

Gloucester City Council

Draft Statement of Community Involvement

May 2023

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	3
What is the Statement of Community Involvement?	3
Our Communities and Stakeholders	4
Importance of engagement and consultation	4
2. Principles for Community Involvement in Planning Decisions	6
3. Community Involvement in Planning Policy	7
Which planning policy documents do we consult on?	7
Development Plan Documents	8
Supplementary Planning Documents	11
Other planning documents	13
Who will we consult?	14
The Duty to Co-operate and Statements of Common Ground	15
How will we consult on planning policy matters?	15
When will we consult on planning policy documents?	18
What happens after a consultation has closed?	18
4. Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders	20
5. Planning Applications	22
Contact Details.....	26
Appendix A - Relevant specific and general consultation bodies	27
Specific consultation bodies:	27
General consultation bodies:	27
Appendix B - Other groups and organisations	29

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how Gloucester City Council (GCC) will engage with local communities and key stakeholders in the development of planning policy documents and in the determination of planning applications within the city, as well as how the Council will support communities undertaking neighbourhood planning.
- 1.2 The purpose of the planning system is to help achieve sustainable development, assisting economic, environmental and social progress for existing and future communities. Planning shapes the places where people live and work, so it is important that communities can take an active part in the process.
- 1.3 There is a legal requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) for Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) to produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)¹, which sets out how the Council intends to achieve community involvement in the preparation of planning policy documents and in making decisions on planning applications.

What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

- 1.4 The SCI is a document which sets out Gloucester's guiding principles and requirements for involving the community and stakeholders, both in preparing and revising planning policy documents and in the consideration of individual planning applications.
- 1.5 The SCI describes the consultation and engagement processes and methods that may be used; it explains the statutory requirements that the Council must meet at each stage and what other consultation or engagement processes may be undertaken in addition to these. This gives the public and stakeholders certainty over what sort of engagement they can expect within the planning process and the different ways they can get involved. Any public facing workshops and events undertaken during the plan making process will be designed in consultation with the Community Wellbeing Team.
- 1.6 The aim of the SCI is to ensure that relevant local communities and stakeholders in Gloucester:
 - Are informed about the local planning documents being prepared and planning applications being considered;
 - Are involved early in the decision-making process;
 - Understand how they can share their views;
 - Have ready access to information;
 - Can put forward their ideas about issues and feel confident that there is a formal process for considering these;

¹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2004/5/section/18>

- Can take an active part in preparing proposals or options to manage land use and future development in their community;
- Can comment on planning applications; and;
- Can be informed about progress and outcomes.

1.7 This SCI covers three areas where the Council is involved in planning. These are:

- a) the preparation of **planning policy documents** – comprising the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs);
- b) how the Council will support communities preparing **Neighbourhood Plans**; and
- c) the determination of planning applications through **Development Management processes**.

1.8 In setting out the consultation methods and tools that are available to be used by the Council, the SCI retains a degree of flexibility so that consultation and engagement methods can be appropriately tailored to a specific planning document or circumstance. The intention is that this will allow for future changes that may be made to the regulations or best practice guidance, and to reflect any new methods of communication and engagement that may become available over the life of the document.

Our Communities and Stakeholders

1.9 The ‘community’ includes individuals, groups and organisations that live, work or operate within Gloucester City. ‘Neighbours’ are those people that share a boundary with a site.

1.10 The SCI also refers to ‘stakeholders’, these are individuals or organisations with a direct influence on the matter under discussion, such as developers, landowners or other important bodies and agencies.

1.11 Some of our consultation with stakeholders is determined by legislation, such as the Duty to Cooperate. The SCI avoids repeating legislation or statutory requirements but focusses on what we are specifically doing in Gloucester City to meet and, where possible, exceed the requirements.

Importance of engagement and consultation

1.12 Planning is fundamental to shaping the neighbourhoods and communities in which we all live and work. The Council considers it important that communities and stakeholders have the opportunity to be involved in the process.

1.13 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), updated July 2021, stresses the importance of community involvement in both plan-making and deciding planning applications.

Engagement should be proportionate and effective and the NPPF at paragraphs 16 and 39², stresses the value in engaging at an early stage, in both plan making and when considering planning applications.

- 1.14 As illustrated in Figure 1, effective engagement involves a number of stages from awareness raising, providing information, through to consultation and communication, to discussion and debate. Good engagement can reduce conflict, result in better outcomes from development for all and allows communities to influence the future of the places where they live.

Figure 1: Types of Engagement



Source: Planning Aid: Good Practice Guide to Public Engagement in Development Schemes

² National Planning Policy Framework: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1005759/NPPF_July_2021.pdf

2. Principles for Community Involvement in Planning Decisions

- 2.1 The Council will meet and, where practicably possible, exceed the minimum standards for community involvement set out in legislation.
- 2.2 Consultation materials will be clear and concise and avoid jargon wherever possible, making it easier for groups and individuals with little or no knowledge of the planning process to get involved.
- 2.3 The scope and timing of the consultation will be clear from the start, so respondents know what they can comment on, when they need to comment and how their comments will be taken into account.
- 2.4 Consultation methods will make use of electronic and modern media techniques wherever possible to make consultations easier, quicker and more cost-effective. They will be used alongside traditional methods to avoid disadvantaging those who are unable or prefer not to engage digitally.
- 2.5 Engagement in the planning process will be encouraged from the earliest stage possible (front-loaded) when there is the greatest opportunity for the views of interested and affected parties to be reflected in decisions made.
- 2.6 Whenever possible, feedback will be given to reflect how comments received have been taken on board and what changes have been made.

