

Statement of Community Involvement Consultation Draft 2012



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1 Foreword

We hope that by involving people in the decisions that affect them we can create a better place for those who live, work and play in Telford and Wrekin. It is important that people know when and how they can be involved in the planning process. This document explains how Telford & Wrekin Council will engage different people in planning; both the production of new planning policy and the decisions made on planning applications.

Engagement will be carried out when people can most effectively be involved in those planning issues that concern them. Your views matter to the Council and are important in shaping the future of Telford and Wrekin.

This is the consultation draft of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. We are publishing this for a period of six weeks for people to comment on our suggested methods of engagement. This consultation will take place between 20th August and 1st October 2012.

After the period of consultation, the Council will review the comments made and make alterations to the document where appropriate. When these updates have been made the Statement of Community Involvement will be adopted by the Council.



Councillor Charles Smith

Cabinet Member for Housing, Regeneration and Economic Development

2.1 What is a Statement of Community Involvement?

2.1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement is a document which provides people with information about how and when they can be involved with planning. It explains how different stakeholders (local businesses, developers and the general public) can get involved in the planning process, from preparing new policy documents to determining planning applications.

2.1.2 As a Co-operative Council, and in the spirit of localism, Telford & Wrekin is keen to involve residents, businesses and other representative organisations in the planning process.

2.1.3 The Telford & Wrekin Statement of Community Involvement is in accordance with national regulations which set expectations with regards to adequate stakeholder involvement in the planning process.

2.1.4 A glossary of all terms used in this document is provided in Section 9.1.

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3 The Vision for Involvement

3.1 Our Vision

3.1.1 Local communities, businesses, investors and interest groups often have vital local knowledge and a stake in their local area. These groups are known as stakeholders. They have views and opinions on planning matters that are important to the Council. In an attempt to operate in an open and inclusive manner, the Council will endeavour to consider and incorporate the often diverse views that planning can arouse, with a view to creating stronger neighbourhoods and an improved borough for all.

3.1.2 The planning process in Telford & Wrekin; from policy development, to application decisions, is a dialogue between all interested parties. The Council will take account of the public's views and strive to see them incorporated in decision making, wherever possible.

3.1.3 All stakeholders in the planning process should understand how the Council will inform, engage and involve them in planning. This information will be set out clearly in the Council's Statement of Community Involvement.

3.2 Our Commitment

3.2.1 Telford & Wrekin Council is committed to involving communities and other stakeholders in the planning process. The Council will:

- Engage in a timely, and appropriate way with all stakeholders, ensuring people are invited to engage before major decisions have been made;
- Use a variety of methods to inform and engage communities in the planning process. The Council understands that people with different needs and interests require different methods to engage with planning;
- Explore new and innovative ways to engage with a wider range of people, especially focusing on electronic communication;
- Avoid using jargon and strive to communicate in the clearest and simplest way possible;
- Ensure public involvement is appropriate in scale in relation to the scale and nature of the planning issues being dealt with and in line with the resources available;
- Treat participants with respect and ensure the safety and wellbeing of participants by taking account of safeguarding frameworks, confidentiality and data protection guidelines⁽¹⁾;
- Keep under review the suitability and effectiveness of our methods of engagement, and make changes where necessary.

¹ It should be noted that not all comments can remain confidential as they may be subject to Freedom of Information requests or made public during a public inquiry, or examination of a document

4 The Planning System

4.1 How does Planning work?

4.1.1 Planning Policy

4.1.1.1 It is stated in the National Planning Policy Framework that the purpose of the UK planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. To achieve this the planning process is guided by a forward looking plan.

4.1.1.2 Each local authority must prepare a **Local Plan**. This plan may be supported by other planning documents that together guide development in that area. All decisions on proposed new development will be judged against the policies contained in the Local Plan (plus other relevant policy documents).

4.1.2 Development Management (Planning Applications)

4.1.2.1 Most types of development need planning permission⁽²⁾. An applicant must submit an application⁽³⁾ to the council describing the proposed development. The Council must then consider the proposal against local planning policies, along with national guidance and other material considerations. Engagement in Development Management is described in more detail in Section 6.

