

Bromsgrove District Council

Statement of Community Involvement



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Planning and
Environment Services

Bromsgrove District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



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Introduction

What is planning?

Planning is the process through which we make land use decisions about the area we live in. The planning system is in place to make sure that a balance is maintained between protecting our environment and developing our area. Both elements are important in creating a place where people want to live and work. It is essential that the community get involved in planning as the decisions taken affect everyone's lives.

Planning can be divided up into two main areas; development control and planning policy. Development control is concerned with planning applications and making decisions on specific developments. Planning policy is about creating a long-term vision for the area. How the community can get involved in both aspects of planning is covered by this document, the ***Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)***.

What is changing?

The old system of planning policy required Local Planning Authorities to produce a '***Local Plan***.' The ***Local Plan*** covered every aspect of planning for a whole area. This took many years to produce and the production process was at times very slow. Now instead a '***Local Development Framework***' (***LDF***) will be produced. This is a collection of different documents that can be worked on individually; making the system more manageable and flexible, with different documents being produced as needs change.

The Government has made improvements to the planning system to make it faster, more responsive to change and to encourage greater community involvement. This document, the ***SCI***, outlines what we, the Council aim to do to get the community involved in planning matters. In the past, the planning system has been prone to conflict between different parties. It is hoped that with effective, continuous community involvement, this will no longer be the case. All members of the community can be involved and contribute to the preparation of plans but we must be realistic: many different views will be expressed and some may be in opposition to one another. All views will be listened to but we won't always be able to do everything that people ask. This document outlines how you can get involved in discussing the issues that affect our District and have your say on planning for Bromsgrove.

More information

This document should be read alongside the ***Local Development Scheme (LDS)***. The ***LDS*** sets out the timetable for production of the ***Local Development Framework*** and a plan of how the process will be managed. It can be found on the Council's website or obtained from the Council Offices on request. A glossary of the different planning terms and acronyms is included in Appendix 1. (Any terms that are in ***bold italic*** within the main text of the document are explained in the glossary.)



The aims of the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

Why involve the community ?

We have produced this document to set out the ways in which the community can be effectively involved in the planning system. By involving the community, the Council will gain a greater understanding of the needs of the community and we can develop a **Local Development Framework (LDF)** that is better suited to the needs of the people of Bromsgrove. At the same time, we are keen to make every effort possible to improve decision-making, minimise delays and use resources effectively.

The SCI will;

- Explain why involving the community is important,
- Describe what we intend to involve you in,
- Let you know how and when you can be involved,
- Give an overview of the community of Bromsgrove,
- Outline the various methods for involving people;
and
- Explain how you will be informed of any outcomes.

Involving the community in the planning process from the beginning will provide many benefits for both the Council and the community. Involving the community is a key part of having a planning system that is open and transparent. The Council will benefit from effective community involvement because:

- We can gain important local knowledge from the community
- We can get community support for the plans we create;
and
- We can reduce the levels of conflict in the system.

The benefits for the community include:

- A better understanding of the planning process
- Reduced levels of conflict in the system;
and
- Having a say in the development of their area.



How did we develop the SCI ?

Production of the SCI began in August 2004. The Local Plans team began to compile a database of all potential consultees for the LDF process. We started by combining all contact details from those who had been involved in planning matters before. We then contacted other Council Departments to seek their views on organisations that may be interested in being involved. Additional research was carried out to identify further local groups, this included Internet searches and liaising with the Parish Councils and County Council. You can be added to our database by sending your contact details to planningpolicy@bromsgrove.gov.uk or to the Council House address detailed in section 8 of this document.

A letter, leaflet and questionnaire were sent out to over 250 local groups, local organisations and individuals. The leaflet summarised the new planning system, the purpose of the SCI and the benefits of community involvement. It asked the recipient for their views about the best ways to involve the community in planning. In total we received a very positive response of 55 completed questionnaires. The questionnaires showed support for the methods we were already using to keep people involved in planning. Ideas included having documents in the waiting rooms of GPs and dentists in the District. This has since been implemented.

An LDF Working Group was set up to oversee the whole LDF process. The Working Group consists of 14 Councillors who geographically represent the entire District. The group was established to ensure the highest standards would be maintained regarding all aspects of the new system including community involvement. As well as having regular meetings with the LDF Working Group, the Local Plans team also attended meetings with other local groups including the **Local Strategic Partnership** and the Parish Councils to engage them in the process. Throughout these activities the Local Plans team used the information gained to produce a Draft SCI. Once the Draft was completed it was taken to the LDF Working Group to approve it for consultation.

Once the document was approved it was made available for consultation for a **statutory** 6-week period. The consultation period was launched with a Planning Workshop Event. Over 200 local groups and individuals were invited to this event and articles were published in the local press publicising the opportunity to get involved. The event comprised of two sessions, an afternoon and an evening session. Each session included interactive displays, an exhibition, workshop activities and presentations about the SCI and community involvement. Over 75 people attended and, along with individual responses received during the consultation process, the feedback received from this event was used to inform the development of this document.



What we will consult on ?

The Council will produce a series of Documents that will make up a **Local Development Framework (LDF)**. The LDF will be made up of three types of documents: **Development Plan Documents (DPDs)** and **Supplementary Plan Documents (SPDs)** and other required documents. The timetable of document production has been carefully managed to ensure that consultation periods on different documents coincide so cutting down on costs and ensuring the public are not over consulted.

Over the next 3 years, the Council intends to produce the following documents;

The Core Strategy

This is a DPD and is the central part of the **Local Development Framework**. This document sets out the long-term vision for Bromsgrove (until 2021) and the key policies that will help to deliver that vision. The Core Strategy will contain the primary policies for delivering the vision and will set out broad locations for future development.

Proposals Map

The Proposals Map will present all of the policies and proposals contained in the different documents in map form. The map will be a separate **Development Plan Document (DPD)** and it will be revised as any new plans are produced

Generic Development Control Policies

This will also be a **Development Plan Document**. It will contain all of the policies that will be used to guide decisions on planning applications for development and the use of land and buildings.

Longbridge Area Action Plan

This Document will be a development plan document, it will contain policies guiding the redevelopment of the former MG Rover car plant at Longbridge.

Managing Housing Supply

This will be a **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**. It will contain specific guidance on delivering and managing the District's housing supply.

Affordable Housing

This document will also be a **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)**. It will review the need for a supply of affordable housing in the District. It will also assess how much of new housing developments should be affordable homes.