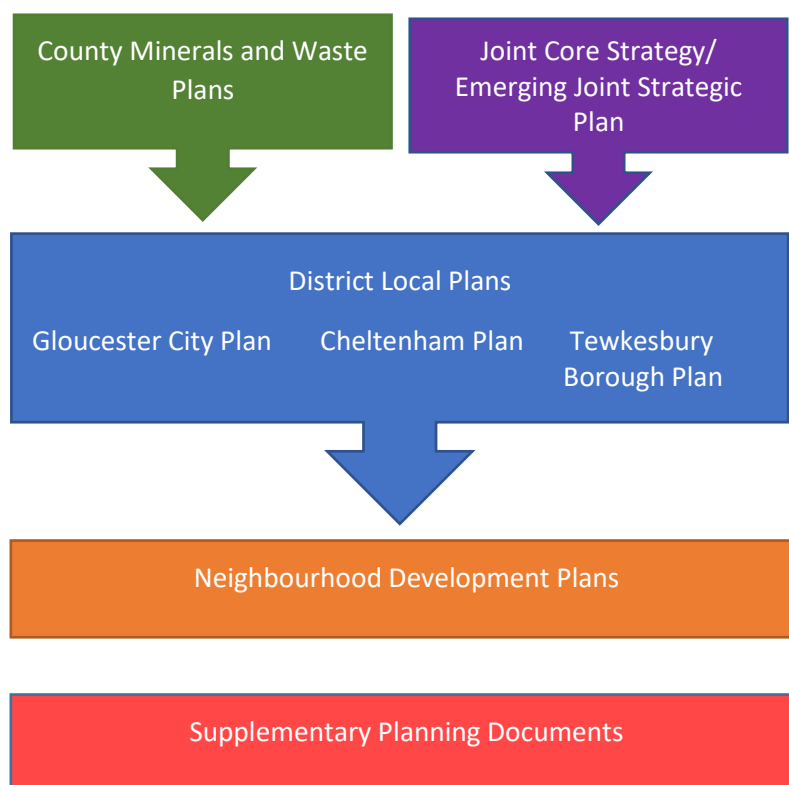
3. Community Involvement in Planning Policy

- 3.1 This section of the SCI explains how the Council will give those with an interest in the future development of the area the opportunity to have their say when new planning policies are being developed. The Council will take a flexible, proportionate, and effective approach to consultation that will be tailored to the nature of the document being prepared.
- 3.2 From time to time, the Council will publish other documents on its website which are related to the plan-making process but which are not normally subject to public consultation. These documents include a wide range of technical studies that provide background evidence for the preparation of policies and are described in more detail later in this section.

Which planning policy documents do we consult on?

- 3.3 The most common policy documents which involve public consultation are 'Development Plan Documents' (DPDs). These are prepared by local planning authorities and outline the key development goals for the area. DPDs include Core Strategies, Local Plans and Area Action Plans which provide specific planning policy and/or guidance for a particular location or area of significant change.
- 3.4 In Gloucester, as set out in Figure 2, the Development Plan consists of the Joint Core Strategy 2011 - 2031 (the JCS), the Gloucester City Plan 2011 – 2031 and Neighbourhood Development Plans (none at present).
- 3.5 In addition, the Council may prepare Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which provide detailed guidance on how policies or proposals in DPDs should be implemented.
- 3.6 The processes for producing these documents vary, and consequently, so do consultation arrangements and procedures. Further details on these documents and their consultation procedures are set out below.

Figure 2: The Development Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents



Development Plan Documents

- 3.7 The JCS provides the strategic policies and requirements for housing, employment and associated infrastructure across the JCS area of Gloucester, Cheltenham and Tewkesbury. It also provides larger scale strategic sites for the delivery of that development. The JCS is currently under review and will be replaced by the Joint Strategic Plan (JSP).
- 3.8 Gloucester City Plan provides for smaller scale sites to meet the development requirements set out in the JCS. It also provides the development management policies for Gloucester City and addresses local issues and opportunities.
- 3.9 A timetable for plan making can be found in the Council’s Local Development Scheme.
- 3.10 The legal requirements for consultation and public participation for plan making, is currently set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (the 2012 Regulations), including consultation on the key stages of preparing a plan, the gathering of evidence, identifying issues, and developing options and public participation on a final version of the plan prior to it being submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination.
- 3.11 The preparation of Development Plan Documents follows a number of distinct stages, which are summarised in Table 1 below alongside the key consultees and consultation methods that may be used. Prior to the start of any consultation stage a Consultation Plan will be prepared to ensure the right level of consultation using the most appropriate methods is undertaken.

