p>	<p>Minor change proposed. Replace 3.10b with 'You must ensure that the development proposal is publicised in a local newspaper (usually The Northern Echo). This should say where and when people can find out more, and to whom and by when people can make comments. An advert will be required no less than 5 days before the event if not editorial has appeared in a local paper in the 2 weeks prior to that'.</p>
11	<p>As you are aware One North East is responsible for the development, delivery and review of the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) on behalf of North East England. The RES sets out how greater and sustainable prosperity will be delivered to all of the people of the North East over the period to 2016. In commenting on plans within an Authority's Local Development Framework (LDF), as required by the legislation relating to its role as a statutory consultee, the Agency will consider the documents in the context of the RES. Our comments relating to the document are set out below: The Agency notes that the above document has been prepared to update Darlington Borough Council's first Statement of Community</p>	One North East	Comments noted.	No change proposed.

12	<p>Involvement, adopted in November 2005 to take into account changes to the Regulations and experience gained from consultation on the LDF.</p> <p>Your Council's proposed approach towards involving the community of Darlington Borough and key stakeholders in the planning process, including taking account of recent changes to government guidance, is noted and welcomed by the Agency.</p> <p>As identified in the Draft SCI, One North East is a specific consultee under the above regulations¹ and in line with PPS12 and the accompanying Plan Making Manual. The Agency considers this role as a vital tool in maintaining consistency across spatial planning levels and in delivering sustainable economic growth in line with the Regional Economic Strategy. As we move towards the preparation of a new Regional Strategy, under its remit as a Responsible Regional Authority, the Agency is committed to maintaining and strengthening this role.</p> <p>One North East is eager to engage in the Darlington LDF process and looks forward to receiving for comment, further documents within the Borough Council's Local Development Scheme as they become available. I trust that the Agency will also continue to be consulted on developments which would be, by reason of scale, nature or their location, of major importance for the implementation of the Regional Economic Strategy, or development of a description in relation to which we give notice in writing to the Council that we wish to be consulted. (The current criteria applied by the Agency were first sent to local authorities in advance of One North East commencing its statutory role on 24th October 2005, and subsequently amended in June 2007. A copy is attached for your information. It is likely that the consultation criteria will be refreshed upon implementation of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act on 1 April 2010, in light of the Agency's role as a Responsible Regional Authority and the new Regional Strategy).</p> <p>Consultations should be directed in the first instance to the Agency's Planning and Housing Team. Phil Jones is Manager of the team supported in the statutory function by Wendy Hetherington and Zoé Gray. The Agency's postal address and phone number are at the foot of this letter. In addition, we welcome consultation via email, which should be sent to: planning@onenortheast.co.uk.</p> <p>The revised Draft SCI makes reference to the Council's database and arrangements for viewing planning applications online. This is the method One North East, as a statutory consultee, uses to view applications from most local authorities. However, as you are aware, the Council's website does not yet have the facility to view online or download planning documents. The provision of this facility would greatly enhance the current service offered by the Council to the community and other stakeholders</p>	English Heritage	Comments noted. In respect of pre-application meetings, where aware of any heritage or other issues, the Council would invite the relevant agency /	Minor change proposed. In 3.1 Paragraph 3, after interested local residents, add 'and any relevant statutory consultees or