Sustainability Appraisal Report

The undertaking of a **Sustainability Appraisal (SA)** is vital to the integration of sustainability and environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans. SA will not be a separate activity but an integral part of the plan making process in Bromsgrove. As such reports documenting the SA process will be published at the same time as the preferred options and submission stages of **Development Plan (DPD)** document production and at the draft stage of **Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)** production.

European Directive 2001/42/EC requires that planning authorities undertake an 'environmental assessment' (SEA) of plans that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment. Any future documentation produced by Bromsgrove District Council in respect of **sustainability appraisal** will incorporate the requirements of this legislation.

To ensure a robust and comprehensive **sustainability appraisal** is undertaken **stakeholders** will have the chance to contribute their knowledge and influence the process. To meet requirements, consultation bodies together with other **stakeholders** and the public will be consulted at appropriate stages throughout the production of the LDF documents and SA Report.

The links between LDF document production stages and the SA process

LDF Stage	SA Process Stage
Evidence Gathering	Develop Baseline and Scoping Report Consult on Scoping Report
Preparation of Issues and Options Consult on Issues and Options	Developing and refining options
Prepare Preferred Options Consultation on Preferred Options Consultation on Submission Document	Assess effects of preferred options Consultation on Draft SA Report Consultation on Final SA Report
Adoption Monitor	Monitoring implementation of Document

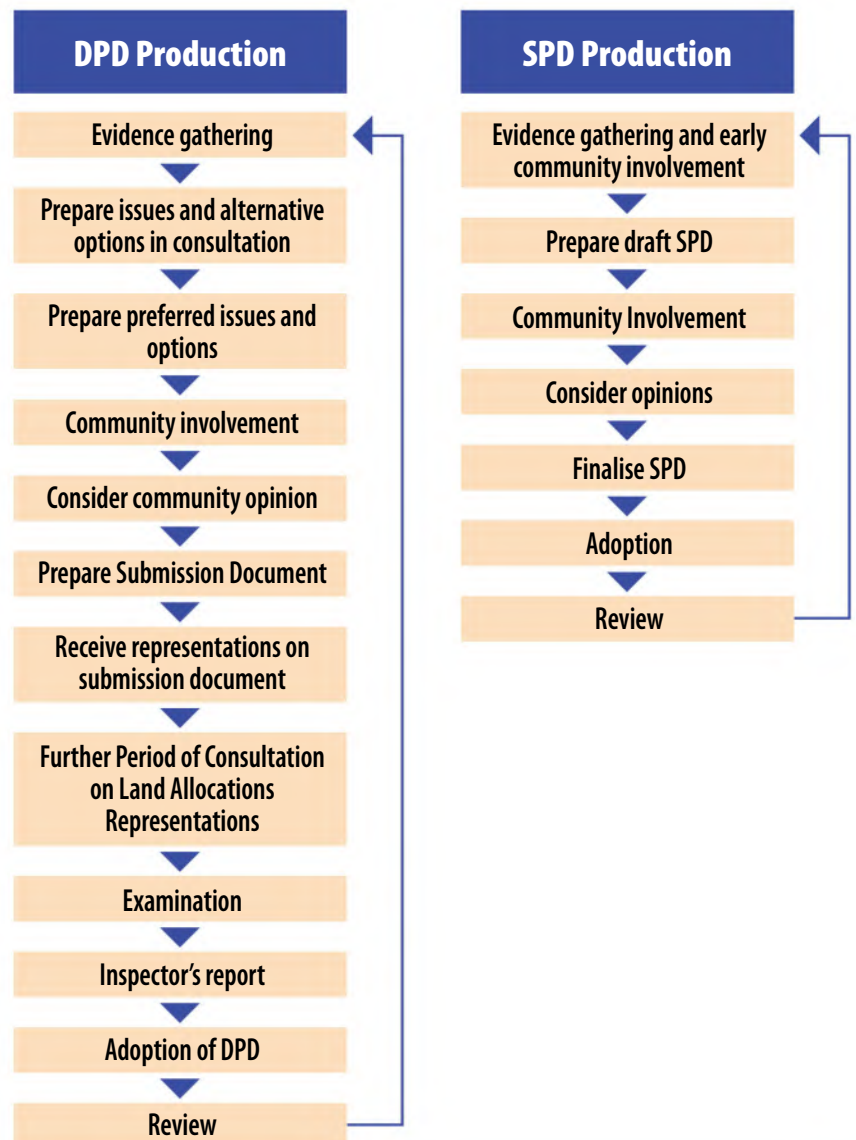


Links with other community initiatives

Stages of Document Production

The **Local Development Framework** will not be developed in isolation from the Council's other strategies, but rather there will be links with other initiatives, such as Parish Plans and the Community Plan. The Community Plan aims to provide a coordinated approach to improving the quality of life for everyone in Bromsgrove. Many of the aims will be delivered through the LDF. The **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** is responsible for the Community Plan. The LDF will be developed with as much input as possible from the LSP.

A key part of the process will be information sharing and combining consultation events with a variety of partners. Where relevant, there will also be links to other strategies and initiatives such as The Local Transport Plan and the Housing Strategy and those plans and strategies originating from other departments. We will also aim to share information and best practice with the County Council and adjoining authorities.





Stages in Development Plan Production

Stage 1

Evidence Gathering and Frontloading

The first stage of creating a document is to gather evidence about what the document should contain. The Council has already carried out major evidence gathering studies on issues such as housing and employment that will inform the production of the documents. Key stakeholders will be contacted at this stage, depending on the type and scale of the document they will be:

- Regional Bodies
- Adjoining Authorities
- Environmental and conservation groups (Local and National)
- Healthcare Providers
- Utilities Providers
- Transport Authorities
- Local Community Groups
- Parish Councils
- Landowners/Developers
- Members of the Public who have expressed an interest
- Any bodies or groups representing the interests of the following Different racial or ethnic communities, people with disabilities, the voluntary sector, the business community, the arts and sports, and consumer groups.

Frontloading refers to seeking community needs and views before documents and policies are written. In terms of the SCI this took the form of a scoping questionnaire.

Stage 2

Preferred Options

The next stage is the production of a Preferred Options document (also known as a Draft), which will set out the available options along with the Council's preferred option. People will be invited to make comments on this document for a **statutory** six-week period. The Council will publicise the document through the methods outlined in the **SCI** so that as many people as possible have the opportunity to feed their views into the process.

Stage 3

Submission Document

After the six-week period of consultation a 'submission document' will be produced. This will consider all the views that were received during the consultation. This document will be submitted to the Secretary of State via the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for independent examination. Consultees will be notified of this further stage and then there will be another statutory six-week consultation period to make formal comments on the document.

