

Wolverhampton Statement of Community Involvement

October 2023

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and sets out how City of Wolverhampton Council will engage with residents, businesses and community groups in the preparation of planning documents and in the consideration of planning applications. This SCI supersedes the previous Wolverhampton SCI, which was adopted in October 2018.
- 1.2 The planning documents to which this SCI relates are primarily “local development documents” (LDDs) as specified in the Wolverhampton Local Development Scheme. These include:
- Development Plan Documents (DPDs):
 - Wolverhampton Unitary Development Plan (saved policies)
 - Wolverhampton Local Plan which will replace the Black Country Core Strategy
 - Area Action Plans (City Centre, Bilston Corridor, Stafford Road Corridor)
 - Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)
 - The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)
- 1.3 The SCI also sets out the Council’s policies for giving advice and assistance on proposals for the preparation and modification of Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders.

2. The Decision-Making Process

- 2.1 Responsibility for making decisions on the preparation of LDDs is split between Full Council and Cabinet, depending on the type of document. Full Council is responsible for all DPDs, whilst Cabinet is responsible for the SCI and SPDs. Full Council and Cabinet reports can be viewed on the Council’s website.

3. Consultation on Planning Documents

Development Plan Documents (DPDs)

- 3.1 There is flexibility available to the Council as to how DPD production is carried out, providing that it accords with the requirements of the relevant regulations and the provisions of this SCI.
- 3.2 The formal process for consulting on a DPD is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. There are three key stages stated in these regulations:
1. Preparation - Invite comments on key evidence and the broad issues, topics and policies which the Local Plan ought to contain;
 2. Publication - Draft plan published for representations for a minimum of six weeks;
 3. Examination in Public (EiP) - Plan submitted to the Secretary of State / Planning Inspectorate for examination along with evidence and a statement of representations.
- 3.3 **When public consultation will be carried out:**
- Stage 1 – a minimum of six weeks consultation to establish the views of consultees on the vision and strategy of the DPD, through the presentation of evidence, issues and a series of options;
 - Stage 2 – six weeks consultation on legal compliance, Duty to Cooperate and the four Tests of Soundness (positively prepared, justified, effective and consistent with national policy);
 - Any interim stages (such as modifications to the plan or re-consultations) – a minimum of six weeks consultation;
 - Notice of the Examination in Public (EIP) – as required by the regulations, six weeks' notice will be given to interested parties should there be an EIP for a DPD.

A degree of flexibility will be adopted, where possible, for stage 1 and any interim stages, to enable representations to be received outside of the formal consultation period, particularly to enable comments on emerging policies and proposals. Documents forming part of the evidence base will be shared with neighbouring authorities producing or updating plans and published as they are completed on the relevant website for consideration by consultees and local communities at the earliest opportunity.

3.4 **Who will be consulted:**

The Localism Act 2011 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 prescribe which bodies must be consulted on DPDs under the duty to co-operate. These bodies will be consulted as required. Other bodies and individuals will also be consulted as appropriate, including:

- Other public and voluntary bodies relevant to the subject matter and/or area of focus of the DPD e.g. the Canal and River Trust

- Those individuals and/or organisations who have indicated that they would wish to be consulted on a particular DPD or on any DPDs;
- The residential and business communities which are likely to be affected by policies and proposals in the DPD.

3.5 How consultation will take place:

Consultation will take place using a range of methods, dependant on the nature and type of DPD, and statutory requirements. For all DPDs this will include:

- Information on the Council's website
- Availability of documents at the Civic Centre and Wolverhampton Central Library

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

- 3.6 While SPDs are subject to public consultation, they are not subject to an EIP. A minimum of 4 weeks public consultation will be carried out for a draft SPD, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. To be adopted, SPDs need to be approved by Cabinet. A summary of the public consultation responses will be made available upon adoption.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

- 3.7 The SCI will be reviewed, and updated if necessary, every five years in accordance with statutory requirements. To be adopted, the SCI needs to be approved by Cabinet.

Local Development Scheme (LDS)

- 3.8 The Wolverhampton Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for preparation or revision of DPDs covering the Wolverhampton area. The Council will comply with current statutory requirements for consultation when updating the Wolverhampton LDS. The LDS will be used to set out the review process for DPDs which have been adopted for five years or more.

4. Neighbourhood Development Plans and Development Orders

- 4.1 The Council will provide appropriate advice and assistance on proposals for preparation and modification of Neighbourhood Development Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders, as resources allow.

5. Involvement in Planning Applications

- 5.1 The local planning authority will carry out consultation on planning applications in accordance with the requirements of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
- 5.2 Members of the public who have submitted comments, either in objection or support of a planning application, are allowed to speak at Planning Committee on individual planning applications. Those who wish to speak at Committee must first give notice, in writing or by email, at the earliest possible opportunity, to the Planning Case Officer.
- 5.3 During the planning application process, amendments can be made by the applicant to the development proposal. The Council will only re-consult following amendments if the changes significantly alter the design, scale or nature of the proposed development. The Planning Case Officer will decide whether or not to re-consult.