Table 1: Stages in Development Plan Document Preparation

Stage	What this stage involves	Key Consultees	Consultation methods and tools
<p>Preparation: Issues and Options / Preferred Options (Regulation 18)</p>	<p>This stage can be repeated as necessary and may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survey and evidence gathering • Consultation on issues and options • Consultation on preferred options • Consider consultation responses • Policy formulation 	<p>At the survey and evidence gathering stage, the Council will contact key consultees particularly those with technical knowledge to assist in the identification of issues and options.</p> <p>Formal public consultation is for a minimum of 6 weeks and will involve the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant specific and general consultation bodies, as defined in the Regulations and set out in Appendix A • Other groups and organisations identified in Appendix B • Parish and town councils adjoining or within the city. • Residents or other persons carrying on business in the area who are on the council's database 	<p>See Table 3 for more detail on potential consultation methods.</p> <p>During the survey and evidence gathering stage consultation methods will focus on targeted meetings and workshops with technical stakeholders in particular.</p> <p>The Council will publicise any consultation documents by notifying all stakeholders using the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release • Council website • Social media and other forms of on-line engagement • Public exhibitions (physical and on-line) as and if appropriate • Public meetings, as and if appropriate • Site notices when development allocations are proposed <p>The consultation documents will be made available for public inspection at the Council offices.</p>
<p>Publication and Submission (Regulation 19)</p>	<p>Publication of the plan for consultation.</p> <p>Submission of the plan to Secretary of State including all associated documents.</p>	<p>The formal period of public participation into the 'soundness' and legal compliance of a plan is for a minimum of 6 weeks and will involve the following groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant specific and general consultation bodies, as defined in the Regulations 	<p>The Council will publicise the draft Plan to notify all stakeholders using the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release • Council website • Social media and other forms of on-line engagement • Public exhibitions (physical and on-line), as and if appropriate

Stage	What this stage involves	Key Consultees	Consultation methods and tools
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other groups and organisations identified in Appendix B • Parish and town councils adjoining or within city. • Residents or other persons carrying on business in the area who are on the Council's database 	The Plan, proposed documents, and supporting documents ³ will be made available online and for public inspection at the Council offices.
		<p>Following the submission of the Plan to the Secretary of State, the Council will make a copy of the Plan and its supporting documents available at the Council offices.</p> <p>The Council will also notify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the general, specific and other consultation bodies who were consulted at previous stages, and • anyone who asked to be notified of the submission of the Plan as to where and when the Plan, proposed documents, and supporting documents⁴ can be inspected. 	
Examination (Regulation 23, 24 & 25)	<p>The Planning Inspector holds an examination into the Plan usually including public hearings as well as consideration of written representations.</p> <p>Changes (modifications) to the submitted Plan are proposed by the Inspector and then consulted on.</p> <p>An Inspector's report is published – determining if the plan is 'sound' and whether it can be put forward for adoption.</p>	<p>The Inspector will consider which individuals or organisations ought to be involved at the Examination in Public.</p> <p>If the Inspector suggests modifications are needed to make the plan 'sound', a consultation on proposed Main Modifications will be held.</p>	<p>Consultation on Main Modifications will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release • Council website • Social media and other forms of on-line engagement <p>The Main Modifications and supporting documents will be made available for public inspection at the Council offices.</p>
Adoption (Regulation 26)	Council adopts the plan	<p>The Council will make a copy of the plan, the adoption statement, and the sustainability appraisal available for inspection at the Council offices.⁵</p> <p>The Council will send a copy of the adoption statement to any</p>	

³ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) Schedule 2 para 10

⁴ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) Schedule 2 para 10

⁵ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) para 26 (a)(i-iv)

Stage	What this stage involves	Key Consultees	Consultation methods and tools
		person who has asked to be notified and the Secretary of State. ⁶	

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 3.12 The statutory requirements for preparing SPDs are laid out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended). SPDs provide detailed guidance on how policies or proposals in DPDs should be implemented. Although they are not subject to independent examination, SPDs undergo public consultation, and must be consistent with national and local planning policies. The regulations set a minimum of 4 weeks for consultation on a draft SPD, although best practice is to consult for longer.
- 3.13 The process for preparing an SPD is simpler than that for preparing a DPD and it does not require an examination. In some cases, it is helpful and informative to the preparation of an SPD, for the Council to undertake some informal engagement and consultation at an early stage. Such informal engagement can identify key issues and challenges for the SPD to consider and can also be used to test evolving ideas and move towards consensus, especially where a masterplan or site-specific framework is being produced.
- 3.14 Prior to the start of any consultation stage a Consultation Plan will be prepared to ensure the right level of consultation using the most appropriate methods is undertaken.
- 3.15 Following consultation, a Response Report will be prepared that summarises who was consulted, the main issues raised, and how they have been addressed.
- 3.16 The key stages in the preparation of an SPD, together with the key consultees and consultation methods likely to be used are summarised in Table 2 below:

⁶ The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) para 26 (b)