Stage 4 Site Specific Consultation

For documents which contain land allocations a further six week consultation period will be held. This is so responses can be made in respect of land allocation representations received at the submission document stage.

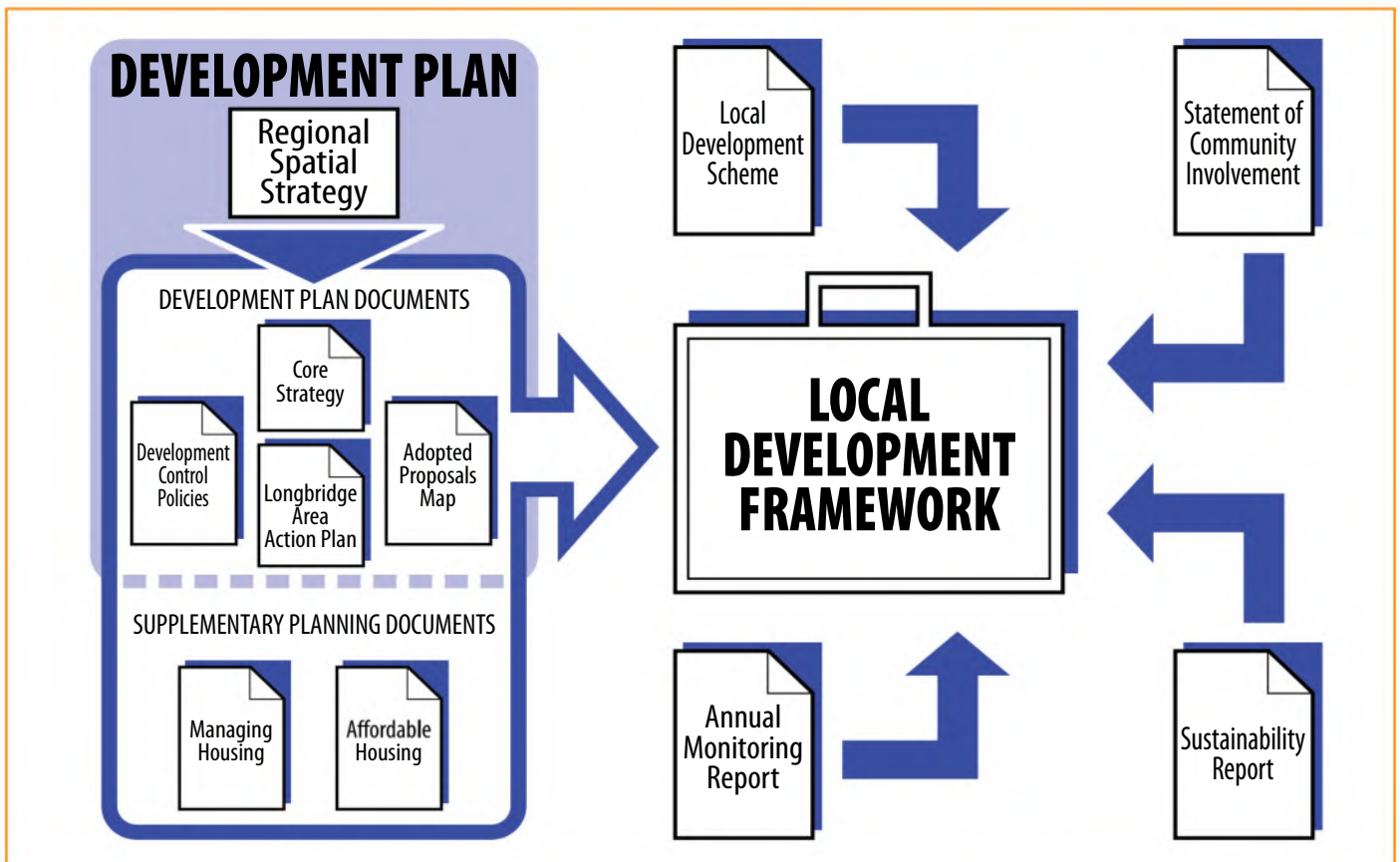
Stage 5 Examination

A Planning Inspector, who is independent of the Council, will then hold an examination of the document in public. They will consider and evaluate all of the comments received and decide if any changes are necessary. The Inspector's findings will be contained in a Report that they produce. A key change in the new system is that the Inspector's Report will be binding on the Council.

Stage 6 Adoption

The council will then adopt the document.

How the documents fit together





When will we consult ?

This table below provides a summary of the production timetable for the LDF. It sets out each of the documents that make up the LDF, the stages the documents will go through and when we intend to complete each stage.

For more information on the timetable please refer to our LDS, which can be found on the Council's website: www.bromsgrove.gov.uk (look for local plans section.)

Document Name	Start preparing Issues and Options	Consultation on Preferred Options	Consultation on Submission Version	Estimated Examination Date	Estimated date for Binding Report	Estimated Adoption Date
Local Development Scheme	October 2004	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	January 2005
Statement of Community Involvement	October 2004	February/ March 2005	July 2005	October 2005	January 2006	March 2006
Core Strategy	November 2004	September/ October 2005	June 2006	December 2006	June 2007	September 2007
Proposals Map	N/A	N/A	June 2006	N/A	N/A	September 2007
Longbridge AAP	October 2005	August/ September 2005	March/April 2007	September 2007	After September 2007	After September 2007
Generic Development Control Policies	September 2005	September/ October 2006	July/August 2007	After September 2007	After September 2007	After September 2007
Affordable Housing SPD	January 2005	N/A	November/ December 2005	N/A	N/A	June 2006
Managing Housing SPD	December 2004	N/A	September/ October 2005	N/A	N/A	February 2006



How will we involve people ?

Methods of involvement

A basic minimum for involvement would be informing the required (**statutory**) consultees about documents and when they were being produced. We intend to do much more and it is our intention to involve as many parties as possible and use a variety of techniques to involve the public.

OUR VISION FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

To involve local people in local planning through appropriate and relevant methods, providing them with an opportunity to understand, provide their views and contribute to document production if they wish to

Principles for involvement

We intend to adopt an approach, which is;

- **Accessible**, have documents and hold events in the most suitable places for people to make use of
- **Genuine**, to only involve people when they can have a real influence on the outcome of a plan
- **Transparent**, to keep the lines of communication open
- **Appropriate**, to use the best method possible for involving people

Throughout the process of creating the SCI we consulted the community on how they would like to be involved. From the views expressed, we have identified a variety of methods for involving the community. The methods we will use to keep people informed and involved in the LDF process are:



LETTER

Our Approach

Letters will be sent out to all required consultees, all those who have expressed a specific interest and local bodies who may have valuable input, to inform them of any consultation they may want to take part in or about a document that has been released for consultation.