4.2 Who is involved?

4.2.1 At different stages of the planning process (from producing policy documents to assessing applications) a range of stakeholders will be involved in different ways.

4.2.2 The Council holds a database of organisations and people who are to be kept informed about the development of planning policy and relevant planning applications in the Telford & Wrekin area. Any resident, business or interested party can add their details to the database by contacting the Development Plans Team via email (developmentplans@telford.gov.uk) or telephone (01952 384255).

Table 1 Stakeholders involved in planning

Stakeholder	How they're involved
General Public	At all the key stages of policy production, people who have registered on the Council database will be notified of the publication of documents and provided with full details of how they can make their views known. The Council will ensure that the key consultation stages are widely publicised. The general public may also be involved in planning application decisions. They may receive a letter or read a site notice about a proposed development and are able to comment on proposed developments.

2 There are some types of development which do not require planning permission (such as some minor building works), however in most cases planning permission must be applied for

3 There are several different types of application dealt with by the Development Management team: for example, planning applications, listed building applications and advertisement consent.

4 The Planning System

Local Organisations and Businesses	As a 'Business winning and supporting Council' Telford & Wrekin is committed to enabling businesses to engage effectively with all Council services. Any local organisations and businesses who have an interest in planning can register with the Council to receive updates regarding planning policy production. The Council will also utilise existing business networks and contacts to make businesses aware of emerging planning policy. For further information on how the Council will support local companies please see the Development and Business Charter.
Parish and Town Council Members	Parish and Town Councillors are important representatives of the community. Parishes will be notified of planning applications in their locality and invited to comment. Planning Officers may attend the Parish Forum to engage with the Parishes as part of planning policy production. Officers will also use parish newsletters and attend individual parish meetings where appropriate. The Parishes are also the level at which Neighbourhood Plans are being produced in Telford & Wrekin.
Council Members	Elected Council Members sit on Plans Board to make decisions about some planning applications (see section 6.4). Members have a key role to play in preparing local planning policy and will be involved in this from the earliest stages.
Agents and Developers	This group includes landowners, private developers, and their agents. They have knowledge and expertise which is particularly relevant to the delivery of the Local Plan. The Council will use local networks and contacts to draw on this expertise, particularly regarding market conditions and the deliverability of development.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.1 Methods we use

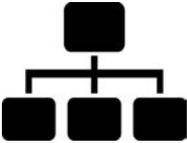
5.1.1 There are a wide range of techniques which can be used to involve stakeholders in planning matters. The following methods will be used at various stages to engage stakeholders in the production of planning policy. Details of which methods will be used when follow in section 5.3 - 5.5.

Table 2 Methods which the Council will use to engage with stakeholders

	Method	How it works	Type of Involvement
	Email and letters	Emails and letters are sent out to inform stakeholders about planning policy production and opportunities for involvement	Information and awareness raising
	Face to face questionnaires	Questionnaires are undertaken with the public at a range of locations around the borough (for example community centres, train/bus stations etc.) asking people's opinion about certain issues or policies	Active engagement
	Leaflet questionnaires	Distribution of leaflet questionnaires at a range of locations around the borough (for example libraries, post offices, leisure centres etc.) asking people's opinion about certain issues or policies	Engagement through seeking opinions of proposals
	Online questionnaire on the Council's consultation portal ⁽⁴⁾	Type of questions will differ at different stages of policy production; they could be broad open questions, multiple choice and specific questions related to a published document	Gathering opinion in general or regarding a published document
	Council notice boards/screens (libraries and community centres)	Posters and digital displays informing people about planning policy production in council owned buildings	Information and awareness raising

4 The Council has a web based consultation software package, where stakeholders can log in and provide comments on emerging planning policy online