Table 2: Stages in Supplementary Planning Document preparation

Stage	What this stage involves	Key Consultees	Consultation methods and tools
Gathering the evidence base and preparing the SPD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence gathering. • Opportunity for informal (non-statutory) consultation and engagement and/or discussion of issues with relevant partners and groups. Formulation of options. • Prepare draft SPD for consultation. 	<p>At the evidence gathering stage, informal engagement may be undertaken; at the very least, this should include key stakeholders, particularly those with local and/or technical knowledge.</p> <p>The consultees at this stage are likely to be determined in part by the nature of the SPD (whether site/ area based or topic based).</p>	<p>During the evidence gathering stage consultation methods will focus on targeted meetings and workshops with local and technical stakeholders in particular.</p> <p>The Council may also make use of a range of other methods to raise awareness and seek input from local residents and businesses.</p>
Consultation on draft SPD (Regulations 12 & 13)	<p>Legal requirement for the consultation is a minimum of 4 weeks. The Council will consult for 6 weeks.</p> <p>Consider comments and representations received during the consultation period.</p>	<p>The formal public consultation stage:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant specific and general consultation bodies, as defined in the Regulations and set out in Appendix A • Other groups and organisations identified in Appendix B • Parish and town councils within the city or area covered by the SPD • Residents or other persons or groups carrying on business in the area covered by the SPD who are on the council's database 	<p>At the formal consultation stage, the Council will consult using methods including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release • Information on the Council website • Social media and other forms of on-line engagement • Public exhibitions as and if appropriate (physical and on-line) • Public meetings as and if appropriate <p>Copies of the consultation draft SPD, together with any other supporting documents will be made available for public inspection at Council offices.</p> <p>If the SPD is area based the information will also be put on display in the area concerned if a suitable publicly accessible venue can be found.</p>
Adoption of the SPD (Regulation 14)	<p>Amend the draft SPD where necessary based on the comments received. Council adopts the SPD.</p>	<p>Following the adoption of an SPD, the Council will make a copy of the SPD, the Adoption Statement and the Response Report available at the Council offices.</p> <p>The Council will also send a copy of the adoption statement to anyone who has asked to be notified of the adoption of the SPD.</p>	

Other planning documents

- 3.17 The Council produces a number of other documents. Those which would usually be subject to consultation include:

Masterplans and Development Briefs: these documents may be prepared to provide additional site-specific guidance for new development or the redevelopment of an area. They are often brought forward as SPDs, and, in that case, will be subject to the SPD consultation requirements. In other cases, they may be produced as non-statutory planning guidance. Consultation on Masterplans and Development Briefs will usually be similar to that for SPDs in that the Council will publish a draft for consultation and the comments received will inform the final document.

Local Development Orders (LDOs): LDOs provide permitted development rights for specified types of development in defined locations. LDOs are promoted by national planning guidance as a flexible tool to simplify and streamline the planning process, creating certainty for new development and saving time and money for those involved. The process for preparing an LDO includes a formal consultation stage which must include consultation with statutory consultees and any person who would have been consulted on a planning application; publishing the documents on the LPA's website with paper copies available at the LPA's principal offices; advertising the LDO consultation in a local newspaper and displaying site notices. Other consultation methods set out in Table 3 below may also be used to ensure that residents and stakeholders have the opportunity to be informed and have their say

Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Appraisal (SA and SEA): the purpose of the sustainability appraisal process is to appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of a plan from the outset. In doing so it will help ensure that decisions are made that contribute to achieving sustainable development. The sustainability appraisal is not a one-off exercise; it needs to be integrated into each stage of plan making and tests the policies and proposals against sustainability objectives enabling them to be modified where appropriate to mitigate potential adverse effects. The Sustainability Appraisal will be published for public consultation alongside DPDs where appropriate.

Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA): this is an assessment of a plan's impact on European protected species, the process for which is laid out in Government guidance⁷. The HRA is subject to consultation with Natural England and it carried out in conjunction with the Sustainability Appraisal as set out above.

Community infrastructure Levy (CIL): the CIL allows local authorities in England and Wales to raise funds from developers who are undertaking new building projects in their area. The money raised is used to pay for infrastructure required to support the new development. CIL must be administered in accordance with the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended); the Regulations set out when and how the Council must consult at specific stages of the CIL preparation process. The Council started charging the CIL on planning permissions granted from 1 January 2019. For more information about the CIL and how it applies in Gloucester, please see the Council's CIL webpage⁸.

⁷ HRA GUIDANCE LINK

⁸ <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-policy/community-infrastructure-levy-cil/>

- 3.18 Other planning documents which the Council produces and are not normally subject to consultation include:

Local Development Scheme: this sets out the Council's work programme for the preparation of new Development Plan Documents, including a description and timetable for each document. The Local Development Scheme is published on the Council's website: <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-policy/local-development-scheme/> This is not subject to public consultation.

Monitoring Reports: the Council produces housing and employment monitoring reports which provide details on the progress of planned development and how the Council is meeting the development requirements as set out in the Plan. There will not be consultation on these reports as they are factual documents, but the Council may contact specific groups to obtain some of the data required.