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	<p>statutory role later in the process. It is the Council's responsibility, for example, to establish, where appropriate, and manage Planning Performance Agreements, which are often drawn up before applications are submitted for determination.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.8:</p> <p>I am unclear as to whether the Council is suggesting that where we as a statutory consultee have made written representations we may be asked to address the Committee, or whether this provision applies only to, for example, neighbours or individuals. English Heritage cannot commit to attending Planning Committees on demand.</p> <p>Minor amendments:</p> <p>Proposed changes to materials on a listed building, for example, may not materially affect its 'overall appearance', especially where they are internal to the building, but may nevertheless still cause considerable harm to significance and integrity.</p> <p>The Decision:</p> <p>We are advised that, where we have commented in writing on an application, we will receive a letter informing us of the decision made by the Council. We welcome this commitment.</p> <p>Significant applications:</p> <p>It would be helpful to explain that, in future, 'Nationally significant infrastructure projects;' will fall to the Infrastructure Planning Commission to determine rather than the Council, but that pre-consultation with relevant stakeholders will still be required.</p>		<p>organisation to attend or to submit comments. A formal procedure will be put in place to ensure that this happens. Suggest adding reference to the inclusion of statutory agencies in the opening section of Chapter 3.</p> <p>Paragraph 4.8 is targeted at members of the public who may wish to speak at Planning Committee. It is at the discretion of any statutory consultee as to whether they would wish to attend a particular Planning Committee. No change proposed in respect of this issue.</p> <p>Comment regarding Nationally Significant infrastructure projects, noted. However pre-application engagement would continue to happen at a local level and therefore no change proposed.</p>	<p>organisations'.</p>
13	<p>NWL acknowledges and supports the general aims and principles of the Council's draft SCI. In order for the SCI to meet the aims of paragraphs 4.27-4.29 in PPS12: Local Spatial Planning (2008) effectively, i.e. to engage with 'utilities companies' as delivery stakeholders, the company would welcome close liaison (through meetings / discussions) with the Council and its partners at appropriate stages in the LDF process to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Principles of water efficiency, flooding (from sewers), sustainable urban drainage systems / BREEAM, etc. promoted by NWL, are incorporated into the policies and objectives of Darlington's DPD's and SPD's; NWL can plan and invest in operational water and sewerage capacity necessary to support future development sites and broad areas where future development will be concentrated. <p>NWL would ask the Council to ensure that the company's previous representations relating to the Core Strategy (2005 and 2008) and the Draft Design of New Development SPD (March 2009) are considered in the production of forthcoming DPD's and SPD's where appropriate.</p>	England and Lyle on behalf of NWL.	Comments noted.	No changes proposed.
14-21	<p>At present, item 3.10j says that the developer should contact 'any parish council whose parish includes or is next to the site'. However, it is quite possible for a parish council to have a legitimate and serious interest in a proposal that is not within or adjacent to its parish. Fore example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A significant residential, retail or distribution centre development may create additional traffic that affects parishes some distance from the development site; A wind farm can impact parishes at some distance from the development site by visual impact and / or aerodynamic modulation noise. <p>I therefore request that the wording of item 3.10j is modified to say that</p>	<p>Councillor P R Vickers Councillor E M Scaife Councillor R Heywood Councillor R Glew Councillor D Brown Councillor S Best Alastair Mackenzie, Resident Parish Councillor M Schott</p>	<p>Comments noted and point agreed. Suggest amending 3.10j to include any Parishes significantly affected.</p>	<p>Minor change proposed. Paragraph 3.10j Delete, 'or is' add comma. After 'is next to' add, 'or is significantly affected by'.</p>