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

	Method	How it works	Type of Involvement
	Non-Council notice boards/ stands/screens (village shop/hall, community centres)	Posters and information stands about planning policy production in non-council owned buildings	Information and awareness raising
	Press releases	Publication of an advert with information about planning policy production and opportunities to be involved in the local paper (the Shropshire Star - as the paper with the largest circulation)	Information and awareness raising
	Website pages	Publication of information about planning policy production	Information and awareness raising
	Social media (including Facebook and Twitter)	Publication of information about planning policy production, often directing stakeholders to the website/a questionnaire	Information and awareness raising
	Open workshops	Interactive engagement sessions where people's opinions and views are gathered through discussion and breakout groups	Active engagement with officers present to support our customers
	Young people's forum	Interactive engagement sessions where young people's opinions and views about planning policy production are gathered	Active engagement with officers present to support our customers
	Public meetings	Interactive engagement sessions where stakeholders' opinions are gathered - they are open to all and are widely advertised	Active engagement with officers present to support our customers
	Focus groups	Interactive consultation sessions where the views of a specific group of people (e.g. Parish councils, Wildlife Trusts) are sought - usually invite only events	Active engagement with officers present to support our customers

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.1.2 It should be noted that the methods the Council uses will be continually reviewed. The opportunities to use new types of engagement techniques and continually innovate our approach to engagement will be considered at each and every consultation. These activities are not set out in the Statement of Community Involvement as they will be specific to the circumstances of the consultation, reflecting new opportunities and best practice.

5.2 Types of Planning Document

5.2.1 The main planning policy document in Telford & Wrekin is the Local Plan, this is supported by a number of other planning policy documents. These each have a different status, therefore the amount of consultation that is required and carried out for each of the documents varies. The remainder of this section explains the consultation which will be carried out in the production of each of the different planning policy documents. The documents are:

- Development Plan Documents
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Community Infrastructure Levy
- Supplementary Planning Documents
- Neighbourhood Planning Documents

5.2.2 The following table shows which methods will be used at which stage in the production of each document. Sections 5.3 to 5.5 explain the purpose of each stage of production.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

Methods used	Development Plan Documents and associated Sustainability Appraisal				Community Infrastructure Levy			Supplementary Planning Documents		Neighbourhood Planning	
	Early engagement	Strategy and Options	Draft Plan	Independent examination	Preliminary draft charging schedule	Draft charging schedule	Examination in public	Early engagement	Formal consultation	Neighbourhood area	Submission
 Email and letters	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y		
 Face to face questionnaires	Y							Y	Y		
 Leaflet questionnaires	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y		
 Online questionnaire on the Council's consultation portal	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y		Y	Y		
 Council notice boards/screens/information stands	Y	Y	Y								
 Non-Council notice boards/stands/screens	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y				Y	Y
 Press releases		Y	Y	Y			Y				
 Council website pages	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
 Social media (Twitter and Facebook)	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y	Y	Y
 Open workshops	Y							Y	Y		
 Young people's forum		Y									
 Public meetings		Y						Y	Y		
 Focus groups		Y			Y	Y		Y	Y		

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.3 Development Plan Documents

5.3.1 Development Plan Documents are statutory documents that contain land use planning policies and development proposals against which planning applications will be considered. The main Development Plan Document is the Local Plan. Set out below are the key stages of community engagement and involvement throughout the document preparation. There are several stages in the adoption of a Development Plan Document.



Stage 1: Early Engagement

5.3.2 At this stage the consultation is centred around the gathering of initial views about what issues people would like the Development Plan Document to cover. People will be encouraged to register their details on the development plans database so that they can be informed and involved in later stages of the document production.

5.3.3 All comments gathered at this stage are considered when writing the Strategy and Options stage document.

Stage 2: Strategy & Options Consultation

5.3.4 The consultation at this stage is for stakeholders to comment on the development proposals put forward by the Council. This is a statutory six week consultation period within which anyone can make comments on the options set out in the document. At this stage, as the consultation period is fixed, care will be taken by the Council to ensure all relevant parties are aware of the dates of the consultation period.

5.3.5 After the close of this consultation period, the Council will consider the comments received and make amendments to the document where appropriate. It may be the case that this consultation will identify matters/issues on which it will not be possible to build consensus. It is these matters which may need to be explored when the document is submitted for independent examination.