Evidence Base: this includes a range of background studies on specific issues that help to support the preparation of local plan policies. These are technical studies and are not normally subject to consultation although we may contact specific groups to obtain information or data.

Who will we consult?

- 3.19 The Council wants to give the community and stakeholders the chance to have their say on Local Development Documents. The Council will seek to involve and consult a wide range of other interest groups and organisations, developers, and consultants, as well as local residents and businesses.
- 3.20 The Council is required to consult certain organisations and bodies, and is advised to consult others, depending on the type of policy document. This is in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 3.21 The 2012 Regulations set out who must be consulted at the defined stages of plan production by identifying the Specific Consultation Bodies (also known as statutory consultees) and a number of General Consultation Bodies, who are groups or organisations representing the interests of certain parts of the local community. Appendix A to the SCI sets lists the Specific and General Consultation Bodies for the city.
- 3.22 The Council is also committed to involving a wide range of other individuals and organisations, including the local community, 'harder to reach' groups and young people. It is important that the needs of those groups of people who do not usually get involved in the process, and who may have specific needs to be met or addressed, are able to get involved if they wish. The methods used for involving the community in planning policy matters need to be varied and responsive to different needs. The Planning Policy Team will work with the Community Wellbeing Team to design a consultation that is relevant, appropriate, and as accessible as possible. Young people are especially important to reach as they will inhabit the places we plan for.
- 3.23 The Council will maintain a database containing the contact details of individuals, groups and other bodies that wish to be kept informed of consultations relating to planning policy

documents. Individuals and organisations on this database will primarily be contacted when the Council consults on relevant planning policy documents and subjects. This will primarily be through the use of email, with paper and post only being used if there is a specific accessibility need or no email address available. The database will be administered strictly in accordance with the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulation and will be regularly updated.

The Duty to Co-operate and Statements of Common Ground

- 3.24 The Localism Act, 2011, introduced the ‘duty to cooperate’. Neighbouring authorities and other relevant organisations are required to work together on strategic planning issues that cross local authority boundaries and affect their areas.
- 3.25 The Council will make sure that it fulfils its legal requirements and will prepare ‘statements of common ground’ with relevant neighbouring local authorities and other strategic organisations and stakeholders where appropriate. The progress made to address strategic cross-boundary matters will be included in the statements of common ground and those statements that are prepared by Gloucester City Council will be made available on the Council’s website.

How will we consult on planning policy matters?

- 3.26 Table 3 sets out a range of different consultation methods which may be used for consultations, depending on the subject matter, scope and stage in the plan-making process. The table suggests when certain methods might be used:

Table 3: Potential consultation methods and where they might be used

Stage	What this method entails	When this method might be used
Website	The Council’s Planning Policy web pages will provide information on the preparation of policy documents and current consultations. For current consultations, the website will show the relevant documents, guidance on how to comment and comments forms, where relevant.	Suitable for all consultations
Digital Engagement methods	There is an evolving range of digital tools and approaches which can be used for consultations, especially at the early stages of plan preparation. Digital methods need to be cost effective and relevant to the type of consultation and the needs/ nature of the community to be involved. Tools include:	Early stages of preparing a plan or other document Webinars/ online events appropriate for all consultations.

Stage	What this method entails	When this method might be used
	<p>Digital Engagement Platforms that enable a range of different digital engagement activities specific to a project or series of projects</p> <p>Online polling/surveying enabling responses to questions or themes which can stand alone from other software/approaches</p> <p>Webinars/online events enable meetings & workshops to occur in a digital setting as opposed to physical locations;</p> <p>Digital collaboration tools including software and tools that can be used to support consultation and engagement, such as interactive whiteboards</p> <p>Map based & spatial tools that can present spatial information in a more engaging way than traditional print documents</p>	
Email and letters	<p>The Council maintains a database of people and organisations who wish to be kept up to date on planning policy document preparation. To help minimise costs, the Council will encourage people to register using their email address. This method will be used as a default unless consultees indicate they require communication by letter. The database will be administered in compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations.</p>	Suitable for all consultations
Local Media, Social Media and general communications	<p>Effective use of local printed and broadcast media can reach a lot of people and help to stimulate conversations and give the project an air of 'legitimacy'</p> <p>The use of social media platforms including Facebook and Twitter, are useful for announcing consultation events and directing readers to web resources.</p> <p>The use of leaflets and posters as part of a communication strategy helps to publicise and convey simple messages,</p>	Suitable for all consultations