E-MAIL

Our Approach

E-mails will be used when appropriate. All documents will be available in an electronic format via email as this is an important way of saving paper.



EXHIBITIONS

Our Approach

An exhibition including explanatory posters and leaflets will be held to inform people about any documents that have been produced. These exhibitions will be held at the Council House, the Customer Service Centre and other locations as appropriate.



WORKSHOPS

Our Approach

Workshop events will consist of a presentation followed by group work in order to discuss the issue at hand. These organised discussion group events can be very worthwhile but can be very resource intensive. Workshop event or focus group will be held for documents. Which technique we will use depends on the nature of the document.



FOCUS GROUPS

Our Approach

Focus groups bring together a small number of stakeholders to discuss a specific issue in depth. They will be used to explore specific subjects in detail.



WEBSITE

Our Approach

The Council's website has proven to be a very useful tool when engaging the public. All documents will be available online free of charge. There will also be a summary of each document and details of any planning events where the community can get involved.



NEWSLETTER

Our Approach

The Council has a bi-annual newsletter, which is sent out to every home in the district. The Planning Department will make use of this to inform the community about the LDF process and how they can be involved.



PUBLIC MEETINGS

Our Approach

The Council holds public meetings called Spotlight Evenings at various locations throughout the district. If the timing of a Spotlight Evening coincides with the production of a document, a Planning Officer will attend the Event to inform the community about the document and receive the public's feedback on the issue.



QUESTIONNAIRE

Our Approach

Questionnaires will be used at an early stage of document production to gauge public opinion on a specific topic. Questionnaires will generally be sent out to members of the public who have previously displayed an interest in the subject to find out their opinions on certain matters. This technique is useful when we need quantitative data.



PHYSICAL PLANNING

Our Approach

Physical Planning refers to using interactive displays and 3-D plans to illustrate the issue we are dealing with. These techniques tend to be very popular with the public and can help those who have not taken part before to have their say. Physical Planning will be used in conjunction with other methods to help maximise involvement.



INTERVIEWS

Our Approach

It may be useful to do one to one interviews with specific individuals who have links to a specific subject to get their in-depth knowledge of the subject. This technique will be employed when appropriate.



MEDIA

Our Approach

There are statutory requirements for the Council to publish details of consultation periods in a newspaper which covers the whole of the District. We will attempt to get extra media coverage of any events to improve publicity.



Piggybacking

A wide variety of methods have been identified in order to involve as many people as possible in the most suitable way for them. Different people will want to be involved in the process to different degrees. Some people may wish to be informed of when documents are being produced and others may wish to devote their time to taking part in focus groups, for example. We are also aware of the suitability of different methods at different stages of document production. At early stages we may seek to gather quantitative data (views, reasoning and suggestions) and this may involve a workshop or focus group; later stages will necessitate as much publicity of proposals as possible to ensure people are aware of proposals.

Piggybacking refers to the Council's Planning Department getting involved in and attending the meetings of other groups. This relates to our intention to link our activities with other community initiatives. By 'piggybacking' events we will be able to reach a broader and, potentially, a greater number of people than we would otherwise be able to do. We will make every attempt to attend meetings of other organisations, such as the parish councils, on request.

The following table shows the various pros and cons of the methods that have already been highlighted;

Method	Pros	Cons
Newsletter	Regularly updated; Reaches large numbers	Can be costly; Can be time consuming; May not be read
Exhibitions	Gives opportunity for comments; Can be effective publicity	Few may attend, those who do may not be representative; Who is reached is very time dependent
Questionnaires	Low in cost and time; Reaches many people; Detailed replies, Easy to analyse data	Not good for complex questions; Can get few responses; Viewed as dull; Hard to reach may not reply
Focus Groups	Can involve hard to reach; Can be complex and in depth; Allows for interaction	Costly; Time consuming; Difficult to analyse results
Public Meetings	Inexpensive; Flexible; Involves large numbers	Turnout can be poor; Attendees may not represent community; Can be difficult to organise
Workshops	Can go into detail; Large numbers can take part; Everyone actively participates	Requires skilled managers; Can be difficult to organise; Can be expensive; Time consuming
Physical Planning	Easy to set up; Entertaining; Can deal with complex issues; Can involve hard to reach	Costly; Needs suitable venue; Cannot ensure Representative
Letter/E-mail	Can be detailed; Only informs the reader	Will only reach people already involved
Interviews	Detailed; Involving	Time consuming; Only possible on a very small scale
Website	Easy to access; Easy to update	Lack of access to internet



Inform, Consult, Involve ?

Community involvement refers to a wide range of activities each with a varying level of involvement. Some of the methods can **inform**, some can **consult** and some can, more actively **involve**. At a very basic level we can **inform** people that a document has been produced and is available for consultation. This may include sending out letters and putting up posters to **inform** people about the document. Some of the methods mentioned will go further and **consult** people asking for their opinion on particular issues. This will include methods such as questionnaires and perhaps focus groups. One step further is to more actively **involve** people in the development of the documents. For example, workshop events can be used to involve people in identifying priorities and shaping plans.

We aim to have an increased emphasis on using more interactive methods such as focus groups and on getting people involved early at a stage, where they can have a real say on the future of a plan. However, for every document we produce, we will use a variety of methods to insure that we **inform, consult** and **involve** the community, providing an opportunity for everyone to be involved at a level that suits them. The following table reviews each method in terms of how it can be used to involve the community:

Method	Does it inform ?	Does it consult ?	Does it involve ?
Letter/E-mail	✓	✗	✗
Exhibition	✓	✗	✗
Piggybacking	✓	✓	✗
Workshop Event	✓	✓	✓
Focus Group	✗	✓	✓
Website	✓	✗	✗
Newsletter	✓	✗	✗
Questionnaire	✗	✓	✗
Public Meeting	✓	✓	✗
Physical Planning	✗	✓	✓
Interviews	✗	✓	✓
Media Coverage	✓	✗	✗



Choosing the appropriate approach

The following table explains how we intend to use each of the methods in developing the different documents. The table indicates methods that will definitely be used (indicated by a ✓) and methods that may be used if we have the necessary resources and it would prove useful to do so (indicated by a ?).

Stage 1 - early community involvement including evidence gathering and issues and options

Stage 2 - consultation on Council's preferred options (or draft SPD)

Stage 3 - consultation on submission document (N.B. This stage does not occur for SPDs.)

Refer back to 'Stages in Development Plan Production' on pages 8 and 9 for more information about stages.