DAPC	<p>a developer should contact 'any parish council whose parish is likely to experience a significant impact from the proposed development. This includes any parish council whose parish includes or it next to the site, as well as any parish council whose parish is likely to experience a significant impact due to increased traffic, visual impact, noise or any other relevant effect'.</p> <p>DAPC Meeting Minutes</p> <p>Item 1 – Current consultations: The Draft Revised Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):</p> <p>Emma Wilkinson (EW) made a presentation on the draft revised SCI highlighting why the SCI is being revised, some of the key changes being proposed to the SCI and that the closing date for comments is 21st January 2010.</p> <p>A handout of the presentation was circulated to all attendees.</p> <p>Cllr D Jones asked for clarification of the pre-application procedure. John Anderson (JA) explained that structured pre-application 'by invitation only' meetings would be offered to developers of significant or sensitive developments involving Planning Committee Members, relevant Ward Councillors, and key stakeholders, including representatives of local residents groups, such as Parish Councils. Other interested parties could attend as observers. The purpose of the meetings would be to raise the profile of member and community issues of importance in order that developers can take these into account when putting together their proposals. It is not the purpose of the meeting for members to express views on proposals. The benefits to potential developers would be that they would find out about local and other concerns earlier in the process, giving them time to respond to them, e.g. by amending designs to mitigate impacts or preparing statements about why issues raised cannot be addressed, before an application is submitted and considered by Committee. The benefits to participants would be that they would be able to make comments at a stage where the developer still feels able to respond to them, and amend plans. The pre-application meetings and involvement of members in these meetings would in no way prejudice the Committee's ability to come to its own view on an application.</p> <p>The outcome of the meeting is likely to be a list of issues that would form the agenda for further discussions with Planning Officers and key stakeholders, and the provision of material by the applicant as to how the matters raised had been dealt with.</p> <p>JA explained that the Council would not be able to force developers to do these events. However, in his experience, they generally wanted to take advantage of such meetings as it reduced their risks.</p> <p>Peter Wood expressed concern that scoping documents and assessments go to statutory consultees for comments but not to Parish Councils. JA replied that what DBC did in this regard met statutory requirements for EIA regarding scoping reports and screening opinions.</p>	<p>Attendees Valerie Adams (DBC Planning & Environmental Policy), Emma Wilkinson (DBC Planning & Environmental Policy), John Anderson (Assistant Director, Transport, Development and Regeneration); Councillor Brian Jones (Sadberge and Whesoe Ward – Chair); Peter Wood (Bishopton Parish Council); Councillor John Weighell (Neasham Parish Council); Mr D Dodwell (Neasham Parish Council); Councillor Doris Jones (Middleton St George Parish Council); Millie Scaife (Sadberge Parish Council); Alastair Mackenzie (Sadberge Parish Council); Renny Vickers (Sadberge Parish Council).</p>	<p>The outcome of the meeting was recognition that the information in the Draft Revised SCI regarding member involvement in pre-application discussions was not completely clear to the attendees and needed some explanation. It is recommended that the introduction to Chapter 3 is amended to clarify the purpose and the broad details of the proposals.</p> <p>The remaining issues were not considered to be matters that would be detailed in the SCI. However, points were noted and to be followed up.</p>	<p>Minor changes proposed. Delete 'A formal meeting should be convened to' at the beginning of Paragraph 2 of Chapter 3. Replace with 'The Council will offer to convene a meeting to'.</p> <p>Deletion of Paragraph 3 of 3.1 'Although such a system can not be prescriptive, in that both developer proposals and public and Member reactions may change, it is envisaged that such proactive forums would serve to reduce the potential for any 'surprises' to appear at a later stage'.</p> <p>Replace with 'The main purpose of these meetings is to allow developers to hear important issues at an early stage that can be addressed as part of the planning application. These meetings are not a substitute for the formal planning process and it would not be the role of Members to form a definitive view at this stage'.</p> <p>Amend sentence 1 of paragraph 5 of 3.1 to read: 'In addition to this we will still expect developers to organise, fund and manage their own publicity events at pre-application stage. However, we will provide help, for example, in identifying relevant Committee and Ward Members, local</p>
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Peter Wood Asked if Parish Councils would get these documents before any of the informal pre-application meetings proposed. JA indicated that there was no guarantee that these documents would be made available, as this was likely to be at the discretion of developers and dependant on the timing of the meeting. For example the meeting could well take place before any formal EIA scoping process and in that case the outcome of the meeting would inform that EIA scoping document.

Cllr D. Jones asked if all Planning Committee Members would be involved in the informal discussions and site visits. There was some concern that if they were not, then decisions would be made by the Committee without having all the information available. Peter Wood indicated that in other authorities only Members who had all the information, e.g. from site visits, could vote.

JA indicated that the key question remained whether those Members of the Planning Applications Committee had sufficient information in their own minds to determine the application before them. If they considered they had the appropriate information then they would be able to participate in the determination of the application whether or not they had been involved in any pre-application meeting. Whilst JA recognised that the Parish Councils had a concern about Members non-attendance at pre-meetings and site visits the Council is asking is 'is the proposed system better than the existing system?'

Cllr B. Jones felt that the proposals were a step in the right direction.

community groups, neighbours and suitable venues for events.'