Stage	What this method entails	When this method might be used
	disseminating information to support more in-depth forms of engagement	
Meetings; workshops and design events including Planning for Real	<p>Meetings allow people to raise issues, ask questions, and be given answers that can be heard by others in the room. However, they can be dominated by outspoken individuals and not everyone is comfortable speaking in public. An independent facilitator can help to ensure the smooth running of the event and equal participation.</p> <p>One to one meetings with key people can help to achieve alignment with other strategies and initiatives. However, they can be resource intensive and requires senior level officer involvement.</p> <p>Workshops encourage active collaboration and joint working to solve problems. The process can help to build a sense of ownership of the results.</p>	<p>Meetings can be used for all consultations.</p> <p>Workshops are useful at early stages of policy formulation and preparation of area-based plans and documents.</p>
Roadshows/ pop-up stalls/ public exhibitions	These provide an opportunity to disseminate information and have in-person conversations using printed material such as maps and plans. They can be combined with other events such as school events or summer fayres and are an effective way to reach a large number of people in a short space of time.	Suitable for all consultations
Surveys and questionnaires	These can be useful for gauging public reactions to ideas and proposals. They are especially useful at the early stages of policy development, to understand the issues and opportunities and the community's aspirations for an area.	Early stages of plan preparation.
Stakeholder Groups/ Community Reference/Liaison Groups/ Focus Groups	When planning for large scale new development, it can be helpful to establish a stakeholder group bringing together representatives of the local community. In the early days, the Group can provide the opportunity to discuss the vision and objectives of the new development and help to inform the preparation of planning policy, enabling the developer and the local	Focus Groups useful for policy testing.

Stage	What this method entails	When this method might be used
	<p>authority to hear the community's views and take them on board.</p> <p>Focus Groups of around 6-12 people selected to be representative of a designated part of the population can improve understanding of how people think and feel about issues. The approach is not, however, an effective way of reaching large numbers of people and, as such, is not a replacement for wider engagement tools.</p>	
Documents available for inspection	<p>The Council will make it clear how and when people should respond.</p> <p>Council offices and documents should be accessible to those with disabilities.</p> <p>Documents will also be available on the Council's website</p>	Suitable for all consultations

When will we consult on planning policy documents?

- 3.27 The Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS) will give an indication of the timescales for the preparation of DPDs in the Council's area, including the Joint Strategic Plan. This should enable people to broadly know when to expect consultation. Each formal consultation stage will be publicised by the Council.
- 3.28 The regulations relating to each type of planning document set out the requirements for consultation at each stage of the preparation process. The Council will always meet these requirements, but in addition we may undertake additional engagement at appropriate points through the process. In particular, there should be significant effort made at the early stages of preparing our local plan documents, at the point in the process when there is the greatest opportunity to influence the shape of our strategies and policies.
- 3.29 The Council will endeavour to give advance warning to stakeholders of upcoming consultations so that they can arrange to respond within the consultation period. The regulations that most planning documents must follow generally require a minimum of six weeks for consultation. Consultations that take place over a holiday period (e.g. school summer holidays, Christmas and New Year) will normally be no less than eight weeks in duration for the convenience of those who may need more time to respond.

What happens after a consultation has closed?

- 3.30 After a consultation period ends, comments will be reviewed and considered by officers. A Response Report will usually be produced which sets out the comments received (either individually or in summarised format, dependent on the volume and complexity), the Council's response to those comments and details of how the outcome of the consultation has been reflected in the next stage of the document preparation process. In some cases, it may be appropriate to identify the specific amendments that have been made to a document in response to comments received, however, this will not always be possible, particularly on complex documents or where a large volume of comments have been received.
- 3.31 The Council will notify anyone who has responded to a consultation upon the adoption of the document and when the Response Report is made available, so individuals can see how their comments have informed the process.

4. Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders

- 4.1 Neighbourhood Development Plans and Development Orders are community-led planning documents, led by a parish council or a designated Neighbourhood Forum. Gloucester only has one parish – Quedgeley Town Council (QTC). The City Council is committed to supporting the formation of Neighbourhood Forums and the preparation of Neighbourhood Development Plans as they are an important way in which local communities can be engaged in the planning system. The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended)⁹ set out the legal requirements for the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders. Consultation as part of the preparation process is undertaken by the town council or designated neighbourhood forum, and whilst they do not need to meet the requirements of the SCI, the information in this document may provide useful guidance.
- 4.2 The City Council has a duty to support local communities wishing to undertake Neighbourhood Planning. The SCI is required by legislation¹⁰ to set out the council’s policies for giving advice or assistance to organisations preparing a Neighbourhood Development Plan or Development Order. The table below sets out the support that Gloucester City Council will provide in terms of neighbourhood planning. The Council cannot write a neighbourhood plan for a community but it will provide guidance and support throughout the process.
- 4.3 Further advice, guidance and support can also be found on the council’s webpage: <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-policy/neighbourhood-planning/>

Table 4: Support for Neighbourhood Planning

Neighbourhood Planning Stage	Responsibility	Gloucester City Council Support
Deciding to prepare a neighbourhood plan or development order	Quedgeley Town Council (QTC) or Designated Neighbourhood Forum in non-parished areas.	We will discuss your ideas for doing a neighbourhood plan to establish if a plan is suitable for your community. We will outline some initial aspects to help you consider whether to proceed. If you are in a non-parished area we will tell you how to apply to be a Designated Neighbourhood Forum.
Designating the Neighbourhood Area	QTC or Designated Neighbourhood Forum.	We will review the application and make the necessary arrangements to designate the neighbourhood area. Where necessary, the Council will undertake a consultation on the proposed area.

