

Community Consultation Requirements for Major Applications

Introduction

The following information is guidance as to the requirements council places on applicants which fall under the definition of 'major applications'. Applicants must determine into which 'tier' their proposal is likely to fall, and if necessary, can request further advice from the planning department on this matter.

The following material contains *suggested* techniques. Applicants should aim to meet the principles of community engaging and use this document as guidance only. Accordingly the case officer may suggest consultation techniques which they deem appropriate which are not contained herein.

Table of Potential Methods of Community Involvement

APPROACH	Tier 1: Significant Applications where there are considerable issues of scale and controversy or contrary to or out of line with Unitary Development Plan.	Tier 2: Significant Applications broadly in accordance with Development Plan BUT raising controversial issue or detail.	Tier 3: Applications of a scale or development area for which a local authority requires wider community involvement; applications that fall within sites that are 'sensitive' to development pressures and allocated sites that may not have been subject to extensive consultation in the local plan process.
Public Meetings	✓		
Public Exhibition	✓	✓	✓
Surgeries	✓	✓	
Development Briefs	✓		
Workshops	✓		
Enquiry by Design and/or Planning for Real	✓	✓	
Citizen Panels	✓	✓	✓
Consultation Panel	✓		

Media	✓		✓
Website	✓	✓	✓
Local architectural or Design Panel	✓	✓	

Methods	Main considerations
Public meetings and exhibitions	<p>Exhibitions should be held locally to the proposed development and over a number of days and varying times of day to ensure that all sections of the community are appropriately represented. Can be fairly resource-intensive and attendees are self-selecting.</p> <p>Public meetings and exhibitions provide a more transparent opportunity for open pre-application discussions, provide an early opportunity for the community to comment on evolving proposals prior to submission, and can offer a high degree of success in keeping people informed.</p>
Surgeries	<p>Surgeries give local community groups the opportunity to discuss applications with the relevant Officers.</p> <p>Surgeries are seen as being able to provide a greater focus on individuals and issues; offer the opportunity to 'dilute' large numbers of people; provide a 'one-to-one' service; and help to diffuse potential objections.</p>
Development Briefs	<p>Where significant change is likely to occur a planning authority may expect to prepare and negotiate with the developer a planning brief, either as part of the pre-application consultation or as part of the application process.</p> <p>The development brief is likely to reduce the uncertainty for developers, minimise abortive work and the amount of negotiation required over a planning application; influence the design of a site; resolve any potential constraints on the site; and bring different parties together, including the local community, in order to achieve consensus and minimise the risk of objection to a scheme.</p>
Workshops (interactive): Planning For Real / Design Days / etc	<p>Workshops are commonly used consultation devices that engage key stakeholders and community groups at an early stage in the planning process. Workshops can form part of a continuing process of community involvement and may bring all possible groups together at the draft proposal stage. Workshops can be re-engaged as proposals emerge and may provide a strong endorsement of the overall principles of development.</p> <p>Workshops require significant preparation to allow a structured approach and report back. Useful for identifying and focusing discussion around difficult issues and key themes (e.g. affordable housing or area-based policies).</p>
Enquiry by Design and Planning for Real exercises	<p>New opportunities and synergies emerge which add value and quality to developments and consensus can be forged amongst previously implacable opponents. These exercises are recognised as being a successful way in which to engage local communities on planning proposals of significance and are fully supported by the planning authority; give the community 'ownership' of the proposals that have been submitted; and help to produce a scheme through a workshop environment.</p>

Methods	Main considerations
Citizen Panels	<p>The Panels are randomly selected and are used to find out the views of residents on specific issues and how these could improve. The results of these are then considered by the Council and, where appropriate, changes or improvements are made. The Panel is a direct way of influencing the service delivery of the Council.</p> <p>Citizen Panels can maintain a cost-effective method of consulting with the public; provide flexible and reliable resources for various forms of consultation; support effective partnership working; and promote the exchange of information and understanding amongst the Partners.</p>
Consultation Groups	<p>Consultation Groups are made up of local residents, local schools and the City Council and are used to facilitate the progress of significant development sites.</p> <p>Consultation groups help to ensure that views, opinions and concerns of local communities about the development are fed back into the planning process as it proceeds, ensure that the work of the group and progress on the scheme are fed back to local communities, take into account the views of local people expressed in the consultation process, and advise developers on how best to identify and pursue issues with local communities</p>
Websites	<p>The development and use of local planning authorities websites offers greater access and involvement for all members of the community. Websites are increasingly the first port of call for the public and professionals seeking detailed information. Should be user-friendly and include all relevant documents (e.g. in pdf and word format).</p>
Media (local press, TV, radio, etc)	<p>In addition to the statutory requirements for advertising planning applications, the use of local newspapers/radio station to carry articles and stories about proposed development would have the benefit of reaching and engaging the wider community.</p> <p>The media is useful for raising levels of awareness and the profile of the LDF and fosters enthusiasm for and involvement in forward planning. Could be augmented by reference to a 'hotline' for more information.</p>
Pre-existing Panels, Forums and Design Teams	<p>Forums comprise 'regular' applicants and provide a medium through which the local planning authority can disseminate information and discuss significant planning applications. The benefits of this approach include securing of a high quality development, ensuring continued community involvement in the development process; securing as far as possible a sustainable form of development; and providing an overview of publicity for the development.</p>

Questions

Please contact the Planning Service if you have any queries about the information provided in this document, or have any further questions.

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