5.3.6 The Council will consider all comments made at this stage in producing the Draft Plan.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

Stage 3: Draft Plan (Submission to the Secretary of State)

5.3.7 The Council is required to publish a Draft Development Plan Document before it submits the document to the Secretary of State for independent inspection at an Examination in Public. The Council must invite representations on the document for a period of at least 6 weeks. A report detailing the main issues raised in this consultation will be submitted to the inspector.

5.3.8 For comments to be considered by the planning inspector responsible for the Examination in Public they must be submitted at this stage.

Stage 4: Independent Examination by the Secretary of State & Adoption of Final Plan

5.3.9 An independent examination is carried out by a planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The inspector will consider the "soundness" of the plan, this involves a legal compliance check, and assessing if the plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

5.3.10 The Council will publish an advert informing people of the details of the examination.

5.3.11 Anyone who has a concern with the document has the right to have their comments considered by the inspector. The inspector will consider most comments in writing, although everyone has a right to speak at the inquiry. The inspector will try to make the inquiry as informal as possible.

5.3.12 After the examination, the inspector will produce a report which will recommend that the Council either adopt the document or make changes before adopting the document. This report will explain any changes which must be made to the Development Plan Document for it to be found "sound". Following this the Council will adopt the document.

5.4 Sustainability Appraisal

5.4.1 The Sustainability Appraisal process considers any likely significant environmental, social and economic effects of the policies or proposals contained within planning documents. The process should identify if there could be any negative impacts which could be caused by the policy. If this is the case measures are included in the plan to minimise or remove these impacts. The Appraisal process includes a Strategic Environmental Assessment which also has to be carried out in the preparation of all Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

5.4.2 The Sustainability Appraisal report is published for consultation at the same time as the relevant policy documents.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.5 Community Infrastructure Levy

5.5.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy is a payment that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The Council must consult on the proposed charging schedule.

Stage 1: Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule

5.5.2 The Council will produce and publish a Preliminary Draft Charging Schedule, this will set out what the proposed charges would be and how they would be implemented. The objective of this phase of informal consultation is to gain feedback on the proposed rates.

Stage 2: Draft Charging Schedule

5.5.3 The Draft Charging Schedule will be formally published and consulted on for a minimum of four weeks. This will be widely advertised. During this period anyone can provide their comments to the Council and suggest changes to document. Stakeholders may also request to speak at the Examination in Public. The Council may make changes to the document following this phase of consultation, prior to the Examination in Public.

Stage 3: Examination in Public

5.5.4 The Council has to submit the Final Charging Schedule to the Secretary of State for independent examination. An independent examination is carried out by a planning inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The Council will publish an advert informing people of the details of the examination. Anyone who requested to speak at the Examination in Public during stage 2 (above) will be heard at the examination. The inspector appointed to the examination will determine the examination procedures and timescales. At the end of the examination the inspector will either approve, reject or approve with changes the Charging Schedule. Following this, if successful, the Council will adopt the Charging Schedule.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.6 Supplementary Planning Documents

5.6.1 Supplementary Planning Documents are produced to support policies and proposals contained in a Local Plan. They provide additional information/guidance to support the implementation of a policy or proposal.

Stage 1: Early Involvement

5.6.2 The nature of community involvement for Supplementary Planning Documents will depend on the nature of the document being produced. If a site specific Supplementary Planning Document is being produced for a major development site, the focus will be on involving local residents and businesses in the vicinity of the site. Where possible, events will be held within the area the document will affect. If the Supplementary Planning Document is more technical in nature for example concerning car parking standards, the Council's approach will focus more on engaging specialist stakeholders e.g. Developers and highway engineers. The main focus of this informal stage of engagement will be information gathering, and the consideration of issues and options.