⁹ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2012/637/contents/made>

¹⁰ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2017/20/section/6/enacted>

Neighbourhood Planning Stage	Responsibility	Gloucester City Council Support
Preparing the Neighbourhood Development Plan	QTC/Designated Neighbourhood Forum prepares the plan.	
Public consultation on a draft Neighbourhood Development Plan (Regulation 14)	QTC/Designated Neighbourhood Forum Responsible for the consultation arrangements on the draft plan and for bringing it to the attention of people who live, work or run a business in the designated neighbourhood area.	We will review the plan for environmental assessment requirements and other legislation including general conformity with the adopted Development Plan and national policy, as well as a more general review of the plan, to help ensure the plan is on track to meet the basic conditions.
Submission of the draft neighbourhood plan to the local authority (Regulation 16)	QTC/Designated Neighbourhood Forum submits the plan. Gloucester City Council responsible for next steps	We will make the arrangements to publicise (consult on) the plan for 6 weeks and will appoint the examiner.
Examination of the Neighbourhood Plan	Gloucester City Council	We will make any necessary arrangements for the holding of the examination. On receipt of the examiner's report, we will work with the Parish or Designated Neighbourhood Forum to incorporate any recommended changes to the plan.
Referendum	Gloucester City Council	The City Council is responsible for arranging and holding the referendum.

5. Planning Applications

- 5.1 Every year the Council processes a large number of planning applications. The nature and scale of these applications vary from householder and minor applications to large scale major applications for residential, employment, retail developments. The nature, scale and type of application will determine the level of consultation and community engagement undertaken.
- 5.2 Gloucester City Council places great importance on public involvement in the planning application process. This section explains how the Council will encourage the community to become involved in this process and also explains the Council's expectations of applicants. Finding out what local residents and businesses think about new development is a fundamental part of the Council's Development Management Service and Gloucester City Council undertakes its legal obligations in a proactive manner. It understands that local people have local knowledge and can provide a useful insight into local matters.
- 5.3 In terms of carrying out consultation, the Council is chiefly guided by the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015. Procedures for planning applications that are related to Listed Buildings or Conservation Areas are covered by the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990.
- 5.4 Gloucester City Council ensures that every planning application is given a level of publicity that is commensurate with the size and nature of the proposal. In many instances, however, Gloucester City Council goes beyond what is legally required. For example, the Council undertakes neighbour notification in relation to Reserved Matters applications (i.e. approval of details following the granting of outline permission) despite the fact that this is not a statutory requirement. Similarly, when amended plans are submitted with significant changes, the Council may re-consult with neighbours and relevant consultees. Change of use applications are also given site notices, which few authorities do.
- 5.5 Gloucester City Council will also seek to consult an appropriate range of statutory and non-statutory consultees. These could include organisations such as the Environment Agency, Historic England and Severn Trent Water. Officers will also use their judgment and consult an appropriate range of non-statutory consultees.
- 5.6 Neighbour notification letters are sent to residents that adjoin the application site and those the Council determines to be most likely affected by a proposed development. As part of this process, a list of material considerations is enclosed to ensure that any representations that the neighbour wishes to submit are kept solely to planning issues and not with regard to any personal matters.
- 5.7 Other measures adopted by Gloucester City Council include the application of a 40m neighbour notification radius in respect of applications that involve a change of use to hot food takeaway. In addition, where objections are received to such proposals and the Council is recommending that permission be granted the application will be taken to planning committee for determination.

- 5.8 The City Council keeps a register of all current planning applications which can be viewed on the public access system. In addition, a 'weekly list' of planning applications and can be viewed on the Council's website via public access. <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-applications/view-planning-applications-online/>
- 5.9 The Council operates a system of public speaking at Planning Committee allowing individuals the opportunity to make their views about specific proposals known. This is supplemented by high-quality PowerPoint presentations on all Planning Committee items including plans and colour photographs. Officers will use plain English in their presentations and avoid acronyms.
- 5.10 In its drive towards a more transparent and accountable planning system and in the spirit of localism, the Government is encouraging local authorities when considering significant development proposals, to build on minimum consultation requirements and in particular to encourage more pre-application discussions and early community consultation.
- 5.11 For the purposes of this SCI, Gloucester City Council considers development to be significant if it meets any of the following criteria:
- Applications which constitute a significant departure from the most up to date Local Plan.
 - Applications for 50 or more homes.
 - Proposals which entail more than 2,000m² of gross floorspace .
 - Applications which are accompanied by an Environmental Statement.
- 5.12 This schedule is based on the Council's Delegation Scheme under which certain applications go to the Planning Committee for determination.¹¹.
- 5.13 There may also be occasions when applications are submitted that do not necessarily fall into any of the above categories but for various reasons may be considered to fall into the significant category. Officers will use their discretion in such instances.
- 5.14 In dealing with applications that meet any of the above criteria, officers will normally:
- Publish a newspaper advertisement, put up a site notice and notify an appropriate number of neighbouring properties.
 - Publish details of the application on the Council's website.
 - Report to the Planning Committee any additional representations that may have been received following the publication of the report.
- 5.15 For major developments, Gloucester City Council strongly encourages applicants before the application is submitted to arrange a public meeting or exhibition at a suitable location such as a local hall in close proximity to the application site, in order to allow the proposal to be more fully understood by the local community prior to submission.
- 5.16 When they submit their application, Gloucester City Council also encourages applicants to:

¹¹ Gloucester City Council's constitution can be viewed online at <http://www.gloucester.gov.uk/council/more/Pages/council-constitution.aspx>

- Submit a brief statement as part of the application submission outlining how the results of the Pre-application Consultation Exercise have been taken into account in the final application documentation.
- Attend meetings with local groups that are likely to have an interest in the application proposal.

5.17 Although there is no legal obligation for applicants to undertake the above steps, failure to consult properly may lead to objections being made by interested parties such as neighbouring residents, which could be material to the determination of the application.

5.18 Gloucester City Council aims to encourage discussions to take place before any major application is submitted in order to try and achieve a degree of consensus and/or at least a clearer understanding of what the proposal is trying to achieve. The City Council has a pre-application service to provide applicants with guidance prior to the submission of an application. There is a reasonable charge for this service and full details can be found on the Council's website <https://www.gloucester.gov.uk/planning-development/planning-applications/pre-application-advice/>

Type of	Statutory Publicity Requirements	GCC Publicity
EIA Screening	None	None
Application accompanied by environmental statement	Press and Site (as EIA Dev)	Press and Site
Departure from Development Plan	Press and Site	Press and Site
Affecting public right of way	Press and Site	Press and Site
Major Development	Site or neighbour And Press	50 + dwellings or 1000+ square metres floorspace Site notice
Minor Development 1-9 dwellings, less than 1,000 sqm non- residential, change of use	Site or Neighbour	Neighbour Letter for all dwellings that adjoin the site and neighbours directly opposite Site notice in exceptional circumstances, e.g. no neighbours nearby to notify,
Householder	Site or Neighbour	Neighbour letter for all dwellings that adjoin the site. if the extension is visible from the street, notify neighbours directly opposite .
Affecting setting of a Listed Building	Press and Site	Press and Site

Type of	Statutory Publicity Requirements	GCC Publicity
Affecting character or appearance of a Conservation Area	Press and Site (for physical works) judgement on whether change of use requires publicity	Press and Site
Change of Use	Site or neighbour	Site notice all and neighbour
Change of use to a hot food take away	Site or neighbour	Site notice for all & 40m consultation radius
Adverts (listed building consent for advert will have LBC publicity)	None	Site notice in C/A Judgement elsewhere Significant amenity
Permitted development requiring prior notification to Local Planning Authority	Only by applicant	Site Notice
Householder Development	Neighbour or site	Neighbour letter
Telecommunication Masts more than 20m		Site and neighbour 15-20m
Tree matters	None	Tree Officer to consider site notice or letters to notify residents
Variation or Discharge of Conditions	None	None
Variation or Discharge of Conditions on Listed Building Consents S.73	Site and Press Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings	Site and Press Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings
Listed Building Consent	Press and Site Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings	Press and Site Except internal on grade II Listed Buildings
Demolition in a Conservation Area	Press and Site	Press and Site
Reserved matters	None	Same as full application
Amended plans	None	For significant changes, i.e. there would be a material change in the impact on neighbouring properties, re-notify neighbours and/or site notice & relevant consultees

Contact Details

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Appendix A - Relevant specific and general consultation bodies

Indicative consultee list. Others may be included or excluded to reflect the latest regulations.

Specific consultation bodies:

- (a) Coal Authority,
- (b) Environment Agency,
- (c) Historic England,
- (d) Marine Management Organisation,
- (e) Natural England,
- (f) Network Rail Infrastructure Limited,
- (g) Highways Agency,
- (h) a relevant authority any part of whose area is in or adjoins the local planning authority's area (a local planning authority, a county council, a parish council, a local policing body)
- (i) any person—
 - i. to whom the electronic communications code applies by virtue of a direction given under section 106(3)(a) of the Communications Act 2003, and
 - ii. who owns or controls electronic communications apparatus situated in any part of the local planning authority's area,
- (j) if it exercises functions in any part of the local planning authority's area—
 - i. a Primary Care Trust established under section 18 of the National Health Service Act 2006 or continued in existence by virtue of that section;
 - ii. a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 6(1)(b) or (c) of the Electricity Act 1989
 - iii. a person to whom a licence has been granted under section 7(2) of the Gas Act 1986;
 - iv. a sewerage undertaker; and
 - v. a water undertaker;
- (k) Homes England

General consultation bodies:

- a) voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority's area,

- b) bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the local planning authority's area,
- c) bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the local planning authority's area,
- d) bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the local planning authority's area,
- e) bodies which represent the interests of persons carrying on business in the local planning authority's area.

Appendix B - Other groups and organisations

The following list will be updated in response to requests for changes or additions once they arise.
The full list will be monitored and updated as necessary: