



Statement of Community Involvement

Adopted July 2006





A Statement of Community Involvement for Mid Suffolk

**Adopted
July 2006**

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Summary:

This document is the Council's adopted "*Statement of Community Involvement*".

It sets out how we intend to involve all sections of the community in the planning process, including participation at all stages of the *Local Development Framework* process and for significant planning applications.

This document sets out: –

- The benefits of community involvement when making planning decisions
- The minimum requirements for public participation
- Who we will be trying to involve
- The methods we will be using to involve them
- The resources available for community involvement
- How we will monitor and improve the process in the future

These aspects will be set out both in general terms and more specifically for: -

- Each of the different documents in the *Local Development Framework*
- Each stage of the production of these documents
- Planning Applications

The document also includes information about some of the community involvement that has already taken place and information about how it fits in with other relevant strategies such as the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.

The Statement is available to view at the following places: -

- The Council's Website www.midsuffolk.gov.uk
- The Council Offices, 131 High Street, Needham Market – (Mon to Fri 8.30am to 5.00pm)
- Stowmarket Service Centre, 54 Ipswich Street, Stowmarket – (Mon to Fri 8.30am to 5.30pm and Saturday 9.30am to 4.00pm).
- Libraries (please phone the library for opening times)
 - Stowmarket, Library, Milton Road,
 - Ipswich, Library, Northgate Street
 - Bury St Edmunds, Library, St Andrews Street North,
 - Debenham Resource Centre, 22 Cross Road
 - Elmswell, Memorial Hall, Cooks Road
 - Diss, Library, Church Street,
 - Eye, Library, Buckshorn Lane,
 - Needham Market, Library, School Street,
 - Stradbroke, Queen Street,
 - Thurston, Community College,
- Tourist Information Centre, Wilkes Way, Stowmarket
- Town Council Offices, 3 Milton Road, Stowmarket

Making the Statement of Community Involvement more accessible

The Statement of Community Involvement can also be provided in alternative formats such as Braille, large print or translated into another language. To access this free service please contact: -

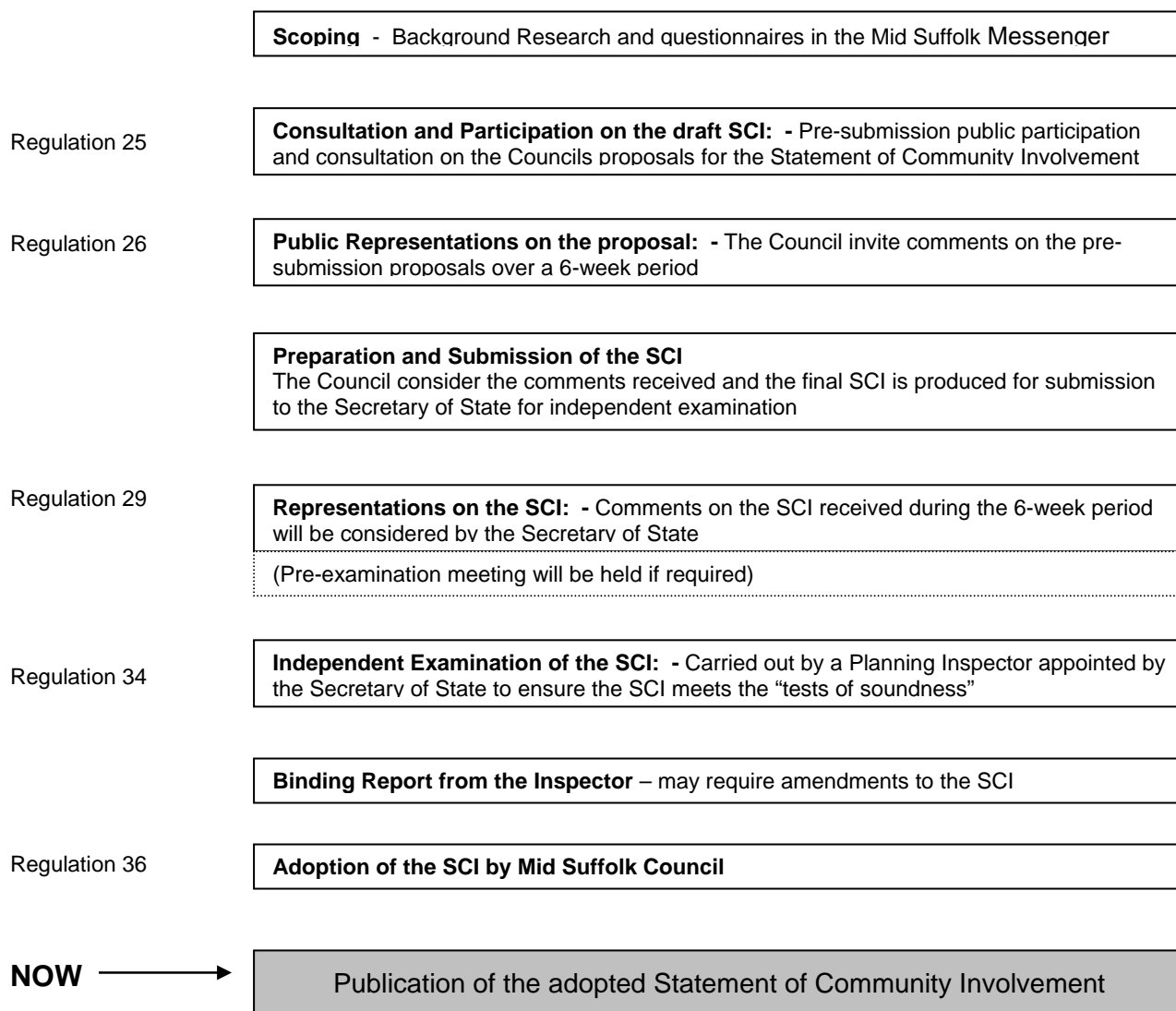
Customer Service Direct – 08456 - 066067

The Planning System uses many technical terms, abbreviations and jargon. To help you make sense of this document a glossary of the most commonly used terms is attached at the back of this document.

The Timetable

The process of producing the Statement of Community Involvement is shown below. The Council has now incorporated the recommendations of the Secretary of State's binding report under Regulations 25 and adopted the document as Council Policy

The Process



Reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement

The Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed on a regular basis – as explained in Paragraph 6.9

If you would like to suggest how the document may be improved in the future, please forward your comments to:

E-mail: - planningpolicy@midsuffolk.gov.uk

Post: - Stephen Andrews, Local Plans Manager, Mid Suffolk District Council, Council Offices, 131 High Street, Needham Market, Suffolk. IP6 8DL

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Part 1

Community Involvement In Development Plans

1.0 Introduction and Context:

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced significant changes to the system of development plans. In an effort to streamline the process, the new system requires the Council to prepare a suite of documents that together make up the Local Development Framework (LDF). This Local Development Framework will replace the existing Mid Suffolk Local Plan.

Each document in the Framework is called a Local Development Document (LDD) and is focused on a different topic. The Statement of Community Involvement is one of these new LDDs and it focuses on getting different sections of the community involved in the planning system.

In this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) we will try to explain how all sections of the various communities in Mid Suffolk will be invited to become meaningfully involved throughout the planning process.

Particular emphasis is given to getting people involved early on, so that their input is taken into account from the start. The SCI is therefore prepared at the beginning of the process of producing Local Development Documents so that there is agreement on how the community will be consulted throughout. The SCI sets out how the council intends to involve people in producing the new policy documents and also indicates how people can become involved in planning applications for significant proposals.

The SCI is a legal document independently examined by the Planning Inspectorate for on behalf of the Secretary of State. It explains how the council will meet:

- the government's requirements set out in the Planning legislation,
- the documents that are subject to consultation and their stages of production.
- the most appropriate methods for involving the community in each of the different types of document and different stages of the process.

The Council must ensure that community involvement meets the duties set out in the Race Relations Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The SCI states the measures that will be taken to ensure fair and equal treatment during consultation and the positive actions to be taken to ensure improved access to the planning process for those sections of the community that can be difficult to reach because of language, disability or lifestyle.

1.1 Timetable for producing the SCI

The early involvement of the community was undertaken through a questionnaire sent to representatives of all sections of the community in February/March 2005. This was followed in June 2005 by a formal consultation on a draft SCI. This draft was amended in the light of your comments and the resultant Statement of Community Involvement has now

been examined by the Secretary of State. Changes recommended by the Secretary of State have been incorporated into the document and the Statement of Community Involvement was adopted as Council Policy in July 2006.

1.2 The Benefits of Community Involvement in Planning:

Everyone gains from the involvement of the community in the planning system and the benefits are greatest where this involvement starts early in the process. The community will help set the agenda - when identifying issues, preparing policies and making decisions on major planning applications.

The immediate gain is that decisions will be better informed when they are reached with the involvement of the people affected by them. However, there are also longer-term gains for all participants that include: -

- i. A focus on the priorities identified by local communities - a stronger evidence base for plans strategies and decisions through the use of local knowledge, skills and experience
- ii. Reduced conflict - saving time, stress and expense by resolving differences at an early stage and therefore fewer unnecessary objections to the resulting planning decisions
- iii. Wider public awareness of how planning works - what can and cannot be delivered through the planning system with a better understanding of the principles and purpose underlying planning policies
- iv. More efficient use of resources - better value for money that will deliver the objectives of the community strategy more effectively

Successful use of locally gathered information with the support of local participants will strengthen the evidence base for plans, strategies and decisions.

Developing the understanding, skills and confidence of the community will help people take an effective part in the planning process while improving levels of citizenship through making an enhanced contribution to their community.

The Statement of Community Involvement is based on the principle that local communities will be encouraged to participate in the planning process by creating better opportunities to obtain information, contribute ideas, help develop proposals and options, make representations and receive feedback.

This SCI sets out how and when different sections of the community can become involved in both the development of the Council's policy documents and in the handling of significant planning applications.

2.0 Which documents are subject to consultation?

The Local Development Framework will be comprised of a portfolio of nine separate 'Local Development Documents' (LDDs) that can be reviewed, amended and updated separately.

The previously published Local Development Scheme (LDS) explains what each Local Development Document covers and sets out the Council's three-year programme for the preparation and review of the Local Development Framework, including a description and timetable for each document.

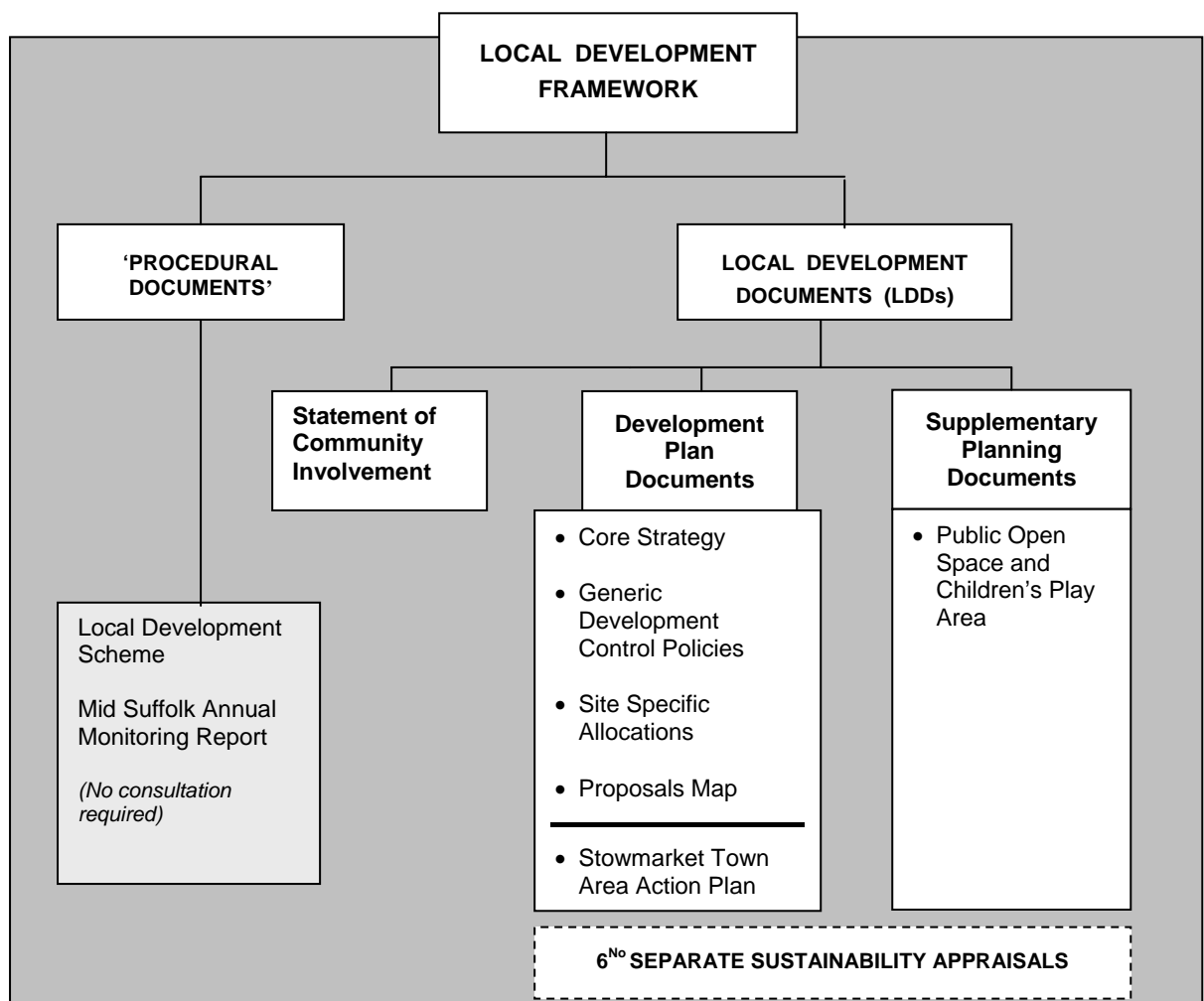
The Local Development Scheme is available on the Mid Suffolk website <http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/environment/planning/policy/LPReview.htm> - the Council offices and at other "deposit points" explained in Section 6.4.

2.1 Types of Document

The LDF has two types of document further explained overleaf.

- (i). 'Procedural' documents give information and explain how the process is organised
- (ii). Local Development Documents (LDDs) consisting of: -
 - Development Plan Documents (DPDs) with the main policies and
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that add detail to specific policies.

Diagram 1: – Titles and Relationship of the Nine Documents in the LDF



2.2 The Key Documents In The New System

a). Procedural Documents

The Local Development Scheme - This document identifies the planning policy documents to be produced and the timetable for their production. It also includes the policies that have been carried forward (saved) from the old Local Plan.

Annual Monitoring Report – measures changes in the key indicators for the quality of life in Mid Suffolk. This indicates whether objectives are being achieved for housing, the local economy, environment, etc. This information is used in the future to identify where policies need amending or replacing.

b). Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

Statement of Community Involvement – This document is prepared at the start of the process and identifies the standards to be achieved by the Council for involving the community in planning matters. The document will outline the methods to be used and the opportunities to become involved in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all local development documents and planning applications.

Core Strategy – The core strategy is the principal document in the LDF. It will identify the development needs to meet the Council's vision for the District as well as the broad locations for new developments to meet these needs. All other documents have to conform to the Core Strategy.

Generic Development Control Policies – The list of policies that will be used to control development proposals on a district-wide basis. Each policy will contain the basic criteria for the consideration of the details of specific planning applications. They will help to safeguard amenity, privacy and the other environmental issues that are important to our quality of life.

Area Action Plans (AAP)– These documents will contain more detailed policies for an identified area that is likely to be subject to change or conservation. The first AAP to be prepared is for the largest town in Mid Suffolk – the Stowmarket Town Centre Area Action Plan.

The Stowmarket AAP will bring forward some of the community-based projects and issues previously identified and worked up by the Town Forum.

Site Specific Allocations – This Local Development Document will identify specific sites for future development such as housing, employment and open space.

Proposals Map- - This series of maps show how the policies and proposals will affect different towns and villages. They will make clear the position of settlement boundaries, conservation areas, proposed housing and employment sites and areas protected for reasons of environmental or visual amenity.

c). Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

Open Space SPD - The LDS has included a programme to support the adoption of a local standard for open space and provide the mechanisms by which commuted sums can be obtained for open space provision.

Six of the nine Local Development Documents will be the subject of a process of community engagement and consultation, each running as a separate process and to an individual timetable. (see Appendix 5)

2.3 Sustainability Appraisals - Ensuring Long Term Benefits

Each of the six key LDDs will be the subject of a 'Sustainability Appraisal' (SA), which will incorporate the requirements of the 'EU Strategic Environmental Assessment.' This will ensure that the resulting long-term economic, environmental and social issues are considered in an integrated and balanced way. These sustainability appraisals are subject to consultation that runs alongside that of the policy document they support.

3.0 Different Stages of Production

There are four different stages to the process of writing every DPD

1. Pre-production – gathering information and evidence from a wide range of organisations to define the issues as precisely as possible.
2. Production – an evolutionary process in 3-parts: -
 - a) Refine the issues and establish the options available to meet national, regional and local priorities. Work informally with the community to identify necessary compromises and preferred options
 - b) Summarise these decisions into a "Preferred Options Report" for formal, public consultation.
 - c) Use the responses to this consultation to determine the content of the final document
3. Examination - the final document is sent for examination by the Planning Inspectorate who will produce a binding report.
4. Adoption - the Council adopt the version of the document amended in line with the Inspector's binding report.

The principles of the process are the same for each type of document, so that if you understand how it works for one then you understand how it works for all. An overview is presented in the diagrams below.

Table 1 and **Table 2** - show these different stages for DPDs and SPDs in more detail and with the approximate timescales.

Diagram (2) - shows how the process flows – Consultation generates information that guides action to create the documents that will be the basis for the next stage of consultation and so on. Regulations govern each process and these are shown in the diagrams and summarised in *Appendix 1*.

Table 1: Stages of Production - Development Plan Documents

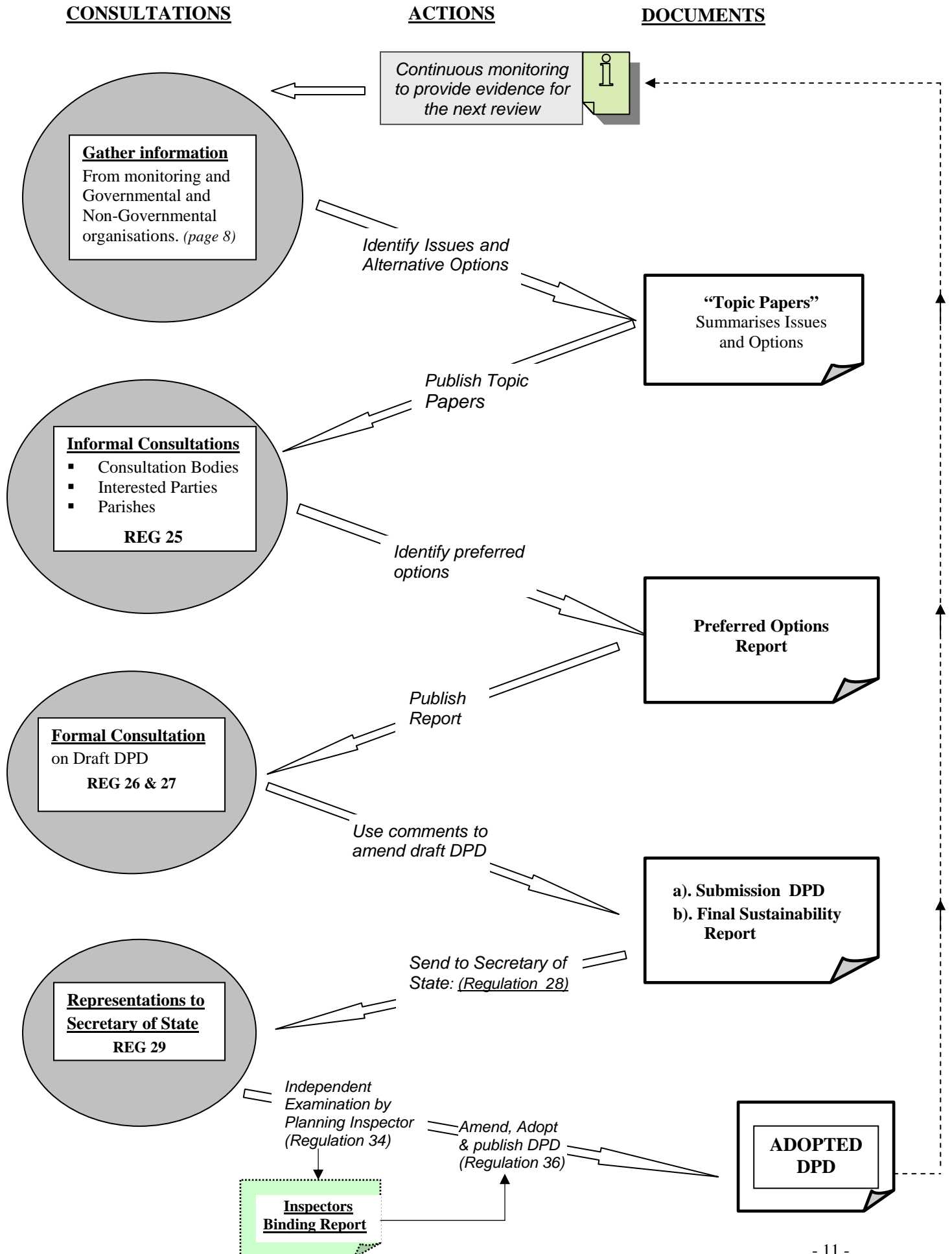
Time Months	Stage		Processes
0	1	Pre- Production	Gather information and evidence from the MSDC monitoring system and from non-Governmental and Governmental organisations
3		Production a). Issues and Options <i>(Regulation 25)</i>	Use this information to summarise issues and suggest alternative options ready for informal consultation Use a variety of means to engage communities in assessing the issues and evaluating the options
12		b). Preferred Options <i>(Regulation 26)</i>	Use sustainability criteria to identify the preferred options. Publish the result in a "Preferred Options Report" Formal consultation 6 weeks
18		c). Submission <i>(Regulation 27 & 28)</i>	Consider comments, amend and publish draft as the final version DPD. Formal 6 week consultation Submit DPD to Secretary of State
24	3	Examination <i>(Regulation 29 &34)</i>	The planning Inspector reviews representations to the consultation in a public examination Inspector publishes the binding report
36	4	Adoption <i>(Regulation 36)</i>	The Council amend the document in line with the report before formally adopting the DPD

Table 2: Stages of Production - Supplementary Plan Documents

Note: SPD are much quicker to prepare as most of the evidence gathering has already been carried out for the relevant DPD and there is no submission to the Secretary of State.
[See *Appendix (1)* for the relevant Regulations]

Time Months	Stage		Processes
0	1	Pre- Production	Gather information and evidence from DPDs and other relevant sources
3		Production a). Issues and Options	Prepare issues and options paper as a basis for gathering community views.
9		b). Preferred Options <i>(Regulation 17 & 18)</i>	Prepare Preferred Options Report taking account of communities views Issue the report for 6 weeks formal consultation
		<i>c). Submission</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
	3	<i>Examination</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
12	4	Adoption <i>(Regulation 19)</i>	The Council amend the document in line with representations before adopting the SPD

DIAGRAM 2 - How Information from Consultations helps to prepare a DPD



4.0 Seeing the wider picture

The aim of the planning system at all levels is to deliver sustainable development to the most appropriate locations, national and regional as well as local. Consequently local planning policy and decisions cannot ignore national guidance, or regulations and legislation or the objectives of other agencies where these are based on considerations of sustainability.

Similarly Mid Suffolk Council must play its strategic role in delivering sustainable services and facilities for the Region. Our planning documents must conform to the Regional Spatial Strategy currently being prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly and Regional Economic Strategy 2004.

At the District level a major goal of the Local Development Framework is to provide the means of achieving the objectives of the Community Strategy by co-ordinating relevant plans, proposals and projects and providing land-use planning control policies. (*See Section 5 - re: the Community Strategy*)

Other essential background information is obtained from local studies of housing need, brownfield land, employment, transport, environment and crime. An indicative list of documents is in the Local Development Scheme.

Government Guidance PPS1 gives prominence to Town 'Forums' and 'Health-checks', Parish Plans and Village Design Statements in determining local planning policies and the Council will pay particular attention to the priorities identified in these documents.

All locally produced background and technical documents contributing to the wider picture will be made available to the public prior to consultation.

4.1 “You asked but then didn’t listen”

This frustration is a common complaint from members of the community and often appears to be based on a misunderstanding of what we are trying to do and the things that consultation can and cannot change.

Consultation is not intended to give a 'power of veto' to local communities, rather it aims to ensure that locally identified needs and priorities form part of the wide planning agenda. Policies and site-specific proposals may then direct development to places where these locally identified goals can be achieved while helping to deliver the regional and national objectives.

<p>It is important to understand from the outset that local planning does not start with a blank sheet of paper – there are ground rules that affect local decision-making and limits to the things that consultation can change.</p>

4.2 Using the Information from previous consultation

An “Issues Report” was published in 2002 and this was supported by a series of 10 public meetings in key locations around the District in 2003/4. The responses to the ‘Issues Report’ and those subsequent meetings will form the basis of “Topic Papers” that will underpin the initial process of informal community involvement for the DPDs. (*see Diagram 2*)

These Topic Papers will allow us to move the process forward without having to ask the community to repeat what they have already said and with less risk of consultation fatigue.

5.0 Links between the Statement of Community Involvement and other local Strategic Documents

The Statement of Community Involvement is the latest in a series of strategic documents that seek to encourage the community to have a greater say in the affairs of the District. In developing these documents, the needs and aspirations of the community have been assessed through market research, in co-operation with a wide range of partners with direct experience of working in the community.

5.1 Community Strategy for Mid Suffolk

First published in October 2003, the Community Strategy for Mid Suffolk sets out a framework for actions to improve the social, economic and environmental well being of all sections of the community. Its central themes are 'Caring for our People', 'Caring for our Towns and Villages' and 'Caring for our Environment'. All of these are issues that need to be addressed, at least in part, by sensible and effective land-use planning.

The Community Strategy for Mid Suffolk is founded on broadly based consultation carried out by the Mid Suffolk Local Strategic Partnership. Community needs and aspirations are assessed on a regular basis using the 'Suffolk Speaks' citizen's panel, which is managed on behalf of the partners by MORI. The views expressed through the panel are tested and reinforced by other consumer research carried out by individual partners, and by the collective experience of the partners working together.

Details of the Community Strategy can be found using the following link.
<http://www.suffolk.org.uk/docs/midsuff.pdf>

5.2 MSDC Corporate Plan

Formally adopted in April 2004, the Corporate Plan brings together all of the activities of the Council into a single structured plan, arranged under eight Headline Objectives. The Corporate Plan has three main themes, which reflect those of the Community Strategy - 'Caring for our People', 'Supporting our Towns and Villages', and 'Protecting our Environment'. Again, these are all issues that need to be addressed, at least in part, by sensible and effective land-use planning.

Details of the Corporate Plan can be found using the following link.
<http://www.midsuffolk.gov.uk/Council/CorporatePlan.htm>

5.3 MSDC Communications Strategy (currently being updated)

There are three main strands to the Council's Communications Strategy, covering Community Engagement; Press and Public Relations; and Internal Communications. Community Engagement is made particularly difficult by the fact that Mid Suffolk is a sparsely populated rural District.

The Communications Strategy recognises that the consultation on the LDF presents a number of opportunities: -

- land-use and planning issues draw large numbers of people into the consultation process.
- A focus on the 'ends' rather than the 'means' will make the issues real, relevant and help generate more and better quality responses
- The information will be of use to all Services within the Council on a wide range of issues affecting the social, economic and environmental well-being of the community.

5.4 The Suffolk Compact

The Compact is a working agreement concerning relations between the statutory agencies and the voluntary and community sector (VCS). It is an expression of the commitment of statutory agencies and the VCS to work in partnership to improve the well being of the community, and to encourage and support voluntary and community activity.

In signing up to the Suffolk Compact, the Council has given an undertaking to consult the VCS on issues that are likely to affect it. It is expected that such consultation will be timely and allow agreed timescales for response, taking into account the need of organisations to consult their users, beneficiaries and stakeholders. Adherence to these principles has been a consideration in preparing the Statement of Community Involvement.

Details of the Suffolk Compact can be found using the following link.http://www.thecompact.org.uk/module_images/Suffolk.pdf

5.5 Joint Consultation Initiatives

The LDF working party has considered the opportunities for lessening the consultation burden on the community by joint consultation initiatives for the Local Development Document and other strategic documents. It is recognised that this would be beneficial (*see also 5.3 above*) but at present resources do not allow such an approach.

There is a proposal (currently subject to internal consultation) to facilitate such a move in the future through a management restructure that will bring planning policy and community strategy sections of the Council closer together. Joint action will also be made easier following the proposed increase in resources set out in Section 7.1 and & 7.1.1 of this document.

6.0 Strategy for Community Involvement

6.1 Characteristics Of Mid Suffolk Affecting Community Involvement:

6.1.1. Geographical Character

Historically Mid Suffolk is an agricultural district that is heavily influenced by large centres of population just across its borders – [Bury St Edmunds in the west, Ipswich in the east, Diss and Harleston in the north]. The other major influence is the A14 trunk road that runs through Mid Suffolk linking Ipswich to Bury St Edmunds and providing the container lorry route between the port of Felixstowe and the M1/M6 motorways.

Mid Suffolk is a rural district with a population of 86,837 (35,396 households) living in 122 settlements distributed over an area of 336 sq. miles [87,148Ha] (*Census 2001*). The pattern of scattered settlements is not evenly distributed with half the population living in the towns and larger villages adjacent to the main A14 trunk road.

There are 3 towns in Mid Suffolk, Stowmarket (pop 14,830), Needham Market (pop 4495) both near the A14 and Eye (pop 2,000) in the north of the district. The villages vary in size from Elmswell (pop 3,359) to Athelington (pop 23),

- 15 villages (12%) have populations in excess of 1,000,
- 73 villages (60%) have populations below 500, of which
- 11 villages (10%) have populations of less than 100.

6.1.2. Demographic Character

Racial/Ethnic Mix The 2001 census shows that 97% of the population fall in the 'white British' group and 99% in one of the three 'white' groups. No other ethnic/racial group constitutes more than 0.18% of the population (c.150N°).

Travellers were not included in the census as a separate group and are often reluctant to self-identify. There are currently 13 authorised sites for travellers in Mid Suffolk with licenses for 105 units. There is therefore potential for a population in excess of 150, which could make the traveller community the largest minority group in the District.

Research at Regional and County level is currently being undertaken to establish a better factual base to enable this community to be more readily engaged in the planning system.

Religion: The 2001 census shows that less than 1% of those that stated a religion were non-Christian.

Age Mid Suffolk has an aging population with 17% over 65 years old and 44% aged over 45. There is also a sizeable population (20%) below school leaving age.

6.2 Who will be consulted?

The Council's strategy for consultation takes account of the characteristics of the district (above), the aspirations of the council and the community as well as the legal requirements and the resources available to meet them.

6.2.1. Legal Requirements

The minimum legal requirements for consultation and public participation on the Local Development Framework are set out in the Town and Country Planning Regulations (2004) (see *Appendix 1*). The Statement of Community Involvement follows these regulations to a timetable set out in *Appendix 5*.

The relevant bodies were consulted in March as required by Regulation 25 and the resulting draft Statement of Community Involvement was published for consultation in June 2005 (Regulation 26). We have considered all the representations we received and made appropriate amendments. The Statement has now been submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination (Regulation 28).

The Planning Inspector will consider any representations made regarding the submitted Statement of Community Involvement and test the Statement through an Examination process (Regulation 29). At the end of this process the Council will receive the Inspector's report whose recommendations are binding. Any necessary amendments will be made to the Statement before it is formally adopted (Regulation 36) around January 2006.

6.2.2. Wider Engagement - beyond the Minimum Legal Requirements

Mid Suffolk District Council is committed to exceeding the minimum legal requirements and involving as many individuals and groups in the formation of the new planning policies and proposals as possible. Any person or organisation interested in the future of the district can get involved in the planning process. We hope this document will enable people to do so.

In response to representations on consultation we will publish an easy to read explanatory leaflet as soon as possible after adoption of the SCI. The leaflet will focus on where information can be accessed and how and when people can become involved. We will make the leaflet available at the Council Offices, libraries and other deposit points, place it on our website and send it to Parish Councils and everyone on our database.

6.2.3. Local Groups we will seek to involve in the process

In order to achieve its aim of wider involvement, the Council intends not only to work with its existing partners in the community but also to develop new contacts wherever possible. Some of the groups that we intend to involve in the preparation of our Local Development Documents include: -

- **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** – The LSP was set up to ensure that a joined up approach was taken to improving the quality of life for Mid Suffolk communities during the next five to ten years.

- **Town Forums** – These forums provide local people with an opportunity to discuss and give views on the core policies and strategic issues as well as on the more specific topic-based documents.
- **Elected Members** – District councillors have been elected to voice the views of the communities they represent and the Council will look to regularly involve Members in every stage of the Local Development Framework process.
- **Town and Parish Councils** – Feedback will be obtained from local councils during the early engagement stages, at the production stage and again at the submission stage to help ensure that the community's concerns are consistently understood and considered.
- **Statutory Consultees** – As set out in the regulations, relevant utility companies, government agencies and adjacent councils will be regularly consulted throughout the Local Development Framework process (see *Appendix 2*)
- **Key Contacts** - The Council holds a large database of organisations and community groups that are based or operate within the boundaries of Mid Suffolk. Included in the database are amenity groups, conservation bodies, local residents associations, religious groups, sports clubs, health care trusts, schools and colleges. The organisations and groups in this database will be invited to become involved in the preparation of relevant Local Development Documents. This database will be updated and supplemented by further information collected during the course of the Local Development Framework. (see *also Appendix 2*)
- **Interested Parties** – The database includes individuals who wish to be consulted on Local Development Framework issues or wish to be involved in the preparation of one particular Local Development Document.

Groups and organisations can confirm their current inclusion on the database, or ask to be included, by contacting the Council Offices. The Council's website is being updated to facilitate access to this information www.midsuffolk.gov.uk

6.2.4 'Hard to Reach' Groups – The Council's 'Equality Statement' promotes social inclusion and attempts to ensure that no one is discriminated against because of his or her age, disability, gender, ethnic origin or nationality, sexual orientation, domestic circumstances, marital status, political or religious belief.

The Council wishes to ensure that sections of the community that have been traditionally under-represented in the planning process have an opportunity to become involved. These are the so-called 'hard to reach' groups who may be unintentionally excluded because their specific needs are not being met.

The Council had identified the hard to reach groups in Mid Suffolk as being: older people, rural groups, disabled people, minority ethnic groups, travellers, young people, people on low incomes, local businesses.

Mid Suffolk is reviewing the way in which it seeks to involve these groups and Appendix 6 shows both our existing practice and the improvements we are developing.

Access – ‘The Common Difficulty’

Studies show that access to information and services is a common difficulty across the district for all sectors of the community. This is consistent with the scattered nature of the settlements, an aging population and the limited availability of public transport in rural areas. Solutions to this problem will benefit all members of the community.

The Council is responding to this problem by creating “Service Shops” in the 3 towns reducing access times to 15 minutes for 90% of the population and by increasing electronic access across the district.

With over 100 parishes in the district there are obvious difficulties resourcing face-to-face meetings. We will make access easier by running nine public workshops across the District for each of the LDF documents. These will be in our three towns, in Debenham and in each of the five areas of the District identified in the Housing Needs Survey as having different development pressures. Groups of parishes will be invited to their nearest venue.

This difficulty of communication with village residents is compounded because although most parishes have a newsletter, they are published at different dates, over several different time periods (monthly to quarterly) with different lead times for submitting copy. This makes it difficult to get the same information published at the same time across the district. Parish newsletters are not always useful when a time-bound response is required.

Capacity Building and Parish Plans:

Because of the difficulties of access it is important to build capacity within the parishes to express their needs and aspirations to their own timetable and in a form that the planning system can support. For this reason the Council is keen to continue to foster the local production of Parish Plans (Village Appraisals) and Village Design Statements.

Parish Plans require the involvement of all members and sectors of the community and a consensus guides the priorities identified in their action plans. Their special value as exemplars of an inclusive process will be recognised by incorporating relevant aspects under appropriate policies of the Local Development Framework.

6.3 Improving our Consultation methods

Mid Suffolk has traditionally used a wide variety of means to engage its dispersed rural communities. Early in 2005 as part of the Regulation 25 consultation, we asked every organisation on our Local Plan mailing list to respond to a questionnaire asking how different groups wanted to become involved in the different types of planning issues.

A formal analysis of the results is presented in *Appendix 3*.

The Main Messages:

It became clear that while housing was the top interest for almost everyone, there were considerable differences in the ranking of other areas of interest. 'Regeneration' and 'economy' were next important for the development industry while for Parish Councils it was 'transport' and 'community issues'. Interest groups and governmental organisations were focused on their own areas of concern. No area of interest scored zero for any of the groups.

The preferred methods for involving the wider community in LDF issues are different for different groups. However e-mail is stated most often as the preferred means of communication for all types of organisation and all types of issue.

While most groups are content to receive information about issues of wider interest from newsletters, e-mails or from the Council's website, there is more demand for face-to-face processes for consultation on local sites and issues. These processes include exhibitions, public meetings and consultations with the interested parties. The Parish Councils particularly value the support they receive from District Councillors in all aspects of planning.

Consultations with interested parties (stakeholders) and pre-application discussions were identified as the best means of involving the wider community in major planning applications. However there were considerable differences between the responses of different groups – (see *Section 8.1.2*)

The Council's response to this consultation has been to investigate the possibility of a customised approach, targeting documents to organisations already known to be interested and using means of communication to suit the specific needs and preferences of each organisation.

However this fully customised approach is currently impracticable because: -

- Consultees interests and preferences change and need constant updating,
- Hardware and software limitations for electronic communications, particularly when dealing with lengthy documents
- Management and financial resources are inadequate either to operate a continuously updated database or to run parallel electronic and paper systems

We propose the further development of electronic communication such as an interactive website but also the use of a wide range of other means of communication with opportunities for one-to-one processes when options are being discussed.

With no clear message on areas of interest, we will follow the most inclusive strategy and assume that bodies are interested in contributing unless they have specifically and recently indicated otherwise.

6.4 Making the LDF documents available to everyone

In a large geographical area like Mid Suffolk it is important for all the documents to be made available as widely as possible.

- Parish Councils will be asked to support the process by holding copies of current key documents and making them available locally.
- Documents and other information will be placed at dispersed “Deposit Points” to open up the process to a wider audience, beyond those who are usually active at the Parish and District Council levels.
- This will be duplicated on the Council website www.midsuffolk.gov.uk
- Groups represented in the Suffolk Association of Voluntary Organisations will be given access to the LDF process via the resource centre at “Red Gables” in Stowmarket. (see App 6)
- Partnership with Suffolk County Council, British Telecom and CGI to offer a new approach to the delivery of public services.

Through the new joint venture company called Customer Service Direct (CSD) we will be able to agree the placement of LDF documentation at various locations where the public will have “walk-in” access including:

- The newly opened Service Centre in Stowmarket and the two new centres in Needham Market and Eye.
- Other Reception offices of the County and District Councils
- The County Library Service –libraries within the District, in neighbouring Districts and Mobile Libraries – other County premises including Family centres and
- Education and Youth service centres

6.5 Methods Of Consultation We Will Use

With a number of documents being prepared on a range of different topics, each with its own continuous consultation and feedback procedures there may be some room for confusion. The Council will need to make clear the scope and purpose of each round of consultation.

So in each consultation round the Council will make clear: -

- What document is being prepared
- What stage has been reached in the process
- The issues on which views are being sought
- What people are being asked to do (fill in a questionnaire, attend a meeting, or an interactive event, etc)
- When your responses need to be received by the Council
- How the responses will be used – whether they can or cannot influence the outcomes
- How and when results of the consultation will be available
- The stages of the process still to come.

We will be using the following methods of public engagement to prepare the Local Development Documents:

- **Local Press** – The East Anglian Daily Times, the Diss Express and the Bury Free Press and other local newspapers will be used to advertise the publication of documents and dates of meetings. Articles and press releases will be used to encourage debate.
- **Leaflets and Newsletters** – We will continue to use the LSP's own newsletter '*The Mid Suffolk Messenger*', which is delivered to all homes in the district. The planning department will also distribute newsletters updating everyone on our database with the latest planning information.
- **Website** – The Council will encourage people to visit our website www.midsuffolk.gov.uk to keep up-to-date with the latest planning news. All draft and final versions of Local Development Documents will be published on the website with a full explanation of how the public can comment on them.
- **Members Bulletin** – will keep District Councillors informed of planning decisions and the progress of the Local Development Framework.
- **Information via Councillors** - Councillors represent the community and cascade and feedback information through their involvement with a wide range of organisations. This service was highly valued in response to our questionnaire.
- **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** – A partnership of members from the private, public and community/voluntary sectors providing public service delivery.
- **Stowmarket Town Forum** –Established from representatives of local organisations, community groups and other interested parties.
- **Town Health Checks** – Needham Market is currently involved in this process. The Health Checks cover a wide range of issues including transport, safety and town centre opportunities.
- **Parish Plans** – A number of Parishes in the District have produced their own Parish Plans. These collect together the views and opinions of the local community and set out an action plan for addressing the main issues for the Parish. Parish Plans (and Village Design Statements) are seen as key to the delivery of the aspirations of the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan as well as building capacity in the Community to deal constructively with planning and change.
- **Topic Papers** - will be prepared and made widely available. These will summarise issues and options relevant to each Development Document and form the basis for early community involvement in the planning process

- **Exhibitions** – Public displays giving communities the opportunity to learn about the progress of the Local Development Framework and to give their views. Located in key sites across the district and open out of office hours with lots of visual information, these are a good way of attracting people who may not normally be interested. – They help people visualise proposals and will be particularly useful for site-specific allocations.
- **Public Meetings / Workshops / Roadshows** – were used to disseminate information and gather responses to planning issues raised at the start of the planning process and will continue throughout the consultation stages.
- **Surveys** – Questionnaires sent to large numbers of people to gauge their response and attitude to a number of questions. “Suffolk Speaks” is a well-established example of this method that is a good supplement to other methods of engagement.
- **Information Boards and Posters** – Eye-catching and informative displays will be used to encourage people to get involved in the planning process. These will be displayed in the planning reception area, local libraries and dispersed access points provided by Customer Service Direct
- **Hard to Reach Groups** – We will work with representatives of groups who are often under-represented in the planning process, to provide opportunities for them to make comments on new proposals and policies. (see 6.2.4 and Appendix 6)

6.6 Community involvement in Specific Local Development Documents

While the section above sets out the consultation options the favoured approach to consultation for each document is set out in tables in *Appendix 5*.

The approach taken is based upon the responses to the survey and the resources available to the Council to undertake each activity. We have also tailored the consultation to meet the needs of each particular document.

In all cases, where we publish a draft document for comment and debate we will: -

- i. put a notice in the local press
- ii. make the documents available at the Council Offices, local offices, all local libraries and on the website and facilitate representations on line
- iii. send copies of documents to the types of body listed in *Appendix 2*
- iv. inform interested individuals and bodies on our mailing list about the stage we have reached and how they can get involved
- v. acknowledge all representations received
- vi. make all representations available for public inspection
- vii. respond to representations on an individual basis by informing respondents how we have considered their comments and whether any changes have been made as a result.

The tables in *Appendix 5* set out the proposed arrangements for involving the community in each of the documents that make up the Local Development Framework at every stage of the process.

These schedules should also be read in conjunction with the recently published Local Development Scheme, which includes and estimated target timescales and milestones for each of these documents.

6.7 What happens to your comments?

Formal consultation periods will usually last for 6 weeks. During that time all written comments received by the Council will be acknowledged and stored electronically for future reference. All responses will be public information so make sure your comments are not libellous or defamatory! Anyone making comments at the Pre-submission stages will be consulted automatically at subsequent stages.

We will consider representations at each stage of the process and report on the issues through the Environment Policy Panel and the Executive of the Council. Following the Council's consideration of responses officers will prepare feedback on the key issues identified by the consultation processes.

Following submission to the Secretary of State an independent inspector may need to consider both the public's representations and the Council's responses. The recommendations in the Inspector's report will be binding on the Council.

Your comments will be used throughout the process as statements on either a particular site related issue or as part of broader policy matters.

6.8 Monitoring and Improving Community Involvement

At the key stages in the preparation of each Local Development Document we will write to interested parties explaining the stage of production we have reached, outlining the progress to date and the timetable for future events. This is an opportunity to inform the community how their views have been taken into account.

To help us monitor and review how we operate, we will attach feedback forms to all the planning policy documents we produce and evaluation forms will be readily available after each major consultation exercise. This will allow us to assess how successful the process was and to make any changes that may be required.

A feedback form for your comments is available with each copy of this document, downloaded from the website, or by request to the Council.

6.9 Reviewing the Statement of Community Involvement

Because the SCI is a Local Development Document (LDD) it will be monitored and reviewed annually as part of the Annual Monitoring Report, to check that the methods and techniques being used are still the most appropriate.

The annual review will look at feedback forms from consultations on the Local Development Documents, comments from any of the Council's wider consultation events and analysis of the level of participation of groups and organisations on the 'Key Contacts' Database (*para 6.2.3*). Where the review shows that the involvement of the community in the planning process can be significantly improved and the SCI no longer adequately reflects this better practice, then the SCI will be reviewed.

In any case the SCI will be timetabled for review in the Local Development Scheme to precede the review of the LDDs and SPDs currently in production. The experience of producing these first phase LDDs will offer an insight into the effectiveness of the techniques used and an opportunity to revise the SCI before these LDDs are themselves reviewed.

These reviews go beyond the period covered by the current Local Development Scheme but will be incorporated at the appropriate annual review.

7 Resources

7.1 Who will be dealing with the SCI and the new Framework?

The Local Plans team will be the main contacts dealing with the people who respond to the planning process and the preparation of the LDF documents.

The original resource of 5 people for the research of background documents, the preparation of the LDF documents and all the consultation processes has been recognised as inadequate if other work is to continue at the same time. Two additional members of staff will be recruited to create a team of 4 planning officers with support from 2 administrative officers, under the Local Plans Manager.

Further support for Graphics and Publishing will be provided by the Council's partner organisation - Suffolk Technological Partnership.

7.1.1 A team approach

The Council works with a strong sense of shared purpose linked to the delivery of its corporate plan, (e.g. of affordable homes, crime prevention and a healthy environment). Assistance from other services within the Council is available to help with the review process through an 'in house' Local Development Framework Working Group. This will allow the involvement of the following officers to support the process at various times:

- Economic Development Officer
- Landscape Officer
- Countryside Manager
- Development Control Officers/Manager
- Waste and Environmental Co-ordinator
- Housing Enabling Officer
- Community Development Officer
- Community Safety Officer
- Corporate Development Manager
- Environmental Health Manager

Joint working ensures 'in house' expertise is utilised to best advantage and that every section of the Council will consider all responses from consultees.

It is intended that in time the additional resource available in the planning team will facilitate a more joined up approach to consultations involving other strategies and other departments.

The Council is also working in partnership with all other Local District Councils in the County and the County Council to enable the pooling of resources for a number of key elements in the LDF process. These areas of work include undertaking the Strategic Environmental Assessment / Sustainability

Appraisal process through the established Suffolk District Authorities Sustainability Appraisal Group.

This Countywide partnership enables local authorities to pool many resources in the production of the Sustainability Appraisal Reports.

7.2 Financial Resources

The District Council has set aside sums of money annually to build up a budget for use in connection with the LDF process. Part of this money will be needed to fund the procedures and formal Inquiry necessary to complete the First Alteration to the Local Plan (relating to Affordable Housing Policy) but the remainder will be available for the LDF process.

The fund is sufficient to support the use of independent consultants to help with the programme of events and the preparation of documents.

Part 2

Community Involvement In Planning Applications

8.0 Community Involvement in Planning Applications

Many people come into contact with the planning system through the planning application process when there is a proposal that is likely to make an impact directly on their lives. Planning applications can generate a lot of local interest and this sometimes results in conflict between the Local Authority, the applicant or developer and the local community.

The minimum legal requirements for public consultation and the administration of planning applications are contained in *The General Development Procedure Order 1995 (GDPO)*. For example *Article 8* distinguishes major from minor development and requires different notification procedures for each.

The table in (*Appendix 4*) sets out the minimum legal requirements and the Council's existing policy that exceeds these requirements.

The SCI will identify what more we aim to do through improved communications, the evolution of electronic services and our partner organisations.

8.0.1 Improving Communications - The “Planning Forum”

In response to the identified need for better communications with interested parties the Council has started a regular series of joint meetings ('Planning Forums') with local representatives of both the development industry and parish councils.

The Council will seek the forum's views on diverse planning matters such as procedures for pre-application advice, speaking at public hearings and revised advisory planning leaflets. The forum will play a key role in our consultation strategy but not to the exclusion of other stakeholders.

8.1 Strategy For Community Involvement In Planning Applications

The strategy recognises that types and scales of community involvement must take account of: -

- The available resources,
- The needs and aspirations of individual communities,
- The nature of the application (purpose, size, scale of proposed development)
- The phase of the application (Pre-application, Submission, Post-application)

Resources are limited and must be targeted to 'significant development'. This will not only include 'major development' as defined in the GDPO but also other development that is of significant size locally or located on sensitive sites. Other development, which is considered to be of a controversial nature, will also be classified as 'significant'. The strategy therefore differentiates between smaller development and the larger "significant developments".

8.1.1 Smaller developments

The council already undertakes to exceed the minimum legal requirements, where possible, by notifying neighbours and parish councils as well as putting up site notices for these applications. In addition applicants are supported through the application procedure with a number of leaflets dealing with all aspects of planning procedures, 'Planning Aid' and specifics such as permitted development rights, listed buildings, landscape specification for development sites. These leaflets are also available through Planning Reception and when updated will be available on the Mid Suffolk website.

8.1.2 'Significant' (Larger) Developments

The legal requirements for notification for major sites are in *Appendix 4*. This section also includes sites that fall outside the 'Major Site' thresholds that are significant locally due to scale, sensitivity or their controversial nature.

In response to the questionnaire asking parish councils, developers and other interest groups how they wish to be informed about major planning applications. The development industry and interest groups tended to favour e-mail communication and pre-application discussion, while parish councils favoured public meetings, exhibitions and talks with interested parties in response to local issues. Parish Councils are being encouraged to make greater use of e-mail communication but this will not replace postal communication except by demand from individual parishes.

Different types of community involvement are appropriate at different stages of the application process. The strategy for significant developments identifies the different needs at Pre-application, Submission and Post-application stages.

8.2 Significant Developments - Pre-Application Stage:

The Council wishes to encourage the concept of a three-way partnership between the planning authority, the community and applicants in the delivery of sustainable development. This would have many potential benefits:-

- Helping to overcome suspicion about the way applications are handled
- Better quality applications
- Better design - in line with both the community needs and the site's characteristics
- Early availability of good quality information to identify issues and problems up-front
- Resolving problems before objections are raised
- Helps applicants gather information such as identifying key stakeholders and emerging policy
- Saving the resources of the Council, the community and the developer.

These benefits will only arise if the parties work together from an early stage, when the details of a future application are still open to change, in a process that includes everyone, acting within an agreed set of ground rules.

8.2.1 The Objectives of pre-application discussions

The objectives of pre-application discussions involve: -

- a) confirming that the principle of development is acceptable and
- b) clarifying the format, type and level of detail required for the planning authority to determine an application.

It is important not to prejudge the forthcoming application and unintentionally create expectations of approval when this may not be forthcoming. This will be particularly important if the council decide to charge for pre-application advice in the future.

Similarly while there may be benefits from an applicant seeking to engage the community directly it is important that there should be no suggestion of entering into direct negotiation. The independence and impartiality of the planning officer must be made clear.

8.2.2 Proposed Action

Pre-application advice was suspended last year due to lack of resources. Following discussion with the Planning Forum it is our intention to re-introduce the service as resources allow. (Reintroduced early in 2006)

Developers are under no legal obligation to enter into pre-application discussions and cannot be required to do so. However the council wish to encourage such discussions and has committed to this in three ways: -

1. A development team approach to dealing with significant proposals so that all parties may benefit from the advice and experience of other relevant sections within the council.
2. Replacing the existing guidance leaflet on pre-application advice with two new leaflets. A short version for householder applications and a revised protocol setting the guidelines for the involvement of the community and the development industry in larger applications.
3. Training will be arranged for officers, members and parish councillors.

8.3 Submission stage

The minimum legal requirements for the notification of planning applications have been covered above and in *Appendix 4*. Parish Councils will continue to be consulted on all applications and can gain early access the weekly list of planning applications affecting their Parish on the Mid Suffolk web site.

The weekly list of applications may be found at the Council web site alongside a link to the planning portal. - <http://www.midsuffolkdc.gov.uk/planning/>

Guidance on specific aspects of the planning application system is available in the leaflets referred to in *Section 8.1.1* above.

These leaflets are in the process of being updated to bring them into line with information that is made available by the Council's partner organisations and from the website. The leaflets will be subject to consultation with the Planning Forum before publication.

Planning reception deal with enquiries following submission of a planning application. They are supported by a duty-officer rota system that ensures that a planning officer is available as and when necessary.

8.4 Post-Application Stage

The Council's Policy on the notification of decisions is that set down in the *GDPO (Article 22)*. Written notice of decisions is given to Parish Councils and objectors. This is proving more valuable now that reasons for approval are included as well as reasons for refusal.

It is recognised that there is a need for more detailed feedback on some decisions and a system of meetings with groups of parish councils on a six-monthly basis will be instituted as resources allow.

Previously Parish Councils have raised the issue of the lack of consultation on revised applications. This has been addressed by a more stringent adherence to the policy that significant revisions will result in refusal, requiring a new application and further consultation to include the proposed revisions.

8.5 Changes To The Methods Of Accessing Information

As part of the response to the problems of access caused by the scattered settlement pattern characterising this rural authority, two main changes are proposed to the way that the public will be able to gain planning information.

- i. Mid Suffolk Council has entered into an agreement with CSD to take over elements of the front-line planning service from October 2005. Access to information from the planning website and to the "planning portal" will be available in 'one-stop shops', first in Stowmarket and later in other centres across the District. (see section 6.4)
- ii. A new electronic planning system is currently being installed and over time this will give the public access to: -
 - Previous applications on a CD viewer
 - Plotting Sheets
 - Current applications including submitted plans and progress of the case file.
 - All supporting leaflets
 - Information about independent support through 'Planning Aid'
 - All protocols relating to such things as, pre-application advice, delegation of decision-making, appeals, speaking at meetings, etc

A translation service for non-English speakers is available on request.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 A Brief Summary of the Regulations relating to public consultation for DPDs.

APPENDIX 2 Regulation 25 - Specific and General Consultation Bodies

APPENDIX 3 Results of Questionnaire into 'Preferred Methods of Consultation'

APPENDIX 4 Summary of the Minimum Legal Requirements for notification of Planning Applications

APPENDIX 5 Methods of Community Involvement for each Local Development Document

APPENDIX 6 Improving Engagement with 'Hard to Reach' Groups

Glossary of Terms

APPENDIX 1

A Brief Summary of the Regulations relating to DPDs.

(The Regulations in full are available from ODPM as “The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004”)

The requirements and Regulations for DPDs and SPDs are different

A). Development Plan Documents (DPDs) (and SCI)

Regulation 25 - Pre-Submission Consultation

This is the informal consultation at the ‘Develop Issues and Options’ stage of the process commonly referred to as “Early Involvement”.

Before being able to comply with Regulation 26 the Local Planning Authority must consult each of the “specific consultation bodies” listed in Appendix 2 and other bodies that we think appropriate, called “general consultation bodies”.

We must identify the extent to which we think that the specific consultation body is affected by the subject matter of the Development Plan Document.

In the case of the Statement of Community Involvement the specific consultation bodies are limited to the East of England Regional Assembly, parish councils in Mid Suffolk, adjoining local authorities councils in Mid Suffolk, and the Highways Agency.

Regulation 26 – Pre-submission Public Participation

Before a DPD is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination, copies of the pre-submission proposals (‘draft DPD’) and supporting literature must be made available for inspection during normal office hours at the Council offices in Needham Market and other appropriate places (e.g. deposit sites – See Para 6.4, page 16).

We must also publish the documents on the website, send copies to the bodies we consulted under Regulation 25 and give notice in the local press

Regulation 27 – Representations on the Draft DPD issued in Regulation 26

During pre-submission public participation we must accept and consider representations properly made and received within a 6-week period before submitting a Development Plan Document.

Regulation 28 – Submission of Documents to the Secretary of State

Four copies of the DPD must be sent to the Secretary of State together with: -

- the relevant supporting Sustainability Report,
- a copy of the Statement of Community Involvement
- the list of the bodies we consulted and how, plus a summary of issues they raised and how these have been addressed in the DPD
- a summary of any representations made under Reg 27 together with a statement as to how they were addressed in the DPD

Copies of all the documents will be posted on the website and sent to consultees listed in Regulation 25 and a statement of the availability for inspection posted on the website and in the local press.

Regulation 29 – Representation on the (Final) DPD issued under Regulation 28

Any person may make a representation within 6 weeks of the submission of the DPD to the Secretary of State.

Regulation 30 – Conformity with Regional Strategy

We must request an opinion from the Regional Planning Body as to the general conformity of the DPD with the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Regulation 31 – Handling of Representations

As soon as practically possible we will make copies of any representations received available for inspection and publish them on the website.

We will send to the Secretary of State a statement of the total number of representations received, copies of the representations and a summary of the main issues.

Regulations 32/33 – site allocation representations

In addition to the requirements of Regulation 31 we must make the representation available for inspection, publish details on our website and in the local press and send a copy to the bodies consulted in Regulation 25.

Regulation 34 – Examination

This regulation explains how examination should be organised when there is a request to appear before the independent inspector. It sets out the requirements regarding timing, location and publicity.

Regulation 35 – Publication of Recommendations

As soon as possible after the day that the DPD is adopted we must publish the inspectors report and the reasons for their recommendations make them available for inspection and organise publicity on the website and in the local press. We must also notify people who requested to be notified of the inspector's report.

Regulation 36 – Adoption of development plan document

As soon as possible after adopting the development plan document we must publish an adoption statement and sustainability appraisal report make all three documents available for inspection and organise publicity on the website and in the local press.

We must send the adoption statement to anyone who requested to be notified and send the adoption statement to the Secretary of State.

B). Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

An SPD can only add detail to identified paragraphs of an existing DPD. Consequently the underlying principles will have already been subject of public examination and the main difference between the procedures for an SPD and a DPD is that the Secretary of State is not required to examine a SPD. As a consequence there is only a single formal consultation and representations are considered by the Local Planning Authority.

Any person aggrieved by the adoption of a SPD may apply for judicial review within 3 months of adoption.

Regulation 17 - Public Participation

Before a local planning authority adopts an SPD they must: -

- make copies of the SPD,
- the supporting sustainability appraisal
- details of which bodies were consulted and how plus a summary of the main issues raised and how these were addressed in the document
- details of how, when and where to make representations

available for inspection, publish them on their website and give notice in the local press.

The Local Planning Authority must send copies of all the documents to each of the specific consultation bodies and other bodies that the planning authority consider appropriate

The planning authority must request an opinion from the Regional Planning Body as to the conformity of the SPD with the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Regulation 18 – Representations on SPDs

Any person can make representations about an SPD providing they are made within the specified 4–6 week time period to the specified person and address.

If representations are received the local planning authority cannot adopt the SPD until they have considered any properly made representations and issued a statement summarising the main issues and how these have been addressed in the SPD

Regulation 19 – Adoption of an SPD

As soon as practicable after adopting an SPD the local planning authority must make available for inspection at all the same places as were used for Regulation 17: -

- the SPD
- the adoption statement (date of adoption and means of contesting the SPD)
- the statement concerning the issues raised in representations and how these issues were addressed in the SPD. (Regulation 18)

The adoption statement and the report on issues must be published on the website and sent to any person who has requested it

APPENDIX 2

Regulation 25 - Specific and General Consultation Bodies

This regulation lists only the types of organisations that we are required to consult for different documents and different stages of the process.

They are listed under two headings as explained in *Appendix 1*:

- Specific Consultation Bodies
- General Consultation Bodies

The full list of groups and organisations is available on the Mid Suffolk website or at the Council offices, libraries and other deposit points. (see para 6.2.3)

Reg 25 **Refn**

Organisation

- n/a *Regional Planning Body - EERA*
n/a *Government Office of the East (Go-East)*

1a) Specific Consultation Bodies - to be consulted in all cases

- I) Countryside Agency
- ii) Environment Agency
- iii) Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission (English Heritage)
- iv) English Nature
- v) Strategic Rail Authority
- vi) Highways Agency
- vii) Relevant authority in or adjoining MSDC
 - a). *Parishes in Mid Suffolk* (123 N^o)
 - b). *Adjoining District Authorities* (7 N^o)
 - c). *Adjoining County Authorities* (2 N^o)
 - d). *Parishes Adjoining MSDC* (47 N^o)
- viii) East of England Development Agency
- ix) Telecommunications Companies
(Any person to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under Section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003 and owners and controllers of any communications apparatus in Mid Suffolk)
- x) Strategic Health Authority
Electricity Suppliers (National Grid and Domestic) *(Licence holders under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989)*
Gas Companies *(Licence holders under section 7(2) of the Gas Act)*
Sewerage Companies
Water Companies

1(b) General Consultation Bodies - to be consulted where appropriate

- a). Voluntary Bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of Mid Suffolk
- b). Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic and national groups in Mid Suffolk
- c). Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in Mid Suffolk
- d). Bodies which represent the interests of disabled groups in Mid Suffolk
- e). Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in Mid Suffolk

2. Other Groups - to be consulted where relevant

At the current time the Mid Suffolk Planning database of contacts contains in excess of 1800 names and addresses of interested parties. Apart from the bodies listed above there are 340 representatives of the development industry, 160 representatives of various national and local interest groups, and over 1000 residents.

The following list gives an indication of the types of organisation we will be consulting about the various documents in the LDF.

(NOTE: There may be some cross-over with Voluntary Bodies above)

Government Departments (*through Go-East or by direct contact as appropriate*)

Parish and Community Councils

Representatives of Youth Groups

Representatives of Older Persons Groups

NHS Trusts

Police (including architectural liaison)

Church Commissioners

Schools and Colleges

National and Regional advisors on sport and playing fields

Rail advisors and companies operating in Mid Suffolk

Advisors on passenger transport

National Authority for Civil Aviation

Advisors on ecology, geology and hydrology

Advisors on surface water drainage

Environmental groups

Controllers of waterways

Chambers of commerce and other business organisations

Representatives of the house building and development industries

Housing Associations and associated organisations

National and local advisors for conservation

National and local advisors for architecture

National and local advisors for regeneration

Etc.

APPENDIX 3

Questionnaire Results

Areas of Interest

(Responses in %)

Type Mail List	Housing	Transport	Environment	Open Space	Rural Issues	Tourism	Regeneration	Economy	Heritage	Community
Development industry	85	37	44	27	52	22	64	58	32	33
Interest groups and governmental orgns	58	50	60	38	56	29	44	35	31	48
neighbouring parishes	89	89	56	33	89	22	44	33	56	89
TOTAL	77	44	50	31	56	25	57	50	33	41

OVERALL TOTALS

	Type Mail List	Total no responses	Public notices	Newsletter	Website	e-mail	Media	Exhibitions	P. Meetings	information from councillors	area forums	Consult Int Party	Surveys	Workshops	Pre-applications
LOCAL ISSUES	int gps + gov	48	19	29	8	48	0	10	13	0	15	35	8	8	29
	developer	95	18	41	43	51	9	19	18	0	15	41	8	16	38
	Parishes	52	86	44	60	n/a	68	36	62	80	46	78	48	32	62
	Neighbour parish	8	56	44	44	56	44	33	33	0	22	44	22	0	11
	Total %	203no	36	39	33	50	23	22	28	0	23	49	19	17	40
WIDER ISSUES															
	int gps + gov		17	23	15	54	2	13	15	0	15	33	13	10	27
	developer		15	42	32	47	12	22	20	0	23	32	14	16	25
	parishes		52	64	56	0	54	52	62	56	52	50	48	32	22
	Neighbour parish		22	67	44	56	56	33	22	0	56	44	33	11	0
	Total %	203	25	44	34	50	22	28	29	0	30	37	23	18	24
MAJOR APPS															
	int gps + gov		21	21	15	46	2	17	19	0	6	31	13	8	38
	developer		19	36	28	58	13	32	21	0	17	39	9	21	46
	parishes		68	64	72	0	58	68	78	70	58	66	48	38	30
	Neighbour parish		56	22	33	44	44	22	11	0	33	44	44	0	22
	Total %	203	33	38	36	54	23	36	34	0	25	44	21	21	39

APPENDIX 4

Summary of the Minimum Legal Requirements for notification of Planning Applications

(✓✓) Must be done

(✓) Option of one or other must be done

Types of Planning Application	Site notice erected for 21 days	Site notice erected for 7 days	By local advertisement*	Adjoining owner / occupier notified
Application requires an environmental statement	✓✓		✓✓	
Contrary to policy in the development plan	✓✓		✓✓	
Affects a right of way covered by (Part III) Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	✓✓		✓✓	
Is a major development	✓		✓✓	✓
Falls outside the above definitions	✓			✓
Requires Listed Building consent		✓✓	✓✓	
Affects setting of a listed building		✓✓	✓✓	
Affects character / appearance of a conservation area		✓✓	✓✓	
<i>**Telecommunications application for prior approval</i>	✓			✓
<i>**Agricultural building application for prior approval</i>	✓✓			
<i>**Demolition application for prior approval</i>	✓✓			

** An application for prior approval is neither a notification nor an application for planning permission

Notes

Local Advertisement – reference to local advertisements in relation to applications within Mid Suffolk means advertising in the East Anglian Daily Times and/or the Bury Free Press and/or the Diss Express, as appropriate.

Site Notice – Where a notice is, without any fault or intention of the local planning authority removed, obscured or defaced before the period of 21 days the authority shall be treated as having complied with the requirements if they have taken reasonable steps for protection of the notice and, if need be, its replacement.

APPENDIX 5

Methods of Community Involvement for each Local Development Document

General Notes:

1. The timetable for each document and each stage of each document is that quoted in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The timetable currently approved by the Secretary of State is available on the Mid Suffolk website www.midsuffolk.gov.uk and will be updated if this proves necessary.
2. Location of Local Workshops* The tables in Appendix 5 contain references to “local workshops*” for the production stage of most documents. With 123 parishes in the district it is impossible to hold meetings in every parish. Consequently the workshops will focus on the three towns, Debenham and the 5 ‘sub-areas’ of Mid Suffolk identified in the Housing Needs Survey approach to the breakdown of the District.

These sub areas are identified as being different in character and having different development pressures and therefore may approach similar planning issues and options in a different way.

The 5 sub-areas are broadly described as: -

Nº	Sub Area
1, 2, 3	Stowmarket, Needham Market and Eye
4	A14 corridor east
5	A14 corridor west
6	North East area
7	Central area
8	North West area

The venues will be arranged at key locations in each sub-area and will be advertised widely. This will provide opportunities to attend a local venue, although of course people are welcome to attend any or all workshops.

3. The needs of local businesses will be addressed through a series of separate workshops for each DPD, to look at the issues and options for meeting the identified needs.
4. Parish Councils and the Local Strategic Partnership will be included as consultees for all documents and all stages of production, and whenever information is conveyed to organisations on the LDF database.
5. Specific Consultees and Other Organisations are the type of organisations identified in the Regulations and listed in Appendix 2.

App 5.1 Core Strategy

The Core strategy explains the Council's wider vision for the area and how the land-use planning control policies are designed to help bring about change. These policies are applied to all development proposals and are for use across the whole district. *See Section 2.2(b) and Section 6 above*

Stage		The communities may...	Mid Suffolk will ...
1.	Evidence gathering	Provide information as appropriate. Offer comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review the material that is available to the public to help start the process ▪ Publish this list of documents on the website ▪ Inform everyone on the LDF database, Parish Councils and the Local Strategic Partnership.
2.	Production	Participate in the Council's programme. Respond to Council's Consultation on issues and options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Sustainability Appraisal scoping report ▪ Prepare a 'Topic Paper' to make the issues clearer and more accessible ▪ Publish 'Topic Papers' on the web site and deposit points, invite comments ▪ Send topic papers to appropriate individuals & bodies on the database ▪ Organise public workshops* in the parishes and towns of the District ▪ Report the key findings to elected representatives and stakeholders ▪ Identify options with your comments in mind.
2a)	<u>Preparing Issues and Options</u> (Regulation 25)		
2b)	<u>Preparing preferred options</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Initial Sustainability Appraisal of options arising from consultation ▪ Prepare preferred options for the Core Strategy
2c)	<u>Formal Consultation Stage</u> Regulations 26, & 27 to 31)	Make formal comments about the preferred options for the Core Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish the preferred options for a six-week consultation. ▪ Send copies to specific consultation bodies and other organisations ▪ Publicise in the local press, website and deposit points ▪ Publish the Sustainability Appraisal of preferred options for comment ▪ Prepare a statement of representations for consideration by elected members ▪ Publish responses for public inspection on the LDF web site and deposit points. ▪ Prepare the Core Strategy for submission ▪ Submit Core Strategy and make available for comment for 6 weeks ▪ Submit Final Sustainability Appraisal Report
3.	Examination (by Planning Inspectorate) (Regulation 34)	Attend any Public Examination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish notice of examination and pre-examination meeting if necessary ▪ Publish on website the list of issues to be dealt with at examination ▪ Publish the Inspector's Report findings.
4.	Adoption of Core Strategy (Regulation 36)	Visit the deposit points or web site to see the finished document. Expect the Council to follow its published strategy!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Core Strategy, Adoption Statement and Sustainability Appraisal Report. ▪ Send copies of adopted Core Strategy to Statutory Consultees and objectors ▪ Notify consultees and place documents at the Deposit Points and on the Website ▪ Publish Press Notices. ▪ Make the Inspector's report available

App 5.2 Generic Development Control Policies

The Generic Development Control Policies are the basic guidelines that are used to determine planning applications. These policies are applied to all development proposals and are for use across the whole district. See Section 2.2(b) and Section 6 above.

Stage		The communities may...	Mid Suffolk will ...
1.	Evidence Gathering	Comment on the broad category of the policies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish on the website the list of documents that guide the process (eg. Planning Policy Statements, Regulations, etc) with links to relevant Government Web sites ▪ Inform everyone on the LDF database, Parish Councils and the Local Strategic Partnership
2.	Production	Participate in the Council's programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Sustainability Appraisal scoping report ▪ Publish 'Topic Papers' on the web site and deposit points, invite comments ▪ Send topic papers to appropriate individuals & bodies on the database ▪ Organise public workshops* in the parishes and towns of the District ▪ Report the key findings to elected representatives and stakeholders ▪ Identify options with your comments in mind.
2a)	<u>Preparing Issues and Options</u>	Respond to Council's Consultation on issues	
2b)	<u>Prepare the preferred options</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Initial Sustainability Appraisal of options identified in the consultation ▪ Prepare the preferred options for the Generic Development Control Policies
2c)	<u>Formal Consultation Stage</u> (Regulation 26, & 27 to 31)	Make formal comments about the Generic Development Control Policies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish the preferred options for a six-week consultation. ▪ Send copies to specific consultation bodies and other organisations ▪ Publicise in the local press, website and deposit points ▪ Publish the Sustainability Appraisal of preferred options for comment ▪ Prepare a statement of representations for consideration by elected members ▪ Publish responses for public inspection on the LDF web site and deposit points ▪ Submit Generic Development Control Policies - (6-week consultation period) ▪ Submit Final Sustainability Appraisal Report
3.	Examination (by Planning Inspectorate) (Regulation 34)	Attend the Public Examination Become involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish notice of examination and pre-examination meeting if necessary ▪ Publish on website the list of issues to be dealt with at examination ▪ Publish the Inspector's Report findings.
4.	Adoption of Generic Development Control Policies (Regulation 36)	Visit the deposit points or web site to see the finished document. Council to follow its new policies for the control of development!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Generic Development Control Policies, Adoption Statement and Sustainability Appraisal Report. ▪ Send copies of adopted Policies to Statutory Consultees and objectors ▪ Notify consultees and place documents at the Deposit Points and on the Website ▪ Publish Press Notices. ▪ Make the Inspector's report available

App 5.3 Site Specific Allocations

The Site Specific Allocations indicate where the District Planning Authority expects land to be allocated for specific purposes such as housing, employment,, shopping and community facilities to achieve the vision set out in the Core Strategy. A proposals map indicating the location of the areas to which policies and proposals apply will accompany the main document. The proposals will indicate the need for and content of any obligations required of the developer before development can commence. . See *Section 2.2(b) and Section 6 above*

Stage		The communities may...	Mid Suffolk will ...
1.	Evidence Gathering	Comment on the ground rules for the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish the list of land bids previously submitted to the Council ▪ Offer the opportunity to landowners/developers for the submission of alternatives ▪ Publish Sustainability scoping report
2.	Production		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Preliminary evaluation of Land Bids against sustainability criteria. ▪ Prepare a Topic Paper showing key land uses affected by site-specific allocations, clarify the issues and invite comments. ▪ Send topic papers to appropriate individuals & bodies on the database and notify everybody on the database Parish Councils and the Local Strategic Partnership ▪ Make alternative Site Specific Allocations available for informal consultation ▪ Produce exhibition and display material for workshops* in the parishes and towns of the District to make it easier to visualise proposals. ▪ Four rural engagement exercises (of the 'planning for real' type) in key locations and three town based events for Eye, Needham Market and Stowmarket. ▪ Identify options with your comments in mind ▪ Complete Initial Sustainability Appraisal of options ▪ Report the key findings to elected representatives and stakeholders ▪ Advertise the availability of feedback on the events and comments received on the website direct to Parish Councils and in the local press.
2a)	<u>Preparing Issues and Options</u> (Regulation 25)	Participate in the Council's programme. Respond to Council's Consultation on issues	
2b)	<u>Preferred Options preparation</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Sustainability Appraisal Report ▪ Develop the proposals suggested during Consultation to identify the Site Specific Allocations that the Council intend to support (preferred options)
2c)	<u>Formal Consultation Stage</u> (Regulation 26-30 & 32-33)	Make formal comments about the Site Specific Allocations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish preferred options for comment during a 6 week period ▪ Publish the Sustainability Appraisal of preferred options for comment ▪ Send copies to specific consultation bodies and other organisations ▪ Publicise in the local press, website and make available at deposit points ▪ Publish responses for public inspection on the LDF web site and deposit points ▪ Submit Site Specific Allocations and Proposals Map for consultation - 6-weeks ▪ Submit Final Sustainability Appraisal Report

3.	Examination (by Planning Inspectorate) (Regulation 34)	Attend the Public Examination Become involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish notice of examination and pre-examination meeting if necessary ▪ Publish on website the list of issues to be dealt with at examination ▪ Publish the Inspector's Report findings ▪ Alter the Site Specific Allocations in accordance with the Inspector's Report.
4.	Adoption of Site Specific Allocations (Regulation 36)	Visit the deposit points or web site to see the finished document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Generic Development Control Policies, Adoption Statement and Sustainability Appraisal Report. ▪ Send copies of adopted Core Strategy to Statutory Consultees and objectors ▪ Notify consultees and place documents at the Deposit Points and on the Website ▪ Publish Press Notices. ▪ Make the Inspector's report available ▪ Publish statement summarising how sustainability issues have been integrated into site specific allocations

App 5.4 Stowmarket Area Action Plan

The Stowmarket Area Action Plan sets out the Council's vision for Stowmarket and the Land use planning control policies that are designed to help bring about change. These policies are applied to all development proposals that affect Stowmarket. See *Section 2.2(b) and Section 6 above*

Stage		The communities may...	Mid Suffolk will ...
1.	Evidence gathering	Provide information as appropriate. Offer comments to steer the projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish on the website the list of documents that guide the process (eg. Civic Trust Report, Donaldson Report, Town Forum etc) ▪ Inform everyone on the LDF database, Parish Councils and the Local Strategic Partnership
2.	Production	Participate in the Council's programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Sustainability Appraisal scoping report ▪ Topic Papers based on previous community involvement, invite comments ▪ Send topic papers to appropriate individuals & bodies on the database ▪ Send copies to the Town and adjacent parish councils ▪ Topic Papers made available on the web site and deposit points ▪ Organise public workshops in Stowmarket Town ▪ Report the key findings to elected representatives ▪ Identify options with your comments in mind.
2a)	<u>Preparing Issues and Options Regulation 25</u>	Respond to Council's Consultation on issues	
2b)	<u>Preparing preferred options</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Complete Initial Sustainability Appraisal of options arising from consultation ▪ Prepare the preferred options for the Stowmarket Area Action Plan
2c)	<u>Formal Consultation Stage</u> (Regulations 26 – 31)	Make formal comments about the Area Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish the preferred options for a six-week consultation. ▪ Send copies to specific consultation bodies and other organisations ▪ Publicise in the local press, website and deposit points ▪ Publish the Sustainability Appraisal of preferred options for comment ▪ Publish responses for public inspection on the LDF web site and deposit points ▪ Submit Stowmarket Area Action Plan - (6-week consultation period) ▪ Submit Final Sustainability Appraisal Report
3.	Examination (by Planning Inspectorate) (Regulation 34)	Attend the Public Examination Become involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish notice of examination and pre-examination meeting if necessary ▪ Publish on website the list of issues to be dealt with at examination ▪ Publish the Inspector's Report findings.
4.	Adoption of Stowmarket Area Action Plan (Regulation 36)	Visit the deposit points or web site to see the finished document. Expect the Council to follow its published strategy!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Stowmarket Area Action Plan, Adoption Statement and Sustainability Appraisal Report. ▪ Send copies of adopted Core Strategy to Statutory Consultees and objectors ▪ Notify consultees and place documents at the Deposit Points and on the Website ▪ Publish Press Notices. ▪ Make the Inspector's report available

Mid Suffolk Local Development Framework: Draft Statement of Community Involvement			
App 5.5 Statement of Community Involvement			
The Statement of Community Involvement sets out the standards to be achieved by the Council for involving the community in the preparation, alteration and continuing review of all local development documents and planning applications. See <i>Section 2.2(a) and Section 6 above</i>			
Stage		The communities may... (Type of Involvement)	Mid Suffolk will ...
1.	Evidence gathering	Provide information and comments through consultation exercises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Review existing comments from previous consultation exercises as to preferences in methods of communication and potential improvements. ▪ Update database of contact names and addresses (Reg 25 App 1 & 2)
2.	Production	Participate in the Council's programme.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send questionnaire to all organisations on the database (Reg 25), their areas of interest and preferred means of communication / involvement. ▪ Analyse responses to the questionnaire and use to update previous information gathered in Stage 1 above. ▪ Feedback responses to questionnaire to everyone on the database
2a)	<u>Preparing Issues and Options</u>	Respond to Council's Questionnaire (Regulation 25)	
2b)	<u>Preparing preferred options</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Use the comments to prepare the draft Statement of Community Involvement. ▪ Seek Members approval to publish draft for consultation
2c)	<u>Formal Consultation Stage</u>	Make formal comments about the Statement of Community Involvement [Regulation 26] Make representations to Secretary of State[Regulation 28]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Draft Statement of Community Involvement consultation (six weeks) ▪ Statement of the responses by Consideration the elected Members. ▪ Publish responses for public inspection on the LDF web site. ▪ Prepare the Statement of Community Involvement for submission ▪ Submit to the Secretary of State. ▪ Publish SCI and invite representations allowing 6 weeks for comment.
3.	Examination	.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Planning Inspector applies test of soundness to the Statement of Community Involvement. ▪ Implement the Statement of Community Involvement based on the Inspector's Report findings.
4.	Adoption of Statement of Community Involvement	Visit the deposit points or web site to see the finished document. Obtain copy of Councils 'easy to read' abridged version Expect the Council to follow its published strategy!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish the Statement of Community Involvement and Adoption Statement. ▪ Place documents at the Deposit Points and on the Web site ▪ Put out Press notices and press releases. ▪ Make the Inspector's Report available. ▪ Make available user friendly, "easy to read" leaflet explaining to the public how and when to become involved in planning decisions of all types.

App 5.6 Open Space SPD

The Open Space SPD sets out the Councils Policy for the future provision of indoor and outdoor, formal and informal, open space, sports facilities and play areas. It will include an assessment of the quality, quantity and accessibility of both the existing provision and future needs. It will also examine the use of planning obligations (Sect 106) contributions to help meet the identified need. *See Section 2.2(c) and Section 6 above*

Stage		The communities may...	Mid Suffolk will ...
1.	Evidence gathering	Provide information and comments through consultation exercises.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carry out a review of existing information ▪ Publish Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report ▪ Develop detail guidance on relevant policy issues
2.	Production	Respond to Consultants enquiries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appoint consultants to involve relevant national and local organisations in identifying issues and options.
2a)	<u>Preparing Issues and Options</u> (Regulation 17)		
2b)	<u>Preparing preferred options</u>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Work with the consultants on the comments and information gathered in Stage (2a) to prepare the consultation draft Open Space SPD. ▪ Seek Members approval to publish draft for consultation
2c)	<u>Formal Consultation Stage</u> (Regulation 17 & 18)	Make formal comments about the Open Space SPD [<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish the draft Open Space SPD for a period of six weeks ▪ Publish Sustainability Appraisal report for consultation. ▪ Send Copies to specific consultation bodies and other organisations ▪ Press notice advertising the availability of the document for inspection at Council Offices and deposit points ▪ Publish responses for public inspection on the LDF web site. ▪ Prepare a statement of the responses for consideration by the elected Members ▪ Consider representations, summarise the main issues and hoe they were addressed in the SPD
3.	Examination	N/A	N/A
4.	Adoption of Open Space SPD (Regulation19)	Visit the deposit points or web site to see the finished document. Expect the Council to follow its published strategy!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Publish Open Space SPD, Adoption Statement and final Sustainability Appraisal Report. ▪ Notify consultees and objectors of ▪ Place documents at the Deposit Points and on the Website ▪ Publish Press Notices regarding the availability of the documents ▪ Make the Inspector's report available ▪ Statement summarising how sustainability issues have been integrated into SPD

APPENDIX 6 – Improving Engagement with ‘Hard to Reach’ Groups

The table shows the ‘hard to reach’ communities identified in the SCI, what there is currently in place to engage them and some options for improving engagement.

Community	How the Council currently engages them	How we can improve the ways we engage them
Older People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Questionnaires to every household ▪ Public Meetings across the district ▪ Parish Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Over 60's Clubs (through Age Concern) ▪ Make documents available in large print ▪ Make documents available on tape
Young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Claydon Junior School were invited to public exhibition for the ‘Snoasis’ Development ▪ Parish Plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Extend “Crucial Crew” contacts with the 29 ‘Year 6’ schools ▪ Organise school visits to the 7 High-schools in the district ▪ Advertise public meetings in the High Schools ▪ ‘Planning for Real’ type exercises aimed at young people ▪ Work with Youth Service and Youth Clubs in the district
Rural Groups including agricultural industry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Service Centres in the major towns ▪ Questionnaires ▪ Public Meetings ▪ Parish Plans ▪ LDF Workshops throughout the district ▪ Parish liaison meetings with planning control ▪ WI landscape project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Interactive website ▪ Better use of Parish Magazines ▪ Add Community Council’s to database ▪ More use of dispersed organisations and interest groups and volunteers such as the WI, Ladies in a Wheel and Rotary Clubs ▪ Avoid workshops, public meetings and consultation at harvest time
Disabled Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessible venues for LDF workshops ▪ Contacts with disability focused interest groups and organisations ▪ Disabilities related to age – see under Elderly ▪ Minicom facility ▪ Website access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Better use of existing contacts, (eg quarterly meeting with Mid Suffolk Voluntary Organisation Forum) ▪ Talking newspapers and audio documents ▪ Formalise codes of practice with Suffolk Compact ▪ Consider needs of sign language users
Minority Ethnic Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language Line Service ▪ Graphical information at Exhibitions ▪ Facilitate face-to-face contact through local service centres and parish workshops ▪ Parish Plans ▪ Website access 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Make documents available in multi-lingual forms ▪ More use of graphical information ▪ Identify representative organisations willing to participate

Travellers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send all documents to representative organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Respond positively to an evolving Regional information base and strategy. ▪ Encourage the involvement of traveller's representatives such as The Gypsy Council, Guild of Travelling Showpersons. ▪ Work in partnership with traveller liaison colleagues at Suffolk County Council
Low income groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local workshops ▪ Housing Needs Assessment targeted to hidden households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More proactive involvement in the community ▪ Seek greater involvement by publicising examples of planning helping to deliver local solutions ▪ Integrated approaches to identified need.
Business Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Send documents and questionnaires to representative business organisations, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (eg Suffolk Development Agency, - Suffolk Chambers of Commerce, Ipswich and Suffolk Small Business Association, - Federation Small Businesses, etc) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Organise an LDF workshop specifically dedicated to business organisations

Glossary of terms:

(Cross reference mainly to Sections 2, 3 and 5 of this document)

Planning Policy Statements (PPS)– Statements of the Government’s national policies on a range of topics.

Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)– these set out the Regional policies in relation to the development and use of land and form part of the statutory development plan. “Spatial Planning” here means taking a broader remit than the land use planning. It includes taking into account the environmental, social and economic implications of land use. It requires for example the need to have regard to the strategies and plans of a wide range of different bodies and agencies.

Local Development Framework (LDF)– the name for the portfolio of documents, which will provide the spatial planning strategy for a local authority area. It consists of

- The Local Development Scheme
- The Statement of Community Involvement,
- Development Plan Documents,
- Supplementary Planning Documents
- Annual Monitoring Report

‘Procedural Documents’ of the LDF – *an unofficial term used in the Statement of Community Involvement for documents that give information and explain how the process is organized.*

Local Development Scheme (LDS)– sets out a programme for the preparation of Local Development Documents. It is a project management document that identifies which documents are to be prepared, the stages that have to be achieved and a detailed timetable.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)– it is a requirement of the Planning Act for local planning authorities to monitor and review progress towards the delivery of the local development documents. Progress is set down in an Annual Monitoring Report for each financial year. It is prepared by the following December and published after approval by the Secretary of State.

Local Development Documents (LDD)– the collective term used in the Planning and compulsory Purchase Act 2004 for the Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)– sets out the methods local authorities will use to involve local communities in the preparation of Local Development Documents and development control decisions. The Statement is not part of the Development Plan but it is subject to independent examination

Development Plan Documents (DPD): - Local Development Documents that contain the main policies and proposals

Core Strategy – sets out the long-term spatial vision for the local authority area. It will include strategic objectives and planning policies to help deliver the vision. It forms part of the Development Plan.

General Development Control Policies – these are likely to be criteria based policies which will be applied to ensure that all developments meets the overall vision and strategic policies set out in the Core Strategy. To a greater or lesser extent these policies will be taken into account in the determination of the majority of planning applications. The development control policies form part of the Development Plan.

Site specific allocations – the allocation of sites for specific or mixed uses. Policies will identify any specific requirements for the site. The allocations form part of the Development Plan.

Area Action Plans (AAP)– these are used to provide a planning framework for areas of change or conservation. They are part of the Development Plan.

Proposals Maps – Ordnance Survey maps, which identify the areas to which policies and proposals in the development plan documents, relate.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)– Local Development Documents that provide additional information about a policy in a Development Plan Document e.g. a development brief for a specific site. They do not form part of the Development Plan.

‘Open Space’ SPD we are preparing an SPD setting out supplementary literature for the operation of open space policy.

Other Processes and Documents essential to the Local Development Framework

Sustainability Appraisal – a tool for appraising policies to ensure that they reflect sustainable development objectives. An appraisal is required in the legislation for all Development Plan Documents. The Government has defined wide-ranging objectives for sustainable development as including:

- social progress that meets the needs of everyone,
- effective protection of the environment,
- prudent use of natural resources
- maintenance of high and stable development includes economic and employment.

Thus we can see that sustainable development includes environmental, economic and social influences. The Sustainable Appraisal process takes into account the Strategic Environmental Assessment required by the EU.

Strategic Environment Assessment – the European Strategic Environment Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) requires an assessment of certain plans and programme including those related to planning and land use.

Some Legal Background:

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced significant changes to the system of development plans. In an effort to streamline the process, the new system requires the Council to prepare a folder of plans called the Local Development Framework (see above) to replace the existing Mid Suffolk Local Plan.

Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 – these are the legal Regulations that govern the preparation of the Local Development Framework Documents and define relevant terms such as “specific consultation bodies” (see below).

General Development Procedure Order 1995 (GDPO)– the Order sets down a series of ground rules for local Planning Authorities with regard to the nature of development, and in this case the process we need to follow to give publicity to relevant planning applications

The Local Government Act 2000. required local authorities to produce a Community Strategy (see below)

Statutory consultees – PPS 12 ‘Local Development Frameworks’ outlines the need for Local Planning Authorities to consult “specific consultation bodies” as defined in the Regulations above. These include the statutory undertakers or providers of service and government departments. These are listed in *Appendix 2* of the SCI along with other types of groups that will normally receive copies of documents at draft and at formal stages in the process of preparing Local Developments Documents.

Other Relevant initiatives

Community Strategy –The Strategy aims to improve the economic, environmental and social well being of the area. Through the preparation of the Community Strategy the local authority is expected to co-ordinate the activities of other public, private and voluntary and community bodies. Responsibility for the preparation of the strategy may be passed to the Local Strategic Partnerships. This group consists of a partnership of service providers, the private sector and voluntary and community groups. The intention is that local needs will be met in a co-ordinated and “joined up” way.

“Suffolk Speaks” – a Suffolk wide survey of local opinion, which has been canvassing views on different topics.

Stowmarket Town Forum – a local group consisting of anyone who wishes to make a contribution. There are councillors from the Town District and County Councils as well as community nominated representatives that cover a wide range of interests – such as environment, education, crime, business, sport, voluntary groups etc. The Forum meets on a regular basis and has produced an Action Plan that will inform the content of the Development Plan Documents.