Stage 2: Formal Consultation

5.6.3 Once a draft document has been produced a formal consultation period will be held for no less than four weeks.

Stage 3: Adoption

5.6.4 Following this the Council will produce a statement explaining how the comments raised at the formal consultation stage have been considered in the re-drafting of the final Supplementary Planning Document. Anyone who provides comments at the formal consultation stage will receive notification of the adoption of the final document.

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

5.7 Neighbourhood Planning

5.7.1 A new tier of planning has recently been introduced, enabling local communities to prepare Neighbourhood Development Plans (also known as Neighbourhood Plans). A plan can enable communities to establish general planning policies for development and use of land in a neighbourhood. The level of detail in the plan will be set by the local community.

Neighbourhood Area Designation

5.7.2 The first stage of the process is to establish the area to be covered by a plan. In Telford & Wrekin, these areas are likely to be parishes. The Council therefore receive an application from the Parish/Town Council to designate a Neighbourhood Area.

5.7.3 The Council must then hold a consultation of at least 6 weeks to ensure people in the neighbourhood area i.e. those who live, work or carry on business in the area to which the application relates, have the chance to comment on the neighbourhood area suggested. As a result of the consultation, the neighbourhood area will either be accepted or refused by the Borough Council, the outcome is publicised as required by legislation. If accepted, work will be led by the Parish Council to develop a Neighbourhood Development Plan⁽⁵⁾.

Preparing the Plan

5.7.4 In producing the Neighbourhood Development Plan, engagement and consultation should be done by the Parish Council in a way that enables as many people as possible to be aware of the plans⁽⁶⁾ (including people living, working and doing business in the area to which the plan relates). Critical to this stage is identifying the key issues relevant to planning in the neighbourhood area. This will be followed by the Parish Council developing a local vision for development and detailed policies e.g. covering where development will be supported. Consultation will be carried out by the Parish Council concerned and it's nature may vary depending on the area involved; the stage of the plan - with a minimum position set by legislation; and, the approach of the local Parish Council.

Plan Submission - Examination - Referendum

5.7.5 Neighbourhood Development Plans have to meet a number of conditions (focused on legal compliance and that plans take account of wider policy considerations - for instance that plans have regard to national and local planning policy) before they can be put to a community referendum and legally come into force. The first step is for a Parish Council to submit its final Neighbourhood Development Plan to the Borough Council. The Council will then publicise the proposed plan to local people for a minimum six week period. The Council will publish the Neighbourhood Development Plan on the Council website and promote this as widely as possible in the plan area.

5.7.6 An independent assessor will be then appointed by the Council to undertake an examination to independently check the plan satisfies the key tests of neighbourhood planning. Depending on the outcome of the examination stage, a referendum (a vote) organised by the Council will then be held in the area covered by the plan. The plan must be considered favourably

5 The method by which the plan is written is at the discretion of the neighbourhood area (Parish); Telford & Wrekin Council officers will assist, including by providing statistical information, and up to date guidance on how to produce Neighbourhood Development Plans

6 Activities may be led by a Neighbourhood Planning Steering Group

5 How you can be involved: Planning Policy

by over 50% of those who voted to be successful. Following a successful outcome at the referendum, the Council then accept the Neighbourhood Development Plan as "made" ⁽⁷⁾ and can then be used when determining planning applications.

7 Also known as adopted.

6 How you can be involved: Development Management

6.1 Planning Applications

6.1.1 Certain types of development require planning permission⁽⁸⁾, such as building, engineering, mining and certain changes to the use of a building or piece of land.

6.1.2 An applicant must submit an application to the Council describing the proposed development, applicants may choose to appoint a planning consultant to do this on their behalf. The Council must then consider the proposal against local planning policies, along with national guidance and other material considerations.

6.1.3 The government sets minimum standards for consulting the public regarding planning applications. Anyone is entitled to comment on a planning application, either to object or support the proposals. The following section describes how to find out about current applications, and how to comment on different applications.

Pre-application discussions & workshops

6.1.4 The Council is keen to encourage early engagement of all parties (including the public) to discuss and resolve issues prior to the submission of a planning application. This may be householder applicants discussing extensions with neighbouring properties or large scale developers holding a public consultation event for a new residential scheme.

