





Statement of

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

ADOPTED DECEMBER 2018



Preston
City Council

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ACHIEVING PRESTON PRIORITIES	Preston City Councils Corporate Plan setting out Preston's Priorities.
COMMUNITY	A group of people who hold something in common. They could share a common place (eg individual neighbourhood) a common interest (eg interest in the environment) a common identity (eg age) or a common need (eg a particular service focus).
IRG	Inclusion Reference Group – Preston City Council run group made up of a diverse mix of community groups.
LOCAL PLAN	A statutory Development Plan – includes strategic policies, policies map and allocates sites to meet development needs and identifies local planning issues.
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework is Government Policy which Development Documents and applications are to be in compliance with.
SCI (THE FRAMEWORK)	Statement of Community Involvement sets out an approach to involve the community and stakeholders in the planning process.
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document a non-statutory planning framework for specific areas of major change and areas of conservation. SPDs can also be topic based, allowing key issues to be addressed.



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INTRODUCTION

WHAT IS A STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)?

The SCI is an important part of the Local Development Plan. It sets out how we will engage with our community in the planning process. We aspire that the community can be involved in the planning of the environment through the preparation of planning policy documents and in processing planning applications.

The main aims of the SCI are to encourage the community to:

- **access information**
- **contribute to ideas**
- **take an active part in developing proposals and options**
- **be consulted and make representations on formal proposals**
- **be informed about progress and outcomes**

This document seeks to explain what that involvement will be and what stakeholders and the community can reasonably expect.

The SCI needs to be updated every five years. The revised SCI reflects lessons learnt from the previous one and the earlier phases of involvement in the Local Plan, looks at changing resources and practices and the changing ways of using technology and social media platforms since the adopted SCI (2006).

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

Opportunities for community involvement in the planning process usually occur in two distinct areas:

- During the preparation of Local and Neighbourhood Plans.
- Individual planning applications and pre-application advice.

Different regulations and procedures apply to these two areas and the remainder of the document is structured to reflect this.

ROLE OF COUNCILLORS

Councillors have an important role within the planning system, as both decision makers and as community representatives. The general public can make their views known to their local Parish Councillors, ward Councillors, who can make representations on their behalf. Councillors are a vital link between the local community and the Council. City Councillors also make decisions on planning issues, such as adopting Planning Policy documents and in deciding planning applications.

EQUALITY & HUMAN RIGHTS IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EHRIA)

In addition to the requirements of the Planning Regulations, we will also consult with the Inclusion Reference Group) Members. Completing an EHRIA evidences that we meet and go beyond the legislative requirements of the Equality Act 2010, specifically the Public Sector Equality Duty. Additionally it supports the Achieving Preston Priorities, particularly around fairness and social justice.



FAIRNESS FOR YOU

- **Fairness at the heart of decision making**
- **An economy supporting prosperity and promoting fairness in working lives and practices**
- **Accessibility to affordable energy and decent affordable homes**
- **Achieving Preston Priorities**

YOUR CITY

- **Secure investment**
- **Improve assets and infrastructure**
- **Attract high quality jobs**

YOUR COUNCIL

- **Well run, value for money services**
- **Good governance openness and transparency**
- **Strong democratic process**

2.

PLANNING POLICY

Planning policy is used by planners assessing planning applications, and others with influence over investment, to guide decision-making in a consistent manner. This is to ensure that it contributes to delivering the Council's strategic objectives or vision for the future in the most effective way possible. The most important component of local planning policy is the Local Plan, which includes several parts: The Core Strategy the Local Plan, the Policies Map and the City Centre Plan. In addition, planning policy includes Supplementary Planning Documents, the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule and any Neighbourhood Plans produced locally.

The National Planning Policy Framework encourages early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged, so that Local Plans, as far as possible, reflect a collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for the sustainable development of the area.

CONSULTATION

When undertaking any formal consultation or formal adoption of a document, we will ensure that the most up to date Planning Regulations are complied with.

As a minimum consultation will include:

DOCUMENT	CONSULTATION (MINIMUM)
Preparation of the Local Plan	6 weeks
Publication of a Local Plan	6 weeks
Advertise the Submission of Local Plan	
Preparation of an Area Action Plan (AAP)	6 weeks
Publication of an AAP	6 weeks
Advertise the Submission of an AAP	
Supplementary Planning Documents	4 weeks
Defining the Neighbourhood Area	6 weeks
Draft Neighbourhood Plan	6 weeks
Advertise the Submission of Neighbourhood Plan	6 weeks



Any consultation will be publicised as widely as possible to allow as many people, organisations, businesses and interest groups, an opportunity to be involved.

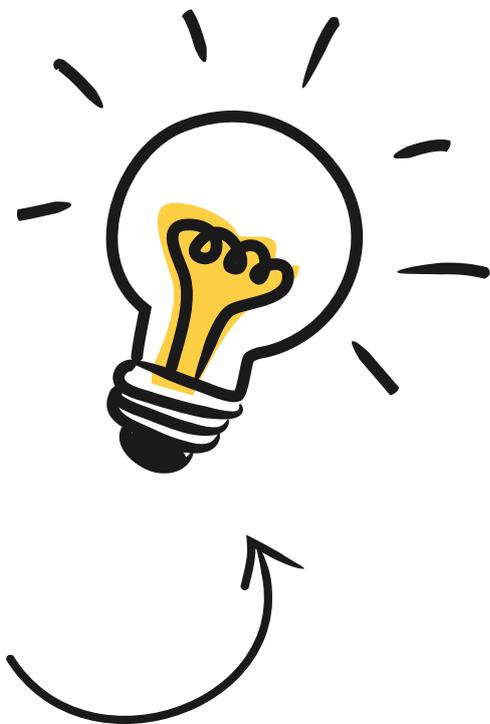
There is also a range of organisations that we have a statutory duty to consult. These organisations include neighbouring authorities, parish councils, infrastructure providers and government bodies. We have a duty to co-operate with a number of organisations. We are required to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis with these organisations.

DO YOU WANT TO BE CONSULTED ON PLANNING ISSUES?

If you would like to be consulted on Local Plan related matters follow this link to update your preferences:

Prestonian e-newsletter and email updates form.

The Council will keep you updated with any new plans and documents which will seek to obtain the views of as many people and organisations as possible as part of this process.



LESSONS LEARNT FROM PREVIOUS PLANNING CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT

The previous SCI was focused on early engagement with the public. This included public exhibitions, drop in sessions and workshops. These events were expensive, required a lot of staff to run and set up, and the outcomes were poor and often not planning related.

It was decided that it was far more efficient and effective to attend other events that acted as attractors in their own right with more interactive activities. In order to access a more representative sample of views we also make use of other sources of information such as corporate surveys and meetings with targeted groups to gauge people's preferences, concerns etc.

In the interests of effective and efficient early engagement with technical stakeholders moreover, an emphasis on workshop-based engagement was proven to be a good way to gather views and expertise from a wide range of organisations and notes of these meetings to be included as representations.