Consultation Method	Core Policies			Development Plan Document (DPD)			Supplementary Plan Document (SPD)	
	1	2	3	1	2	3	1	2
Document available to view	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓
Leaflet/Summary available	✓	?	?	✓	?	?	✓	?
Advert in paper	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓
Press Release	?	✓	?	?	✓	?	-	✓
Exhibition	✓	?	-	?	?	-	?	?
Informal Questionnaire	✓	-	-	?	-	-	✓	-
Focus Group	✓	?	-	✓	?	-	?	?
Workshop	✓	-	-	?	-	-	?	-
Physical Planning	✓	-	-	?	-	-	-	-
Informing via e-mail and letter	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	✓
Public Meeting	?	?	-	?	?	-	-	?
Interviews	✓	?	-	✓	?	-	✓	?



Access to Information

The Council recognises the importance of effective communication. All Local Development Documents will be available for review at the locations below:

- The Council House
- All District Libraries
- The Council Website
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/localplans
- Customer Service Centre

We will also advertise in the local press when a draft version of any document is available for consultation and prior to submission to the **Secretary of State**. The advert will state where and when the documents can be viewed. The LDD's will be available in a variety of different formats including: -

- Paper copies – leaflets, posters and paper copies of documents, which will be placed in key community locations;
- Electronic Versions – that can be e-mailed to interested individuals/organisations;
- Website – proposals documents, proposals matters, availability of proposals documents for inspection (with times, locations, places) will be published on the Council's website – www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

We will also make documents available in other languages and formats (large print, Braille) as needs are identified.

Any comments that people wish to make on any of the LDDs can be sent to the Council by post or by e-mailing the following addresses

Planning Policy
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire B60 1AA
Tel: 01527 881325 / 881323
Fax: 01527 881313
e-mail: planningpolicy@bromsgrove.gov.uk



Feeding back and taking views into account

The views that are expressed by the community during any involvement activity will be fed into the process of document production. Feedback from consultation will be made available in summary form and will be used to influence the drafting of policy. Those who participate in the process will be told what the outcomes of consultation processes were and how the results will be used to move the process forward. Ensuring people are kept informed of the outcome of events is seen as a vital part of the new planning system to reinforce the message that public involvement is helpful and worthwhile.

We are committed to incorporating the consensus views raised through involvement into the preparation of the documents. At both the Preferred Options stage, and also at the Submission stage of the DPDs, we will;

- Acknowledge written comments by letter or e-mail;
- Record comments from public meetings and forums and feed these into the process;
- Produce a summary of written comments received during meetings and make these publicly available on the Council's Website,
- Produce a report to Members listing all written comments received, our responses and recommendations as to what changes, if any, should be made. This report will also be available on the Council's website.

The Council will also keep contributors informed, where possible, through using;

- The Local Media, e.g. Press Releases;
- Newsletters such as Council Chat, distributed to all households in Bromsgrove District;
- Officer presentations to **stakeholder** groups who have been involved in participation events and those who contact us to request a presentation.

We will develop and maintain the contact management database of those people and organisations that wish to be involved in the LDF process, to enable a two-way flow of information at the key stages of developing planning policy.

Ongoing Involvement



What do we mean by 'Community'?

<p>Required Consultees</p> <p>Have to be involved in the Planning Process</p> <p>For full details see Appendix 2 Examples include: English Nature Highways Agency Environment Agency</p>	<p>Hard to Reach Groups</p> <p>Those groups who tend not to get involved</p> <p>Single Parents Disabled People Carers Elderly Young People Black and minority Ethnic Groups</p>
<p>Communities of Place</p> <p>Those who have an interest in a specific geographical area</p> <p>Landowners Parish Councils Community Groups Resident's Associations Ward Councillors Members of Parliament</p>	<p>Communities of Work</p> <p>Those who have the primary interest of employment</p> <p>Chamber of Commerce BROMARK Self-Employed Unemployed Micro Enterprise Small to Medium Enterprise Large Enterprise Agricultural Businesses Agricultural Employees</p>
<p>Service Providers</p> <p>The providers of the services available in the District</p> <p>Telecommunications Providers Utility Providers Tourism Providers Emergency Services Health Services Public Transport Providers Community Transport Providers Educational Establishments Rural Service Providers</p>	<p>Communities of Interest</p> <p>Communities that can be defined by the common interest they share</p> <p>Housing Groups Transport User Groups Agencies (Regional, County, Local, National) Local Strategic Partnership Countryside and Nature Preservation Arts and Culture Community Safety Sports, Leisure and Recreation Faith Groups Development Industry</p>



Who we will consult

As a minimum the Council must consult a list of required consultees about every document we produce or planning application. This list is available in Appendix 2. Clearly it is vital we involve more of the community than just the required consultees.

Many groups may be harder to reach than others. The Council will aim to remove any barriers that may hinder people from taking part in the planning process. Groups that may find it difficult to get involved include;

- People with disabilities,
 - Carers
 - Elderly people,
 - Young people,
 - Those affected by rural exclusion,
 - Black and Minority Ethnic Communities
- and
- Those who work long hours

In an attempt to remove the barriers to involvement for these groups the Council will;

- Use a variety of involvement techniques to reach as many people as possible,
 - Reach rural communities through Parish Councils,
 - Hold events outside of normal working hours,
 - Contact specific representative groups for advice on encouraging involvement
- and
- Produce documents in different languages and formats

To reach the 'communities of work' we aim to involve as many people as we can through their field of employment. The contact database has the details of many local businesses and places of work as well as those of representative bodies. These people will be kept informed of involvement opportunities throughout the plan making process.

In an attempt to involve as much of the community as possible in the planning process we will target many local groups with specific interests such as Transport user groups or Housing Issues groups. These groups will be informed of all community involvement opportunities and will be asked specifically to take part in the development of documents that involve their interests. 'Communities of place' are those who have a specific interest in the District of Bromsgrove. This will include organisations such as the Parish Councils and specifically the local organisation, 'Our Bromsgrove.'

The service providers of the District will also be targeted. They will play an important role in development of plans, as they will have important and specific areas of knowledge that will be of considerable value to the development of our plans.



Community Involvement in the Development Control Process

The Development Control process involves the consideration of individual planning applications, such as a house extension or new shopping centre, against the different planning policies and also the enforcement of planning conditions that have been imposed on developments.

Currently most people only get involved in the planning system through development control and planning applications. This could be through applying for planning permission for an extension, getting a letter about an application close to you or seeing a site notice.

It is important that the public are involved in the determination of planning application process as well as planning policy. The SCI also aims to set out a framework of community involvement for the different types of planning application. The Development Control department of the Council gets over 1,500 applications each year. These range from advertising consent and house extensions to major applications from developers for building houses.

The main way for people to have their say in the planning application process will be through sending a representation to the Council about the application. This may be in support of the application or an objection to it. The representation will be taken account of when a decision is being made on the application.

In order to deal with the different types of planning application, the government has proposed that a tiered system of involvement be used. More minor applications may have the **statutory** minimum amount of community involvement whereas other types of application may require more.

The government's definition of a major application is;

- A residential development comprising 10 or more dwellings or,
- A site area of 0.5 hectares or more where the number of dwelling is not given or,
- For other uses where the floor space to be built is 1000m² or more or
- When a site area is 1 hectare or more

Greater community involvement will be necessary in these cases. However, it is often not these cases that prove to be the most controversial. In light of this there will also be a category of applications that will be termed 'significant'. It can be difficult to identify what will be a significant application but it will include applications which;

- Are likely to attract significant public interest,
- Will have a significant physical impact on the area and;
- Form a departure from the Local Plan or subsequent **Development Plan Documents**

There may be other circumstances where an application may be deemed to be 'significant'. A planning officer can judge an application to be significant if past experiences have shown that similar applications have proven to be controversial. If you have any queries about the development control process or about a planning application please e-mail planning@bromsgrove.gov.uk or call **01527 881346**.



The Planning Application Process

The following flow diagram shows the planning application process for a minor application. An explanation of how the process will be different for both 'major' and 'significant' application follows.

PRE-APPLICATION

Applicant can contact an Officer for advice on the **Planning Help line**, Monday-Friday, 10am-4pm on **01527 881346**.
The applicant can also look up the Council's Website, **www.bromgrove.gov.uk** for advice and links to other useful websites



APPLICATION RECEIVED

A notification letter is sent out to all those who own land neighbouring the development and also to required consultees

If a landowner can't be identified or a public right of way, conservation area, listed building is affected or an environmental statement attached, a site notice will be put up or a newspaper advertisement will be placed

A weekly list of all applications is available at the Council House, in Local Libraries, at Parish Council Offices and on the Council's Website

Anyone can make a representation within 21 days of the application being registered (For English Nature 28 days in the case of a planning application potentially affecting a SSSI or in a SSSI consultation area. Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended by Section 75 and Schedule 9 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000)



DECISION ON APPLICATION

The officer considers the merits of the application and the representations that have been sent in. They write a report and make a recommendation.

Usually the Director of Planning Services makes a decision about the application but the decision can be referred to Planning Committee at the Officer or Councillors request.



NOTIFICATION

Decision notices can be viewed on the Council Website

Letters will be sent out to all those who made a representation. If more than 12 people make representations a notice will be placed in the newspaper instead



APPEAL

Applicants can appeal if the application is refused planning permission, or specific conditions have been imposed or if the application was not processed in 8 weeks

If an inquiry does occur, a site notice or newspaper advertisement will publicise this and letters will be sent out to all statutory consultees.



Major Applications

Significant Applications

If an application falls into the major category there will be a number of differences. A site notice will be put up or an advertisement will be placed in the relevant newspaper¹. All major applications will go to the Planning Committee² for a decision. They also take 13 weeks as opposed to 8 weeks to process the application.

The Council recommends that any developer proposing a major development in the District contact the Council for a pre-application discussion. We will encourage any developer doing so to consider involving the community prior to submitting their application. We would expect the developer to maintain the highest standards when conducting community involvement work.

Applications that are deemed to be significant are those, which are likely to have significant public interest. These types of applications could be where the proposal forms a departure from the development plan, or the location is sensitive for reasons such as affecting the setting of a listed building, the character/appearance of a conservation area, the effect on protected trees or other natural habitats, or could cause adverse traffic problems and impact on the amenity of local residents. This is an indication of what could be a significant application and does not include all possibilities.

With this in mind, it is likely developers proposing 'significant' applications will need to involve the community to a greater degree. The community involvement should include:

- Attending or arranging a public meeting,
- Holding an exhibition, and
- Releasing a development brief.

The Council will encourage any developer to have a pre-application meeting with the Council about the proposed development and the community involvement that should be undertaken. The Council will play a guiding role regarding the development to ensure high standards are maintained but without compromising their impartiality. The consultation methods adopted should be relevant and appropriate for the exact nature of the planning application and those to be involved.

¹ Notices will be placed in the relevant newspaper covering the District. It will be either, the Bromsgrove Advertiser, the Bromsgrove Standard, the Redditch Indicator, the Stourbridge News or the Birmingham Post

² Members of the public can attend Planning Committee but cannot currently speak at committee. This situation is under review and it is expected that a trial period of public speaking at Planning Committee will commence sometime this year.



Resources and Management

Involving the community in an effective way, particularly through more interactive methods, can be very time consuming and costly. This is why it is important that the process is appropriately resourced and managed. We have carefully considered how the community will be involved and have developed an approach that is fit for purpose but also achievable within the constraints of the Council's resources. The Head of Local Plans will manage the whole process. Other resources, which we will need take account of, are as follows:

Budgets

The Local Plans team has two budget sources: The Council's Planning Budget and The Planning Delivery Grant (PDG.) The Council's Planning Budget for this financial year takes account of the community involvement initiatives set out in the SCI and their costs. The Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) is awarded to the Council by Central Government. The amount of PDG the Council receives is based on our performance and how well we meet targets. It is important that we keep to the timetable set out in this document in order to receive as much PDG as possible. The PDG was considered when deciding on the timetable of document production.

Staff

The Local Plans team will carry out much of the community involvement work. Other sections of the Council will provide assistance as necessary. We are aware that the Council has suffered staffing problems, with many posts being vacant long term. This may affect the LDF process and may limit our resources. As such we must be prepared to review our approach to community involvement in response to this. A review will be undertaken as part of the monitoring process.

Consultants

Part of our Planning Budget is set aside for employing consultants. A detailed review of the potential benefits and costs will be undertaken to help us decide if it will be appropriate to hire consultants to undertake community involvement work.

Equipment and Materials

The Council already has access to equipment and materials such as IT facilities and projectors needed for successful community involvement. Part of our Planning Budget is set aside for equipment and materials. By working with the other Council departments and in collaboration with other local organizations, additional equipment and materials will be available to us.



Planning Aid

Monitoring

Venue hire and other direct costs

Most community involvement activities will be undertaken free of charge at the Council House. It has proven to be an accessible and suitable venue in past consultation experiences. We will also aim to minimise the costs of undertaking events by attending the events and/or combining with the events of other organisations. The timetable of production for the LDF has been arranged so consultation periods for different documents will coincide. This will enable us to reduce the overall number of events and minimise costs. It will also mean that the community will not suffer from over-consultation (consultation fatigue) and will be more likely to get involved.

Members

The Councillors, through their role as representatives of the community will have an important part to play throughout the LDF process. Not only will members be involved in the LDF Working Group but also they will be involved through the consultation events.

West Midlands Planning Aid is an independent service that will provide free advice on planning matters to those groups and individuals who cannot afford professional fees. The service can help communities to prepare themselves for getting involved with the LDF and the Development Control process. The Council has and will continue to look to the Planning Aid service for advice throughout the LDF process, as they may be able to facilitate and encourage more effective involvement. The Council will aim to make the public more aware of the service and what it has to offer.

The SCI is not intended to be a static document. Community involvement is a process of continuous learning. The SCI will change over time as we learn through experience. The Council will be producing an **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)** to ensure work is being completed efficiently and effectively. As a part of the AMR the SCI will be reviewed. If there is a deficiency in the SCI, changes will be made. As part of the review process the community will be asked when they take part in any event, their opinion of the event and how it could be improved. The monitoring process is in place to help ascertain if;

- The SCI is effectively engaging communities and if not, why not?
- The techniques being used are working and if not, why not?
- There is any room for improvement

The first AMR will be produced by December 2005 and will be available on the Council's Website, www.bromsgrove.gov.uk.



Legal Duties

The Race Relations Act (2000) sets out the duty of The Council regarding race relations. We have a duty to remove any unlawful discrimination and to promote equality. Community involvement must reflect this. The Council must also comply with the duty outlined in the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) to provide a public service that doesn't discriminate against disabled people by providing them with a lower standard of service.

Therefore we will make sure that there are no barriers for people from Black and Ethnic Minority communities or those with disabilities in getting involved in the planning process. We will remain in contact with representative organisations throughout the LDF process to ensure that we are making every reasonable effort to involve these groups in the planning process.

Conclusion

The purpose of the SCI is to set out how people can be involved in the planning process. The development of the document has involved a broad range of community representatives through a survey, workshop and **statutory** consultation period. We recognise that it is essential to ask the community how they wish to be involved – resulting in a document that has been developed in line with its own principles. All of the comments were considered and have been incorporated into this version of the document. It is the Council's view that this document meets all of the necessary criteria of an SCI. It explains:

- The minimum requirements for community involvement,
- The links with other community initiatives,
- The local groups and bodies to be involved generally,
- How involvement will occur in a timely and accessible way,
- That we have the resources to carry out the work proposed,
- That suitable methods will be employed,
- How results of involvement will be fed into document production,
- How people can be involved in planning applications, and
- How the SCI will be reviewed.



Appendix 1 Glossary

Local Development Framework (LDF)

This is the portfolio of DPDs (Development Plan Documents) and SPDs (Supplementary Plan Documents.) This will be the framework for delivering the planning strategy and policies for Bromsgrove District.

Development Plan Documents (DPD)

These will be the key documents of the LDF they will contain development plan policies and be subject to independent examination.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

Each SPD will cover a specific issue, which will provide additional guidance for policies in the DPDs.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

This document is a 3-year project plan for the production of documents in the LDF.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)

This document will show the progress of plan production set out in the LDS and how effective the development plan policies have been.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA) Report

An appraisal of the environmental, social and economic impacts of specific policies and proposals. Will be undertaken at the same time as the SEA.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)

The environmental assessment of plans and policies. As required by an EU Directive.

Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

A partnership of members from many different bodies responsible for the Community Plan

Statutory

Based on a legal requirement. Certain consultees are statutory and we are required to consult them. They are referred to as required consultees in this document.

Stakeholders

Person with a share and/or an interest

PINS

Planning Inspectorate, the governing body of planning

Secretary of State

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister



Appendix 2 Required Consultees

Consultee	Required Consultee for Development Plan Document	Required Consultee for Planning Applications
Regional Government body – Government Office of West Midlands (GOWM)	✓	
Regional Planning body - West Midlands Regional Assembly	✓	
Regional Development Agency – Advantage West Midlands	✓	
DEFRA (Department for the Environment Food and Rural Affairs)	✓	
County Council – Worcestershire County Council	✓	✓
Adjoining County Councils - Staffordshire County Council Warwickshire County Council	✓	✓
Adjoining Local Planning Authorities – Birmingham City Council Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Stratford-on-Avon District Council Redditch Borough Council Wychavon District Council Wyre Forest District Council South Staffordshire Council Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	✓	✓
Town and Parish Councils	✓	✓
Adjoining Parish Councils	✓	✓
Environment Agency	✓	✓
Countryside Agency	✓	✓
English Nature	✓	✓
English Heritage	✓	✓
Network Rail	✓	✓
Relevant Telecommunications company	✓	
Strategic Health Authority - West Midlands South Strategic Health Authority	✓	
Relevant electricity and gas companies	✓	✓
Relevant sewerage and water undertakers	✓	
Equal Opportunities Commission	✓	



Appendix 2 Required Consultees Continued

Consultee	Required Consultee for Development Plan Document	Required Consultee for Planning Applications
Local Airport Operators	✓	
Health and Safety Executive		✓
Secretary of State for Transport		✓
Rail Operators		✓
Local Highways Authority	✓	✓
The Coal Authority		✓
The Theatres Trust		✓
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)		✓
Waste Regulation Authority		✓
British Waterways		✓
The Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment		✓
Council for British Archaeology		✓
Council for the Protection of Rural England		✓
Forestry Commission		✓
Highways Agency	✓	✓
Sport England		✓
Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit Bromsgrove		
Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in Bromsgrove		
Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in Bromsgrove		
Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in Bromsgrove		
Bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in Bromsgrove		



Appendix 3 Other Consultees

This is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as necessary

Active Permissions
Advantage West Midlands
Age Concern
Alcohol Advisory Team
All Saints Church
Alvechurch Historic Society
Alvechurch Parish Council
Army Cadet Force
Aston Fields Workmen's Club
Avoncroft Arts Society
Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings
BARN
Barnt Green Parish Council
Belbroughton Heritage Village Society
Belbroughton Parish Council
Bentley Pouncefoot Parish Council
Beoley Parish Council
Bewell Head Workmen's Club
Birmingham City Council
Black Environment Network
Bourneheath Parish Council
British Wind Energy
BROMARK
Bromford Housing Group
Bromsgrove and Redditch Advocacy Group
Bromsgrove 41 Club
Bromsgrove Access Group
Bromsgrove Action Group for Older People
Bromsgrove and District Guides and Brownies
Bromsgrove and District Twinning Association
Bromsgrove and Redditch Mind
Bromsgrove Baptist Church
Bromsgrove Boaters
Bromsgrove CAB
Bromsgrove Christian Church
Bromsgrove Court Leet
Bromsgrove Cricket, Hockey, Tennis, Croquet Club
Bromsgrove District Primary Care Group
Bromsgrove District Scouts
Bromsgrove Homelessness Forum
Bromsgrove Junior Chamber
Bromsgrove Labour Club
Bromsgrove Ladies Club
Bromsgrove Lions Club
Bromsgrove Mental Health Resource Centre
Bromsgrove Methodist Centre
Bromsgrove Round Table
Bromsgrove Rovers Supporters' Group
Bromsgrove Salvation Army
Bromsgrove School
Bromsgrove Society
Bromsgrove Society Local History Group
Bromsgrove Swimming Club
Bromsgrove Tangent Club
Bromsgrove Tennis Club
Bromsgrove United Charities
Bromsgrove United Reform Church
Bromsgrove Youth Centre
Brookhaven
Broome Parish Council
Burma Star Association
BYHF - Baseline Service
C.P.R.E (Bromsgrove District)
Catshill & North Marlbrook Parish Council
Catshill 20/20
Catshill Workmen's Club
Centro
Centro (WMPTE)
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council



Appendix 3 Other Consultees Continued

This is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as necessary

Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire & Worcestershire	Government Office for the West Midlands
Charford Multi Agency Resource Centre (CACTUS)	GPU Power UK
Church Centre	Hagley Hall
Church of God of Prophecy	Hagley Parish Council
Churches Together	Hanbury Parish Council
Churchill and Blakedown Parish Council	Hanover Housing Association
Clent History Society	HCD Architecture
Clent Parish Council	Health Development Team
Cofton Hackett and Barnt Green Parish Centre	Heart of England Tourist Board
Cofton Hackett Parish Council	Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust
Community First	Herefordshire & Worcestershire Transport 2000
Connexions	Herefordshire & Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust
Country Landowners Association	Herefordshire and Worcestershire RIGS Group
Countryside Agency (West Midlands)	Highways Agency
Court Leet	House Builders Federation
CPRE Worcestershire Branch (CPRE)	Housing Corporation
Cyclists's Touring Club (CTC)	Housman Society
David Lloyd Leisure	Huntington Parish Council
Diocese of Worcester/Worcester DBF	Hutchinson 3G
Dodderhill Parish Council	Icknield Street Action Group
Dodford with Grafton Parish Council	Judd Medical Ltd.
Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council	Kinver Parish Council
Employment Service	Lickey and Blackwell Parish Council
English Heritage	Lickey End Parish Council
English Nature	Lickey Hills Society
Environment Agency, Upper Severn Area	Local Sports Council
Feckenham Parish Council	Malcolm Judd & Partners
Federation of Master Builders	Mappleborough Green Parish Council
Federation of Small Businesses	MARC
Finstall Parish Council	Millennium Volunteers
Frankley Parish Council	Millfields and District Social Club
Friends of the Earth (West Midlands)	MIND
Gingerbread	Multi-Agency Resource Centre
Girls Brigade	



Appendix 3 Other Consultees Continued

This is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as necessary

N.E.W Hope
National Children's Home Aftercare
National Farmers' Union
National Grid Transco
National House Building Council
National Housing Federation (West Midlands)
National Playing Fields Association
National Rural Enterprise Centre
National Trust - Severn Regional Offices
Network Rail
NEW College
Nexus Housing Association
North East Worcestershire College
NSPCC
O.G.C
O2
Oldberrow Parish Council
Open Spaces Society
Orange
Our Bromsgrove
Our Lady of Perpetual Succour
Pegasus Planning Group
R A F Association, Bromsgrove & Redditch Branch
Racial Equality Council
Railtrack PLC
Ramblers Association
Redditch and Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust
Redditch Borough Council
Romsley Parish Council
Rotary Club - Bromsgrove
Rotary Club of North Worcestershire
Royal British Legion
Royal Naval Association (Bromsgrove Branch)
Rubery Village Business Association
Rubery Youth Marching Band
Rural Housing Trust
S.B.M.H.T
Sandwell MBC
Schools Outreach
Severn Trent Water
Shelter
Simon N Hartshorne
Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council
South Staffordshire Council
Sport England (West Midlands)
St John Ambulance, Quadrilateral Division
Stoke Heath Neighbourhood Watch
Stoke Parish Council
Stoke Prior Youth Group
Stratford on Avon District Council
Sustrans
Tanworth-in-Arden Parish Council
The Abbeyfield, Rubery & District Society
The Bird Trust
The Bromsgrove Festival
The Bromsgrove Society
The Caravan Club
The Chairman of the West Midlands Parks Forum
The Countryside Agency
The Inland Waterways Association
The Lickey Community Group
The Prince's Trust
The Royal British Legion (Aston Fields Branch)
The Stoke Prior Business Association
The Woodland Trust
The Worcestershire Partnership
T-Mobile



Appendix 3 Other Consultees Continued

This is not an exhaustive list and will be updated as necessary

Touchstone Housing Association
TRANSCO
Travel West Midlands
Tutnall & Cobley Parish Council
Upton Warren Parish Council
Victorian Society
Vodafone
W.R.V.S
Weaver PLC Construction
West Mercia Constabulary
West Mercia Housing Group
West Mercia Police
West Midland Arts
West Midlands Planning Aid Service
West Midlands Regional Assembly
West Midlands RSL Planning Consortium
William Morris Supermarkets
Worcester and Birmingham Canal Society
Worcester Archaeology Society
Worcester BTCV
Worcestershire Association for the Blind
Worcestershire Biodiversity Partnership
Worcestershire Business Partnership
Worcestershire Carers Unit
Worcestershire County & Mental Health Trust
Worcestershire County Council
Worcestershire Federation of WI's
Worcestershire NHS Trust
Worcestershire Racial Equality Council
Worcestershire Rural Housing Enabler
Worcestershire Special Olympics
Worcestershire Tourist Board
Worcestershire Wildlife Trust
WRVS Rural Rides Bromsgrove
Wychavon District Council
Wyre Forest District Council
Wythall Community Association
Wythall Parish Council
Wythall Ratepayers & Residents Association
Youth Enquiry Service
Youth Officer-Participation & Information
Youth Worcs
Youth Zone



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Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Planning and Environment Services

Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.

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