6.1.5 As set out in the new Development & Business Charter the Council will provide free pre-application planning advice on all schemes, and encourage potential applicants to access this service.

6.2 Publicising an Application

6.2.1 The level of advertising of an application is determined by the type of application and the location. There is a statutory requirement for some applications to be advertised in a local newspaper and for a site notice to be displayed on or near the application site. The council will need to advertise an application if:

- The proposal is a departure from the Local Plan
- It affects a right of way
- It has an environmental statement submitted
- It is a major application
- It involves works to a listed building or the development affects the setting of a listed building
- It is within a conservation area or the development affects the setting of a conservation area.

6.2.2 There is a 21 day period for responses to be submitted to the Council if an application has been advertised. Applications are advertised in the Shropshire Star (as the paper with the largest circulation locally) on a Thursday.

6.2.3 The Council also sends a site notice with all applications to the applicant (or agent if one has been used) requesting that the notice is displayed on or adjacent to the site. The notice includes information on the nature of the application and details of how to comment.

⁸ There are some types of development which do not require planning permission (such as some minor building works), however in most cases planning permission must be applied for.

6 How you can be involved: Development Management

6.2.4 Occupiers of properties adjacent to the proposed development site are notified individually by letter. In cases where there are isolated applications (such as in the rural area) or larger applications which may have wider than adjacent influence it will be the Local Authority's judgement how far the neighbour notification will apply.

6.2.5 Appropriate Statutory Consultees are also notified of the application. Not all Statutory Consultees are consulted on each application; the organisations consulted will depend on the type and nature of the application.

6.2.6 All those who have been notified of a planning application have 21 days to send comments to the Council.

6.3 Amendments to an Application

6.3.1 In order to avoid unnecessary delay, for minor amendments, such as small alterations to the design of extensions or individual houses where the amendment results in smaller buildings, no additional re-notification is undertaken. More significant alterations, such as re-siting of roads in residential developments or altering the siting of extensions or building closer to neighbouring properties may require neighbour re-notification - this is not always 21 days.

6.3.2 In summary, significant amendments are subject to re-notification and possibly re-advertisement, whereas no notification would usually take place for minor amendments.

6.4 Determining an Application

6.4.1 When the Council receives an application it will be assigned to a planning officer. The officer will produce a report about the planning application which will recommend either approval or refusal. Prior to preparation of this report, the officer may liaise with other officers in the Council (for example; engineers, parks and open spaces etc.) and potentially external bodies such as the Environment Agency and Parish Councils depending on the nature of the application. All comments from statutory bodies, other Council Officers and the general public are considered and have to be weighed up against national and local policy advice and guidance in coming to a decision. It is important to note that just because the Council has received an objection to a development this does not automatically result in refusal of the application.

6.4.2 The majority of applications submitted to the Council are determined by planning officers through delegated authority. This helps ensure that most applications are determined within the statutory period. Applications which cannot be determined by delegated powers are considered by Plans Board, these include:

- Where the planning officer considers that the application should be considered by Plans Board
- Where the approval of an application would be a departure from local planning policy
- Where the proposal involves the Council either as applicant or land owner as required by the scheme of delegation to officers and committees
- Where the applicant/land owner is either a borough Councillor or Council employee at senior level

6 How you can be involved: Development Management

- Where a borough Councillor or a Parish/Town Council makes a written request for the application to be considered by Plans Board
- If the application is subject to a new or change to a planning obligation (also known as S106 agreement/undertaking).

6.4.3 Plans Board comprises of a Chair, a Vice Chair and 8 other Borough Councillors. Plans Board usually meets every 3-4 weeks. Members of the public are allowed to speak at Plans Board if they have registered to do so in advance of the meeting through the Council's Democratic Services⁽⁹⁾.

6.4.4 Applications are either:

- Approved
- Approved with conditions/obligations⁽¹⁰⁾
- Refused

6.4.5 After a decision is made, neighbours, Parish Councils and members who commented on the application will be notified of the outcome. If the decision was taken by committee at Plans Board the resolution will also be published in the minutes of the meeting.

6.5 Appeals

6.5.1 If an application has not been determined within the appropriate timescales, the application has been refused, or the applicant disagrees with the conditions attached to the granting of permission the applicant has a right of appeal to the national Planning Inspectorate. This right of appeal only applies to the applicant, not a third party (for example a neighbour).

6.5.2 There are several different types of appeal and these are dealt with in different ways. If an appeal is received everyone who was consulted on the original application, including those who commented, are notified of the appeal and information is provided on how to make any further views known. There is no need to re-submit previous information sent with the planning application as all this information will be sent to the Planning Inspectorate.

6.5.3 Appeals are dealt with either in writing, (if a written representations appeal) or in person at an informal hearing or public inquiry.

6.5.4 A written representations appeal is determined by the Inspectorate on the basis of written statements submitted by the appellant, the Council and any third parties. If a public inquiry is to be held to consider an appeal, a site notice is displayed with details of the date and location of the event. Third parties are able to attend both informal hearings and public inquiries.

9 For further information see http://www.telford.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1900/information_about_public_speaking.

10 Conditions may either be restrictive conditions to mitigate the potential impact of a development or a pre-commencement condition which is something that may need to be rectified before the development can commence. The application could also be subject to a planning obligation - a Section 106 agreement or charges made under a Community Infrastructure Levy (should the Council choose to adopt one). Section 106 agreements are private agreements negotiated between local planning authorities and persons with an interest in a piece of land, they are intended to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

6 How you can be involved: Development Management

6.5.5 To reduce the amount of time taken to process small household appeals the Inspectorate offers a Householder Appeal service. A householder appeal is an appeal against a refusal on a householder planning application⁽¹¹⁾. These appeals are carried out electronically, the inspector will only consider the material which was submitted to the local authority when it made its decision, and the appeal form submitted by the appellant. There is no opportunity for any party to submit further representations. Appeals will usually be dealt with within 8 weeks.

11 Appeals where the Local Authority have failed to make a decision, applications for additional dwellings, applications relating to development to a flat and appeals against the authority's decision to impose a condition on a planning permission for a householder development are not suitable for the Householder Appeals Service.

7 Ensuring Equal Opportunities

7.1 Learning from Past Involvement

7.1.1 Telford & Wrekin Council are keen for a wide representation of our borough's population to be involved in planning. Equalities data has been collected when carrying out previous consultations with the public on planning policy. Using this data we can see which sections of society are less involved in planning.

7.1.2 It is evident from this data :

- More men than women engage with planning
- A greater number of people aged 40-64 engage with planning than any other age range
- The majority of those involved are White and British

7.1.3 Unfortunately limited data has been collected regarding stakeholders with disabilities, it is recognised that this is a protected characteristic that should be considered when reviewing our approach to engagement in the future.

7.2 Addressing Under-representation

7.2.1 Many reasons may exist for the under-representation of certain groups such as selecting potentially excluding locations for engagement events, or the use of inappropriate methods of engagement. We will seek to identify reasons for under-representation and adapt our communication methods to meet the participatory needs of underrepresented groups, even where limited data is available. Progress will be monitored through the annual monitoring report.

Table 3 Methods used to engage hard to reach groups

Hard to reach group targeted	Methods to use
Young people (under 35)	Engaging with the Young Peoples Forum as part of new policy production and using Social Media
People over 65	Holding our face to face consultation events at appropriate locations and using existing networks and groups
BME communities (including gypsies, travellers and travelling show people)	Holding our face to face consultation events at appropriate locations and using existing networks and groups such as "connecting communities"

8 Monitoring & Review

8.1 Monitoring

8.1.1 The Annual Monitoring Report, considers the effectiveness of local planning policies. Future Annual Monitoring Reports will provide a summary of the previous years community involvement activities and assess their effectiveness.

8.1.2 The Annual Monitoring Report is published annually in December, it is available at <http://www.telford.gov.uk/planning>

8.2 Review

8.2.1 In the future the Statement of Community Involvement will be reviewed as required. The engagement methods outlined here will be supplemented, as appropriate, to reflect best practice in community engagement, to better manage stakeholder expectations and to address specific problems or concerns as these emerge. The Council will always seek to maximise effective engagement of all stakeholders in planning.

9.1 Terms used in this document

Annual Monitoring Report: A document which assesses the extent to which local planning policies are being achieved.

Black and Minority Ethnic "BME" Groups: A term used to cover all the characteristics of a 'racial group', BME refers to people who do not define themselves as being White using the Census definitions.

Community Infrastructure Levy: A levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods want - for example new or safer road schemes, park improvements or a new health centre⁽¹²⁾.

Conditions: Planning applications can be granted permission "with conditions", this means development is allowed but only if the certain conditions are met such as development must start within 3 years of the granting of permission.

Development Management: The Council service that considers planning applications

Development Plan Documents: The term used in the Planning Regulations under the Local Development Framework system to describe the statutory documents that contain land use planning policies and development proposals against which planning applications will be considered.

Examination in Public/Independent Examination: All Development Plan Documents will be subject to independent examination by an inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The examination is to test the "soundness" of the document (this involves a legal compliance check, and an assessing if the plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy).

Local Plan: The term used by the government in current national policy to describe the key planning policy document for a Local Authority area. It should set out the key policies and proposals for meeting the economic, environmental and social aims for the future of the area, where this effects the development and use of land. This term is now used rather than Core Strategy.

Material Consideration: Factors that will be taken into account when determining planning applications. Examples include: nature conservation issues, traffic, disabled access.

National Planning Policy Framework: The government's national planning policies (issued in March 2012) It replaces national Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes along with some circulars.

Neighbourhood Development Order: Local communities can produce a Neighbourhood Development Order to permit development they want to see without the need for planning applications. These must be supported by more than 50% of people in a referendum.

12 <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/communityinfrastructurelevy/>

9 Glossary

Neighbourhood Development Plan: Neighbourhood forums (In Telford & Wrekin these are usually Parish and Town Councils) can use new neighbourhood planning powers to establish planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. It must conform to national planning policies and the strategic policies that Telford & Wrekin Council have in place but once completed becomes part of the statutory planning policies for the area.

Obligations (Section 106 agreements): Private agreements negotiated, usually in the context of planning applications, between local planning authorities and persons with an interest in a piece of land, they are intended to make acceptable development which would otherwise be unacceptable in planning terms.

Planning Application: Most types of development need planning permission from the Local Authority. To apply for permission a developer must submit a planning application to the Local Authority who will make a decision. The Planning Application is a form which sets out information about the proposed development, it is accompanied by maps and plans of the development.

Planning Permission: Developers must request permission from the Local Authority to carry out development by submitting a planning application which will then be approved or refused.

Plans Board: The Board's main role is to determine applications for planning permission within the Borough. Not all applications come before the Board – decisions on many minor applications are delegated to Officers. The Board consists of 9 Council members and is politically balanced.

Regulations: Refers in this context to the national planning regulations to which all local planning authorities have to adhere in preparing plans.

Secretary of State: A cabinet minister who is in charge of a government department. The Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government oversees planning.

Soundness (of a Planning Document): Once a Development Plan Document has been produced, the local planning authority must submit it for independent examination where the "soundness" of the document is tested, namely that it is positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

Stakeholders: People, groups and organisations which may be affected by planning, includes the general public, developers, Councillors and any other interested party.

Statutory Consultees: Organisations and bodies, defined by statute, who must be consulted on relevant planning applications and as part of relevant planning policy production.

Strategic Environmental Assessment: Required by European Legislation, an assessment of the effects of policies and proposals within the Local Plan on the environment.

Supplementary Planning Document: Policy documents which provide policy guidance to supplement policies and proposals contained within Development Plan Documents.

Sustainability Appraisal: An appraisal of the potential impacts of policies from an environmental, economic, and social perspective. This will inform the Council of the potential implications of different alternatives. Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal will be undertaken together.