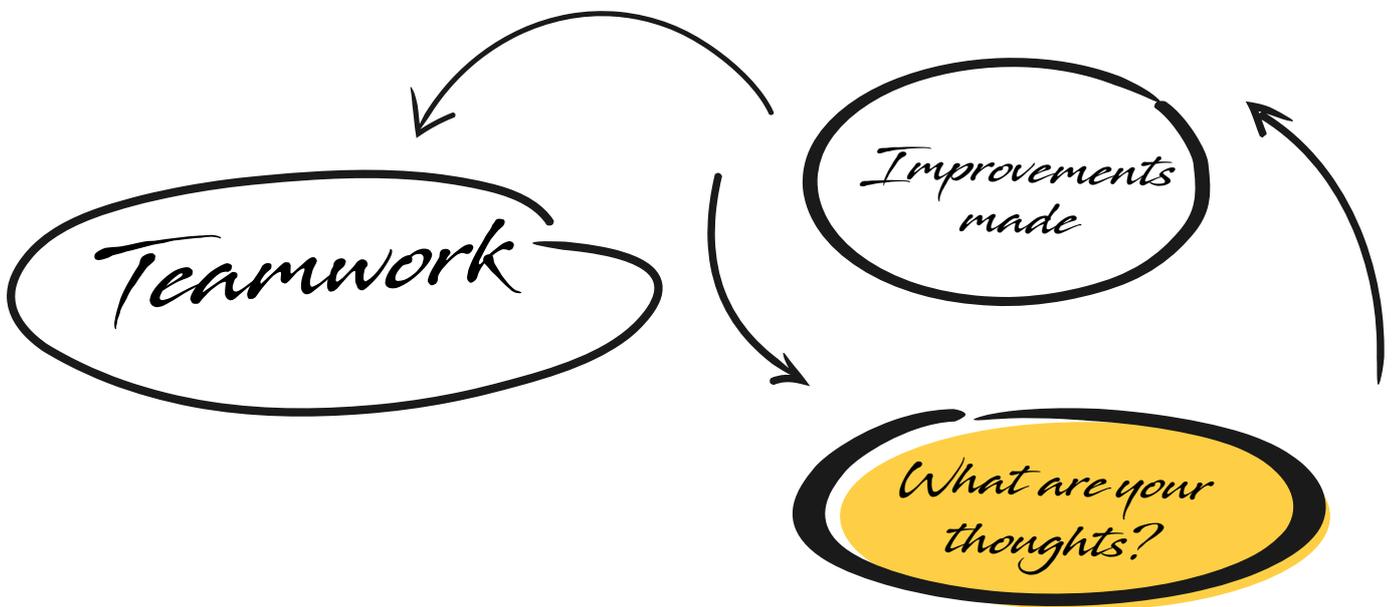
Having undertaken and evaluated a series of formal consultations on Local Plan documents, it was decided that these needed to be supplemented with continuous engagement of local people, making better use of wider corporate resources. The following challenges to engagement and consultation on planning matters in Preston can be identified, alongside various opportunities to tackle them and improve involvement in planning.

Table 1: Previous Planning Consultation & Engagement Challenges and Solutions

CHALLENGES	OPPORTUNITIES/SOLUTIONS
Lack of time to engage; inability to attend consultation events at set times	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social media and website enabling 24/7 engagement • High levels of internet access, including mobile access • Attendance with fun, interactive activities at ‘leisure time’ events
Understanding of English / Understanding of Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with intermediary groups and elected members who can bridge the language barrier • Use of plain English, clear, visual presentation • Creating an Easy Read Document where possible • Promoting understanding through better communications, workshops with key representatives
Population churn, meaning residents consulted are not necessarily those that are affected	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuous engagement rather than consultation only at defined points in time • Updating the database regularly
Lack of interest in planning, particularly strategic planning – seen to be boring, not a life priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement in more exciting, interactive ways, using social media and attending other events with wider attractions • Engagement on specific issues, (not necessarily badged as planning) over short periods to avoid consultation fatigue • Making use of data from corporate surveys and other data gatherers • Drawing on Councillors representative knowledge of local people and issues
Suspicion of the Council and cynicism, consultation fatigue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact with intermediary groups who can bridge the gap • Clear and timely reporting of what we have done with the messages given to us • Engagement on specific issues, (not necessarily badged as planning) over short periods • Making use of data from corporate surveys and other data gatherers

Table 2: Previous Engagement Activity

ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITY	MOST USEFUL AT WHAT STAGE OF POLICYMAKING?	EXAMPLE OF WHEN USED?
Surveys as part of technical assessments	Evidence base gathering; monitoring and review	Local Plan and Core Strategy evidence base Documents. To inform SPD's
Workshops with technical, statutory and over-arching/ umbrella (e.g. organisations that work with certain sectors of the community) stakeholders	Evidence base gathering, issues and options formulation and policy drafting and testing	Local Plan: Core Strategy visioning, evidence base testing and policy drafting
Practice based experience of 'on the ground' issues	All	Local Plan, SPD's
Local Plan Member Working Group (focused sessions with elected members concerning particular issues relating to Planning Policies)	Evidence base gathering, monitoring and review	Local Plan and Core Strategy
Face to face discussions and interactive activities at community events	Evidence base, issues and options formulation, monitoring and review	Inputs to the area-based evidence base re issues and potential development sites (via annotatable maps, post-its and stickers)
Discussions and workshops with groups and individuals that have good links with particular communities	All	Ideas for sites to investigate for site allocations within the Local Plan: Detailed Sites and Policies DPD
Meetings with neighbouring and other authorities on relevant cross- boundary/interauthority matters, notably transport, waste and other sub-regional infrastructure, plus housing need and supply.	All	Joint Core Strategy and Joint SPD's. The City Deal.



3.

COMMUNICATIONS AND AVAILABILITY

Since the previous SCl was adopted, there have been significant advances in technology and increased availability of internet access. The majority of people now have access to the internet.

For consultation purposes, primarily emails will be sent to all statutory consultees and people signed up to receive our planning Policy updates. We will have the Consultation on our website and also post on our social media channels – Facebook and Twitter.

For those people without internet access, it is available to the public at all of the libraries in the Preston area..

Where possible for any consultation documents we will aim to produce an 'easy read' document for people that struggle to read which will aim to summarise the document picture format.

When people have no access to the internet paper copies can be sent out.





4.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

CONSULTATION AND PUBLICITY FOR PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Where required and where neighbouring land or buildings can be clearly identified, notification letters are sent to the occupiers. Site notices are displayed in cases where the occupiers of neighbouring land or buildings cannot be identified. Sometimes site notices will be posted in addition to neighbour notification, where neighbours can be identified.

Consultees, neighbours and any other interested parties can view the plans and information submitted with the application on the Council's website – www.preston.gov.uk/planning. For those without access to the internet, an appointment can be made to view the plans at the Council's offices by telephoning 01772 906912. Consultees are requested, and anyone else is invited, to make comments within 21 days. Comments should be made in writing and can be submitted via the Council's website, by email to the Planning Department's mailbox (devcon@preston.gov.uk) or by letter. Such correspondence will not be acknowledged but any responses received within the consultation period which raise planning-related issues will be considered as part of the determination of applications.

Lists of new applications are published on the Council's website on a weekly basis. These lists provide information including the site's location, the ward, the nature of the development proposed. Pre-application discussions

We are committed to involving the community in determining planning applications. Although it is not mandatory the Council believes that engagement by the applicant with the community prior to the submission of a planning application can be advantageous to all parties involved. In the case of significant planning applications we encourage applicants to carry out community consultation prior to formal submission.

Methods of community consultation will vary depending on the type and scale of development, but may include informing occupiers of nearby properties, ward councillors, Parish Councils where applicable and amenity and community groups. On smaller scale developments, applicants are advised to discuss proposals with their immediate neighbours prior to submission.

Pre-application discussions with us provide a valuable opportunity to improve the quality of applications, enable us to raise awareness of any local issues, allow decisions to be made more quickly and provide more certainty for applicants. For major developments, we offer a Development Team Approach involving a multidisciplinary team of professionals from key partners in the development process. We provide pre-application advice on minor schemes including domestic extensions. Further details on our pre-application advice service, including information on the relevant charges, can be found on the Council's website:

<https://www.preston.gov.uk/yourservices/planning/planning-applications/application-advice/>

Information on whether planning permission is likely to be required for a range of common development projects can be obtained from the Planning Portal's website www.planningportal.co.uk.



INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY DURING THE PROCESSING OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Amendments may be made to a proposal following negotiation between planning officers and applicants. There is no statutory requirement for the Local Planning Authority to publicise any insignificant (non-material) changes to applications. Where amendments make significant changes to a proposal, we will consult the statutory consultees and will notify neighbours and other interested parties, where the changes affect their interest.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A DECISION IS TAKEN ON A PLANNING APPLICATION

When a decision has been made the decision notice is sent to the applicant (or the applicant's representative) and is published on the Council's website. If an appeal is lodged against the refusal of permission we will notify in writing all those notified of the original application and anyone who made written representations. We will forward all representations received on the application to the Planning Inspectorate. We will advise anyone notified of the process to be followed and the arrangements for sending in any further representations.

