

# **Bolton Local Plan**

## **Statement of Community Involvement**

**August 2021**

**Department of Place**

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# Statement of Community Involvement

## August 2021

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## **Introduction**

1. 1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). sets out how the council intends to involve the community in the preparation of its planning policies and in the decision-making process for planning applications. All elements of the community have a significant role to play in the planning of Bolton. The term “community” embraces all and includes local residents, businesses, organisations, landowners, developers, statutory agencies and interest groups.
1. 2 The Statement of Community Involvement has been prepared in accordance with the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework. Paragraph 16c of the Framework states that plans should “be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees.” Paragraph 16e states that plans should “be accessible through the use of digital tools to assist public involvement and policy presentation.”
1. 3 Paragraph 24 of the Framework states that “local planning authorities are under a duty to cooperate with each other, and with other prescribed bodies, on strategic matters that cross administrative boundaries”. The Local Planning Regulations contain a list of prescribed authorities for the purposes of the duty to cooperate.
1. 4 Paragraph 39 of the Framework states that “early engagement has significant potential to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the planning application system for all parties. Good quality pre-application discussion enables better coordination between public and private resources and improved outcomes for the community.”
1. 5 This SCI is intended to set out Bolton Council’s proposals to ensure that the most appropriate methods of public engagement are applied to statutory planning functions. The SCI will provide a basis to inform, consult and involve communities in the Local Plan process, as well as in the determination of planning applications. A significant emphasis has been placed on targeting groups that have not traditionally been engaged in the planning process such as young people, ethnic minority communities and people with disabilities. Through the use of early consultation with appropriate stakeholders, valuable

contributions to the determination of major planning applications and development of Local Plan documents can be made.

1.6 Achieving effective community involvement in the planning process is likely to have a number of benefits including:

- Securing community commitment to future development;
- A means of effectively co-ordinating the activities of different departments and organisations;
- Promoting regeneration and investment, creating certainty and commitment to change;
- Providing a strong basis for successful negotiations on development proposals; and
- Providing a robust base for addressing difficult situations.

### **The Plan Making System**

2.1 The Local Plan in Bolton consists of four elements

- Bolton's Core Strategy (2011)
- Bolton's Allocations Plan (2014)
- The Greater Manchester Waste Plan (2012)
- The Greater Manchester Minerals Plan (2013)

2.2 Bolton's Core Strategy is the key document in the Local Plan. It describes what we want Bolton to look like in the future up to 2026 and the strategic planning policies to make this happen. The Allocations Plan allocates land for various uses and sets criteria for the determination of planning applications. The Greater Manchester Waste and Minerals Plans are in force in Bolton and contain the planning policies for waste and minerals respectively.

2.3 The Local Plan is supported by a number of other planning documents. These include this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), the Local Development Scheme (LDS), Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and Neighbourhood Plans (the first of these, for Blackrod, was approved at referendum in May 2021 and "made" by Bolton Council in June 2021. Collectively, these will provide and deliver the spatial planning strategy for Bolton. The different plans that comprise the Local Plan are subject to a formal

Sustainability Appraisal (SA), while both Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and SPDs will be supported by an evidence base of studies and technical documents.

- (1) **Statement of Community Involvement:** sets out Bolton Council's policy for consulting the community in the preparation and revision of all Local Development Documents and planning control decisions within its local area.
  
- (2) **Development plan documents** are spatial planning documents prepared by the council. The council's Local Development Scheme 2020 currently contains two DPDs for preparation; (a) the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, being prepared jointly with the other nine districts in Greater Manchester, co-ordinated by the Greater Manchester Mayor and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority; (b) the Bolton Local Plan. However, progress on the GMSF halted in December 2020 when Stockport Council was no longer able to support its publication. This joint plan is now being progressed by the nine other GM districts, including Bolton, as "Places for Everyone" (PfE). The LDS is undergoing a review to set out the revised timetable for the PfE and the subsequent Local Plan.

The PfE will provide the overarching framework for the strategic management of sustainable growth and development across most of the conurbation to 2037. Consultation on the PfE is carried out on a joint basis, and as the PfE is being prepared as a DPD, this consultation must be in line with the nine districts' Statements of Community Involvement.

- (3) **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)** provide detailed guidance on site specific or topic areas and cover a wide range of issues on which policy guidance is provided by Bolton Council to supplement the policies and proposals in DPDs. They are not subject of independent examination and do not carry development plan status but are material considerations in the determination of planning applications and carry significant weight when prepared in accordance with the regulations.
  
- (4) **Neighbourhood Plans** are produced by a Town Council or a designated Neighbourhood Planning Forum (where a Town Council does not exist) to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and shape the development and growth within the local area. They are subject to a statutory process and must be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan and have regard to national

planning policy. Following examination by an independent examiner and a favourable vote in a referendum they can be adopted by the council and form part of the development plan. As such they have significant weight in determining planning applications. The council has statutory duties to publicise the neighbourhood plan at specified stages. However, it is the role of the neighbourhood plan responsible body to ensure that the plan is representative and shaped by consultation. How and when this is undertaken is decided by the neighbourhood planning body.

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### **Consultation Processes**

3. 1 This section of the SCI sets out the consultation processes involved in the production of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and for the council's responsibilities for neighbourhood planning.

### **Duty to cooperate**

3. 2 The Localism Act requires local planning authorities and public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an on-going basis to maximise the effectiveness of addressing strategic cross boundary matters in local plans. The 'duty to co-operate' is a statutory requirement for all local planning authorities in relation to the planning of sustainable development.
3. 3 The council will continue to work collaboratively with other bodies to ensure that strategic priorities across local boundaries are properly coordinated and reflected in the preparation of Development Plan Documents. The extent to which the council has undertaken this duty will be scrutinised as part of the independent examination of Development Plan Documents. The bodies that will be consulted on under the 'Duty to Co-operate' are listed in Appendix 5.
3. 4 The council will prepare a Statement of Common Ground, which is a written record of the progress made to address any strategic cross boundary matters during DPD plan preparation. It outlines where effective co-operation is and is not happening and is a way of demonstrating at examination that plans are deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working across local authority boundaries. It is also evidence that the council has complied with the Duty to Cooperate. This will be maintained and made available on the council's website.

### **DPD Process**

3. 5 Minimum levels of consultation on DPD's are determined by Regulations 18, 19 and 35 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012. The key stages of DPD preparation are set out below:



### **Initial Scoping**

3. 6 The initial tasks include defining the objectives for the DPD as well as the framework and scope of the Sustainability Appraisal. Consultation on the scope of the Sustainability Appraisal with the three statutory bodies (Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England) represents the formal commencement of a DPD.

### **Preparation of the DPD**

3. 7 The next stage of DPD preparation involves identification of the main issues and options for the DPD and developing the evidence necessary to support the DPD. Government guidance advises that the extent of consultation undertaken for DPD's should be proportionate to the scale of issues involved. The council will therefore engage the community on an ongoing and informal basis using specified consultation periods, as appropriate, in order to contribute towards the preparation of the DPD. Throughout this stage the council will involve all relevant organisations, interest groups and individuals.
3. 8 Public consultation during this period of DPD preparation will be undertaken in accordance with the regulations in that the council will consult each of the specific consultation bodies to the extent that the Council thinks that the DPD affects the body and such of the general consultation bodies as considered appropriate. In any given consultation period, any party may make representations and appropriate documents will be available at the One Stop Shop in Bolton Town Hall and on the Council website.
3. 9 This initial period of community engagement is a key stage in the preparation of DPD's as it enables people to express their views, put forward their own ideas and to actively participate in developing options before any firm proposals have been drawn up. The Council will take into account any representations received as a result of the consultation above as it prepares a "proposed submission" version of the DPD.

**“Proposed Submission” document (Publication)**

3. 10 Before the Council submits a DPD to the Secretary of State it will publish a “Proposed Submission” version, in order for representations relating to issues of soundness to be made.
3. 11 The Council is required to publish:
- the “Proposed Submission” DPD;
  - the Sustainability Appraisal report;
  - changes to the Policies Map (if appropriate);
  - a statement setting out
    - who was invited to be involved in the plan preparation;
    - how they were invited to be involved in the plan preparation; and
    - a summary of the main issues raised and how they have been taken into account.
  - any other supporting documents relevant to the preparation of the DPD.
3. 12 At this stage the council will:
- Place any documentation identifying the “Proposed Submission” DPD on the Council’s website together with any supporting information which is needed to enable people to understand what they are being asked to comment upon and state where the documentation can be inspected;
  - Make all relevant material available for inspection at the One Stop Shop reception in Bolton Town Hall for the whole of the period of consultation; this may be in paper or electronic format, or both
  - Send copies of the relevant material to the general consultation bodies and specific consultation bodies, in accordance with the regulations;
  - Utilise the Local Plan consultation database to inform relevant entries of progress.
3. 13 The period of consultation that follows publication of the “Proposed Submission” version of the DPD will be in accordance with regulation 19 and will normally be six weeks but can be longer if the Council feels this is appropriate. Following the period of consultation the Council must produce a summary of the main issues raised by the representations.

### **Submission of DPDs**

3. 14 This is the Council's intended final version of the DPD and will be submitted to the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulation 22. The Submission DPD will be accompanied by all the documents produced at publication stage in addition to the following:
- a statement setting out:
    - the number of representations made at publication stage;
    - a summary of the main issues raised by the representations; and,
  - copies of all the representations made at publication stage.
3. 15 The Council will make documents available in the One Stop Shop reception in Bolton Town Hall, as well as on the Council's website and will contact relevant entries on the Local Plan consultation database.

### **Examination**

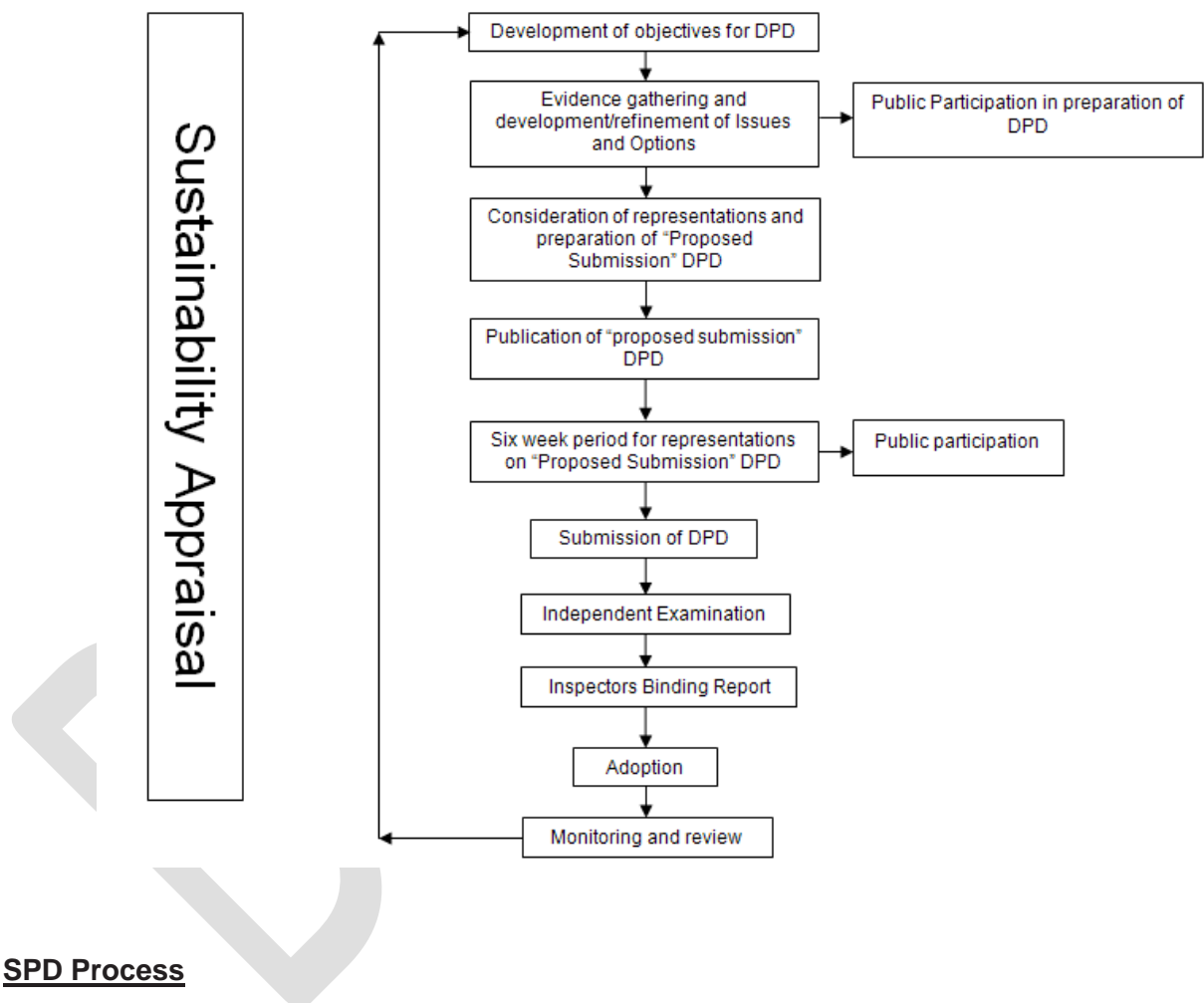
3. 16 The council will not make any fundamental changes to the DPD between submission to the Secretary of State and the examination. The DPD will be examined by an independent inspector whose role is to assess whether it has been prepared in accordance with the Duty to Cooperate, legal and procedural arrangements, and whether it is sound. The Inspector will decide how the examination is run and this can be through written representations and/or hearing sessions. Written representations carry the same weight whether they are presented verbally at the examination or not. Hearing sessions are structured discussions used to explore issues which the Inspector needs further clarification on to determine whether the document is sound. The inspector will invite participation at hearings from those who wish to be heard and anyone else who might be required to explore the relevant issue.

### **The Inspector's report and adoption**

3. 17 The Inspector can recommend that the council should make main modifications to ensure that the DPD is sound. The council can also make additional modifications on minor matters. The council will consult on recommended main modifications. The extent of this consultation will vary according to the nature of the modifications, but as a minimum, the council will place the modifications

on its website, make available a copy in the One Stop Shop, and inform all people who have made a representation at the time of publication. Once the examination has been completed the Inspector will issue the council with a report which will be made available for public viewing. The council will then formally adopt the DPD.

3. 18 The above process is summarised in the chart below:



3. 19 Supplementary Planning Documents are produced to support and provide additional information to policies and proposals within DPDs. They can take two main forms; either area specific proposals, including development briefs or be topic based, for example, affordable housing.

3. 20 The process for producing a SPD is similar to, but shorter than, that for DPD's. SPDs are not subject to independent examination and will not form part of the

statutory development plan, but they are a material consideration in the planning process. The process of SPD development is outlined below:

### **Initial Community Involvement and Evidence Gathering**

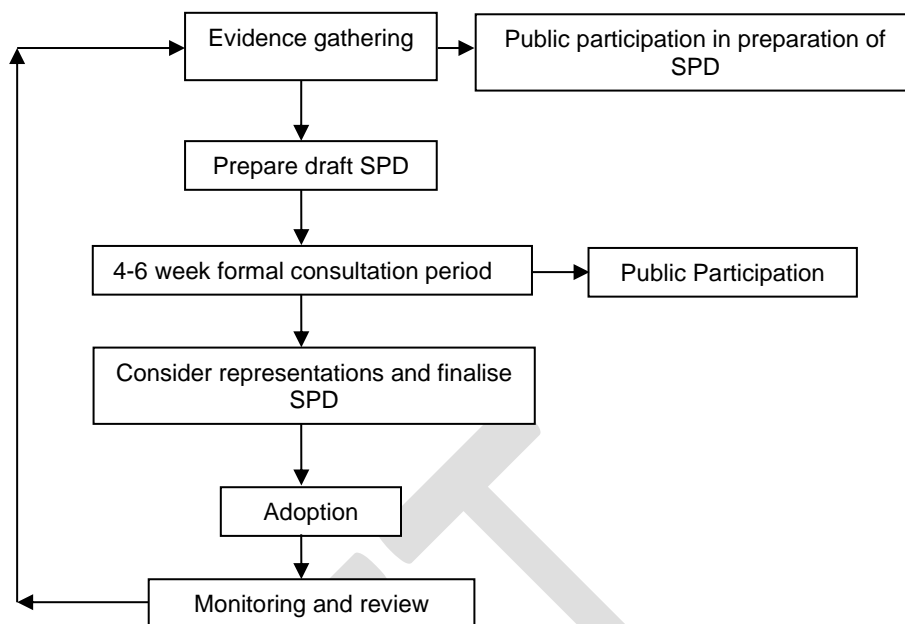
3. 21 This stage, as for DPD's, is based around the gathering of evidence and asking people to identify and make suggestions for what should feed into the SPD. The nature of initial community involvement for SPD's will be dependent upon its content and in some cases, it may be most appropriate to move straight to a draft version.

### **Production of SPD and Formal Consultation**

3. 22 The Council will produce a draft SPD which will be subject to a period of consultation of not less than four weeks in accordance with regulation 12. The Council will make the documents available on its website, in the One Stop Shop and in the Borough's libraries. It will notify relevant contacts on its local plan consultation database.

### **Reporting on responses received and adoption**

3. 23 Officers will give full consideration to any representations made. A summary of all representation will be made together with the Council's response, which will indicate whether it is intended to amend the document. This summary of representations and the Council's proposed response will then be appended to a Statement of Consultation and this, along with the final SPD, will be reported to Council Members to seek final approval. Upon approval the SPD can be formally adopted.
3. 24 The above process is summarised in the chart below:



### **Neighbourhood Planning Process**

#### **Designation of neighbourhood area and neighbourhood forum**

3. 25 When it receives an application for a neighbourhood area, the council must publicise the application before making a decision on whether to designate it. The council must also publicise its decision on the designation.
3. 26 In areas of the Borough where there is no town council, the council may also receive applications for the designation of a neighbourhood forum. The council must publicise any such application and the decision on whether to designate it.
3. 27 The council must determine applications for the designations of neighbourhood areas and neighbourhood forums within a period specified in regulations.

#### **Publicity prior to submission of a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood order**

3. 28 At this stage it is for the town council or neighbourhood forum to prepare and publicise the neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood order. It is not the responsibility of Bolton Council.

3.29 As well as its specific responsibilities at some stages of neighbourhood planning, Bolton Council also has a statutory duty to support and advise the neighbourhood forum or town council in the preparation of the neighbourhood plan. This will cover such activities as:

- Making local planning evidence available to the town council or neighbourhood forum
- Advising on the possible scope of neighbourhood planning
- Advising on the relationship between the local plan and neighbourhood planning
- Advising on the statutory processes of neighbourhood planning

### **Submission of a neighbourhood plan or neighbourhood order**

3.30 When the town council or neighbourhood forum submits its proposed neighbourhood plan/ order to it, Bolton Council must publicise it. This should allow for representations for not less than six weeks.

### **Examination**

3.31 Bolton Council is responsible for appointing an independent examiner to assess the Neighbourhood Plan / Order. There is no requirement to carry out publicity at this stage.

### **Publication of the examiner's report and plan proposal decisions**

3.32 After the examination, Bolton Council will receive the examiner's report. It must make a decision on whether to support the plan / order in the light of the report. The council must publicise the examiner's report and the decision.

### **Referendum**

3.33 If Bolton Council decides to support the Neighbourhood Plan / Order then the next stage is for a referendum to be held. Bolton Council will organise and publicise the referendum including publicising documents and information statements during the referendum period.

### **Publicising the outcome of the referendum**

3.34 Bolton Council will publicise the outcome of the referendum once it is known.

**Making the Neighbourhood Plan / Order**

3. 35 If more than 50% of votes cast in the referendum are in support of the neighbourhood plan / order then Bolton Council must make the plan / order. A neighbourhood plan becomes part of the development plan for Bolton as soon as it has been approved by a referendum and must be taken into account in the determination of planning applications. Bolton Council must publicise the making of the plan / order.

**Brownfield Land Register**

3. 36 The Town and Country Planning (Brownfield Land Register) Regulations 2017 came into force on 16 April 2017. These require local planning authorities to prepare and maintain a register of brownfield land (also referred to as previously developed land) that is suitable and available for residential development.
3. 37 Registers will be in two parts, Part 1 will comprise all brownfield sites appropriate for residential development and Part 2 those sites granted permission in principle. There is no requirement for consultation on Part 1 of the register, and the council will not carry out any consultation on sites that are only in part 1.
3. 38 Regulations require the council to carry out consultation on sites if they propose to enter them on Part 2 of the Register. Entry on Part 2 establishes the principle that residential development can take place on that site, although a further consent would be required to implement that permission. The council will follow the consultation requirements set down in the regulations, plus carry out any further consultation that the Statement of Community Involvement recommends in its approach on planning applications.



### **Methods of Consultation for DPDs and SPDs**

4. 1 Government guidance stresses that early and meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses is essential. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged to reflect a local collective vision and a set of agreed priorities for sustainable development.
4. 2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012, set the minimum standards for community involvement for development plan documents and supplementary planning documents. The council must meet the statutory obligations set out in the regulations, but it is also committed to ensuring that the scope of the SCI extends to engaging directly with the wider community including 'seldom heard' groups, local groups, organisations and individuals using a range of public consultation methods in the preparation of the Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Documents.
4. 3 Seldom heard groups usually refer to people who are typically not involved in the planning process and have been identified to include the following:
  - Women
  - Minority ethnic communities
  - Gypsies/travellers
  - Asylum seekers
  - Refugees
  - Disabled people
  - People with specific health issues
  - Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups
  - Young people and older people
  - Those in specific areas (such as rural areas or peripheral estates)
  - Religious/faith groups
  - Those on low incomes
4. 4 The traditional exclusion of these groups can often be the result of either:
  - Information not reaching them; or
  - The present involvement methods being ineffective.

4. 5 The Council will involve seldom heard groups through a range of imaginative consultation techniques, for example through the use of targeted events in local areas, dependent upon how each individual group will respond most effectively. It is hoped that these techniques will generate discussion and engage those that have traditionally been hard to reach. The effective involvement of these groups is recognised as an important element of the planning system in providing useful contributions and influencing the development process.
4. 6 The Council will pay regard to the requirements of the Equalities Act 2010, which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.
4. 7 The Council will, where possible, endeavour to provide documents when requested in large type, braille, electronically, audio and translations.
4. 8 Lists of the consultees that will be involved in the Local Plan process are included in Appendix 5.
4. 9 Consultation methods generally fall into 3 broad categories, classified as:
- **Involvement** – Providing clear, relevant and well presented information to gain community interest through the use of leaflets, advertising, ongoing awareness and publicity campaigns;
  - **Engagement** – Providing opportunities for dialogue with the community and stakeholders through the use of questionnaires, exhibitions and formal consultation processes; and
  - **Feedback** – Re-assure participants that views will be fully considered and acted on to give the community greater confidence in the system. The website will be used to provide publicity and information, and will be a vital tool to maintain interest, understanding and trust. In dealing with the outcome of consultations during the preparation of DPDs and SPDs the Council will:
    - i. Contact people if it needs to clarify any points raised;
    - ii. Summarise all responses and make the summary available in the Bolton Town Hall One Stop Shop and on the council's website,
    - iii. Prepare a report on all responses made and set out the Council's views on these, including recommendations on the way forward.

This report will be made publicly available in the Bolton Town Hall One Stop Shop and on the council's website.

4. 10 The council has a consultation policy and a consultation toolkit, which could be used to decide which method to use.
4. 11 Appendix 1 identifies a range of consultative measures that may be used in the preparation and production of the council's DPDs and SPDs, and for its responsibilities on neighbourhood plans. This table considers the benefits and/or issues relating to each method as well as investigating the likely resources required for its implementation. It should be noted that the methods identified in the table are by no means definitive and in light of experience more effective consultation techniques may be used.
4. 12 Of the recognised methods outlined in Appendix 1 it is envisaged that a number of techniques can be used during the preparation and consultation stages of DPDs and SPDs. The potential methods used during the DPD, SPD and neighbourhood plan production stages are outlined in Appendix 2, 3 and 4.
4. 13 Each organisation listed in Appendix 5 will be invited to make a representation at the relevant production stages of DPDs as highlighted above. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) will set out a timetable detailing the relevant dates during the preparation process where consultation will take place.

### **Strategic Environmental Assessment and Sustainability Appraisal**

5. 1 The purpose of Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is to assess the likely environmental impacts of the policies and proposals of the development plan. SEA enables the establishment of an environmental audit or baseline and will form the basis of the Council's strategic environmental aims and objectives that will form a main thread through all policies and proposals set out in the Council's Local Plan. The Council, in carrying out any SEA, will involve the community and stakeholders as appropriate to ensure that their views are considered in this process.
5. 2 The Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process runs alongside the DPD process. The SCI and SPDs are not subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, unless there are issues not covered by the parent DPD. The SA report will appraise the social, environmental and economic effects of all DPDs at a variety of stages. If significant changes are made prior to submission of a DPD to the Secretary of State, these will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal. Any responses made during the consultation process will be taken into account during the preparation of a DPDs. In undertaking sustainability appraisals, the council will:
- Consult key stakeholders on the scope of the sustainability appraisal;
  - Consult key stakeholders and the public as part of public participation in the preparation of the DPD and make initial sustainability work available; and
  - Undertake public consultation on the sustainability appraisal report along with the Proposed Submission DPD.

### **Planning Control Process**

6. 1 The legislation setting out planning control consultation requirements is set out below:

- The Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure Order) (2015) (as amended)
- The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017
- The Town and Country Planning (Major infrastructure Project Inquiries Procedure) (England) Rules 2005
- Article 5G of the Town and Country Planning (Permission in Principle) Order 2017 (as amended)
- Regulation 5 and regulation 5A of the Listed Buildings and Conservation Area Regulations 1990 (as amended) - for listed buildings
- Schedule 2 to the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) – for applications for prior approval for development which is subject to permitted development rights

6. 2 Through the planning application process there is a need to ensure that the community is informed and involved in the consideration of planning applications. Article 15 of the Town and Country Planning (General Development Procedure) Order 2015 provides every planning application with a level of publicity that is commensurate with the size and nature of the proposal.

6. 3 Planning applications can be divided into 3 main types:

#### **Major planning applications for development involve:**

- Any minerals and waste developments over 1ha of land
- Residential development for more than 10 units or on a site greater in size than 0.5 ha
- Industrial or commercial floorspace of over 1,000 square metres or over 1 hectare of land
- Change of use where the site area is over 1ha of land

**Minor planning applications:**

- Are for all developments under the thresholds outlined for major developments

**Other applications:**

- Applications of this type include householder planning applications, small scale change of use applications, and applications for Listed Building Consent, Conservation Area Consent and Advertising Consent

6. 4 Bolton Council seeks to ensure that the community of Bolton and beyond have information available to be able to be actively involved in the planning process. The Council will seek to consult an appropriate range of statutory and non-statutory consultees. In deciding which statutory body is consulted, the Council must take into account the nature and location of the proposal and the relevant legislative context. All statutory consultees have 21 days in which to respond. In addition, bodies such as Natural England will be allowed a longer period of time to comment on applications where this is prescribed by legislation. The non-statutory consultees, which include community groups that have notified the Council of the wish to be consulted on applications are informed at the planning officers' discretion.

6. 5 The Council keeps a register of all current planning applications and any associated documents which can be viewed via the council's website which contains information on current applications received in the form of a weekly list, and decisions made. This can be accessed through the website, following the link below: [Simple Search \(bolton.gov.uk\)](http://bolton.gov.uk)

6. 6 Should you not have access to a personal computer and the internet, the details can be viewed at public libraries, local council offices and at the One Stop Shop in the main Bolton Town Hall.

6. 7 In the event that you do not have access to a personal computer and public libraries. local council offices and the One Stop Shop are closed, it is recommended that you contact the case officer to discuss your individual requirements and queries.

6. 8 When publicising planning applications, the Council must meet the statutory obligations as set out in Article 15 of the General Development Procedure Order, which states the minimum requirements expected of the Planning Authority. Bolton Council goes beyond these measures through the use of press notices, site notices and through notification letters.
6. 9 Neighbour notification letters are sent out to notify all occupiers whose premises adjoin an application site. Once notified of an application there will be no further correspondence from the Planning Department and those affected/notified (objectors and/or other interested parties) should be prepared to access the Council's web site to view the progress on any planning application including:
- If any changes have been made to the original submissions;
  - To establish if an application has been determined;
  - Look at relevant officer reports and recommendations;
  - See the decision and the conditions of any approval or reason for any refusal of consent;
  - If an application is to be considered by Committee and;
  - If a Committee site visit is planned.
6. 10 Neighbours who are notified about an application can view the plans and other supporting documents again at the web site.
6. 11 In addition to applications for planning permission, notification letters will be sent to occupiers of land or premises, which adjoin a site which is the subject of the following:-
- tree felling applications;
  - reserved matter applications;
  - Development by the Crown does not require planning permission, but Government Departments will in most instances (other than in the event of emergency development or for national security purposes) consult local planning authorities before proceeding with development, including material change of use);
  - applications of the Local Authority;
  - Listed Building and Conservation Area consent applications;

- Hazardous Substance consent applications;
  - amendments to applications or permissions where in the opinion of the Planning Officer the amendments are significant and material.
6. 12 The Planning Control officer, in accordance with national and local planning policy will consider any representations made relating to a planning application and form a reasoned and balanced judgement based on this information. To find out the result of any planning application neighbours should view details via the web site. Most planning applications are determined by Planning Control Officers under delegated powers on behalf of Director of Place.
6. 13 Bolton Council will determine all planning applications under delegated powers except those that fall into the following categories (unless such applications are to be refused because of lack of information):
- (a) applications for major development involving development of ten or more residential units, 1000 square metres or more floor space and/or where the site area is 1 hectare or more and where more than five objections containing valid material considerations have been received during the statutory consultation period and where the officer recommendation is not to refuse;
  - (b) applications for development pursuant to demolition of a Listed Building;
  - (c) applications that are substantively contrary to the Local Plan or Local Development Framework Proposal and the officer recommendation is to approve;
  - (d) applications referred by the Director of Place or Assistant Director Economic Development and Regeneration under one of the following criteria:
    - (i) a novel, finely balanced policy or precedent issues, which are not addressed either through the Council's Development Plan, any adopted Supplementary Planning Documents, or government planning policy as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework or any successor document; or
    - (ii) there are probity issues or public interest reasons for the matter to be determined by Planning Committee;



(e) applications where members of the Council have asked for the application to be placed before the Planning Committee because of identified significant material planning considerations raised by the proposal;

(f) applications containing any substantive changes to proposals including the terms of major planning agreements (usually specified at the time a major development application is reported to Planning Committee) where such changes are materially different to those specifically agreed by Planning Committee on an application previously determined by Planning Committee

subject in each case to a requirement to report exceptional or unusual circumstances to the next meeting of the Planning Committee.

6. 14 The Planning Committee meets every four weeks at Bolton Town Hall and discusses applications that are not determined under delegated powers. These applications tend to be considered more contentious in their content. Members of the public can attend such meetings and make a request to speak at the meeting explaining their concerns, either for or against a proposal, or simply listen to the Committee debate. Members may ask questions of an objector/supporter who speaks. After this, the Committee may have further discussions before a formal decision will be made. In the event of a refusal, the applicant may appeal to the Secretary of State. There is no third party right of appeal. An appeal can be made only against the refusal of planning permission, against conditions imposed on a planning approval or against non-determination of a planning application.
6. 15 Planning Committee meetings are also streamed live (where possible). The live stream for Planning Committee can be accessed using the following link:  
<https://www.bolton.gov.uk/cabinet-committees/cabinet-committee-meetings/1>
6. 16 The Council encourages developers to engage in pre-application discussions with planning officers prior to the submission of an application. The discussion will aim to address any issues that may arise from the potential development, ensuring that the correct supporting information is gathered and taken into account in preparing the proposal, with the overall aim of ensuring that the application can progress through the planning process with a greater degree of certainty.

6. 17 As a means of promoting a more transparent and accountable planning system Bolton Council encourage developers to carry out their own pre-application consultation exercises on major development proposals. Although this is not a statutory requirement it does aim to build on the minimum consultation requirements and in particular encourage more pre-application discussions and earlier community consultation. Although there is no legal obligation for applicants to undertake any of the above steps, failure to consult properly is likely to lead to objections being made by interested parties, which could be material to the determination of the application. The Council regards such an approach as a way of avoiding unnecessary objections being made at a later stage and is therefore in the applicant's best interest. Developers are encouraged to undertake consultation that they consider most appropriate to their case. The Council consider that it is for developers to determine the extent and preferred methods used for consultation. Possible examples of consultation that could be useful include:

- Making detailed proposals available for public view at the site (e.g. drawings, photo montages and sketched mounted on the site boundary, including 3D representations where possible);
- Public exhibitions - via a website and in person;
- Circulate a leaflet or letter outlining the proposals within the vicinity;
- Arrange a meeting with groups in the community (e.g. Parish Council, residents associations, interested parties, ward councillors, neighbours), giving sufficient advance notice; and
- Hold interactive virtual or in person workshops to elicit feedback from the community;
- Use of social media as appropriate to engage with interested parties;
- Discussions with Highways England where proposals may affect a trunk road either directly or indirectly as a result of development generated traffic.

### **Monitoring and Review**

7.1 The Council will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the provisions in the SCI in informing the preparation and review of LDDs and providing the community in the Borough with effective and continuing opportunities for involvement. As part of this process any LDD produced will be accompanied by a statement of compliance which will outline the ways in which the SCI has been followed and the benefits that have occurred from its use. The SCI will then be reviewed as and when necessary to ensure that it is effective. The need for a review may be triggered by a number of factors such as the proposed engagement methods not working effectively, evidence suggesting certain sectors of the community are not being reached, or new developments in community techniques that need to be taken into consideration in the SCI. Any changes made will be reported in the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR).

**Appendix 1 – Potential Consultation Methods**

<b>Consultation Method</b>	<b>Resources Needed</b>	<b>Overview</b>
Council's Website – <a href="http://www.bolton.gov.uk">www.bolton.gov.uk</a> and e-mail shot	Low – Staff time and costs (no printing, postage, data entry charges)	This method can be used as both a consultation and participation tool and is available to a wide cross section of society. The internet is often the first port of call for people interested in seeking up to date information, and for making representations online. Documents will be available in pdf format for greater accessibility and to be more user friendly. This fulfils part of the minimum statutory requirements under the 2004 Act. The website is seen as an effective way of initiating and maintaining community interest and involvement. This method will benefit the efficiency of the consultation system for officers as they can then link this directly into a database, reducing lengthy data inputting sessions.
Social media	Low – Staff time and costs	News on consultation on Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents can be disseminated through the council's existing social media platforms e.g. Facebook and Twitter. This method helps to raise awareness on planning issues among sectors of the population who tend to have lower participation in planning e.g. younger people. It should be recognised that this is not a form of consultation in itself but a way of promoting the consultation
Media – local/national press, specialist planning magazines, radio, and TV, Bolton Scene, and Area Forum newsletter	Low – Staff time	Adverts can be placed in the press prior to consultation stages to notify members of the public and organisations of how to get involved and how to make comments (as set out in the regulations). Local newspapers and radio stations will receive media releases outlining the latest consultation stage and what the issues or proposals are. This method helps to raise awareness and publicises any specific opportunities to get involved in the process. The main benefits of this process are that a wide audience can be reached in a form that is familiar in format. It should be recognised that this is not a form of consultation in itself but a way of promoting the consultation.

Poster campaigns and leaflets/brochures	Medium – Staff time, production costs (cheaper than producing full documents), but costs are dependent on what distribution method is used	Leaflets and posters are both a form of notification and way of raising awareness of consultation. This process is particularly appropriate for members of the public and ‘seldom heard’ groups, who may not be on the existing consultation lists. Posters and leaflets provide a means to publicise basic information and inform the public about further opportunities to get involved and to advertise up-coming events. A large number of leaflets may need to be distributed to get a reasonable return.
Development Plan Consultation Database	Low	During the consultation process for previous development plans, the Council established a comprehensive database that contains a wide range of individuals, businesses, organisations and groups that expressed an interest in, or responded to, consultation exercises involving the development planning process. This database has been added to through various consultation processes involving the DPDs and SDPDs. This database will be used as an integral part of future consultation and community participation exercises. The database will continue to be used as the basis for producing letters that will inform recipients of relevant stages in DPD and SPD preparation. New respondents and people expressing a wish to be kept informed as to the progress of DPDs and SPDs will be added to the database. The council has ensured that this database is GDPR compliant
Public meetings/public exhibitions/displays/stalls/road shows	High – Staff time/design and printing costs	This approach targets the general public, and will allow Bolton Council to take issues within the borough closer to the homes of the community. This method offers a good medium for disseminating information, allowing communities to air their views, however, it should be remembered that attendees are self-selecting. Events may need to be held over a number of days, in accessible locations appropriate for the topic being discussed, and have a variety of times to ensure that all sections of the community have an opportunity to attend.
Documents available for inspection at Bolton Town Hall One Stop Shop, council offices and libraries during set consultation periods	Low – cost of printing documents	A minimum statutory requirement under the 2004 Act which enables consultation with the general public, local interest groups, businesses, developers/landowners/agents, and people without access to a computer.

Produce documents in alternative formats	Low – cost of printing documents	Produce documents in alternative formats on request including large print, Braille, The Talking Newspaper etc.
Contact telephone number	High – if manned by members of staff	This is a way of providing up to date information to general public, interest groups, businesses, and ‘seldom heard’ groups who don’t have access to the internet. This method will allow people to access and explain/clarify issues but it will not be used to receive formal responses to consultation
Letters to statutory bodies	Low/medium – staff time	A minimum statutory requirement under the 2004 Act, which allows consultation with central, and other local authorities, as outlined in Appendix 5.
Area Forums	Medium/High	The approach allows the general public, local interest groups and ‘seldom heard’ groups to be consulted through existing forums dealing with local issues. This is an open and inclusive way for people to get involved with the process and engage in debate on the issues affecting the area. It should however be noted that this form of consultation is self-selecting in terms of attendees, and the event should take place over a number of evenings or weekends at a relevant and easily accessed venue. This approach would be especially appropriate for area-based policies.
One-to-one meetings with selected stakeholders	High – Staff time	This can involve local interest groups, national interest groups, businesses, developers/landowners/agents, and service providers. This form of consultation is an effective form of identifying key issues and involving specialist organisations on specific topic areas.
Focus Groups	High – Facilitators may be needed and incentives offered to get people involved	Focus group discussions can involve a number of people including local interest groups, national interest groups, businesses, developers/landowners/agents, and service providers. This form of consultation is useful for area-based discussions and the presentation of options available. This process will raise the council’s awareness of local issues affecting its residents etc. This process provides an opportunity to explore issues in depth but may need to be complemented by other consultation methods. Bolton Council has an e-panel (panel of people willing to take part in electronic surveys) which could be used to recruit for focus groups. Focus groups can be recruited through social media. Bolton’s Youth MPs can help to reflect the views of young people.

Planning for Real – Interactive workshops	High – All materials/models would need to be provided and facilitators employed.	This consultation concept will largely involve the general public and local interest groups. This consultation method helps people to engage in the issues and provides a way of recording preferences. These workshops tend to use maps, 3D models or plans onto which all community members are able to place their ideas, suggestions, comments and actions for the future of the area. This process requires the appropriate involvement of people and significant preparation to allow the method to work effectively. This approach could be considered for use with the site-specific DPDs and SPDs, at the evidence gathering stage. This method could be used as an alternative to staffed Public Exhibitions.
Planning Aid	Low	Provides people with independent advice from qualified planners and offers an alternative to asking Council officers for assistance in understanding a planning application or development plan proposal. Can assist hard to reach groups and others in taking part in the plan preparation or planning application process. However, it is only available to deprived groups or individuals. Impartial advice provides a key means of community empowerment and involvement in the planning process. It is envisaged that this service can be used at each stage of DPD and SPD production involving the public and as part of the public consultation process on planning applications.
Questionnaires or response forms	Medium – printing costs, staff time (costs will vary depending upon methodology, for example, post/electronic/face to face/telephone)	This method could be used as a consultation method for both DPDs and SPDs. This is an easy method to administer as the questionnaire can be used to standardise the format of responses therefore allowing easier analysis and assessment of the responses. It can encourage people to consider specific issues or options that they may not have thought about otherwise. This method although simple is probably not the best way to engage individuals who prefer to respond in greater detail. Questionnaires could also be administered using some of the above methods, for example, website/e-mail survey, distributed at public meetings or area forums. Questionnaires should normally be based on-line.

Work on the Local Plan will be carried out by the Strategy Team. There are a number of consultation methods suggested in the document that require different levels of resource, both financially and in terms of officer time. Staff time spent on consultation will need to be balanced with other workload commitments. The Council will use the consultation methods that are appropriate in terms of scale for each DPD and SPD. In

terms of consultation on planning applications, the Council has set targets that it adheres to in the determination of planning applications. The Council will encourage developers to carry out consultation themselves, before they submit their application to save on resources.



**Appendix 2 – Potential Methods of Consultation on Development Plan Documents**

Consultation Methods	Stages		
	Public participation in preparation of DPD	Consultation on “Proposed Submission” DPD	Adoption
Councils Website – <a href="http://www.bolton.gov.uk">www.bolton.gov.uk</a>	*	*	*
Social media	*	*	*
Media – local/national press, Bolton Scene, specialist planning magazines, radio, and TV	*	*	*
Poster campaigns and leaflets/brochures	*	*	
Development Plan Consultation Database	*	*	*
Public exhibitions/ displays/stalls/road shows	*	*	
Paper documents available for inspection at the One Stop Shop during set consultation periods	*	*	*
Produce documents in alternative formats	*	*	*
Contact telephone number	*	*	*
Letters to statutory bodies	*	*	*
Public Meetings/Area Forums	*	*	
One-to-one meetings with selected stakeholders	*	*	
Focus Groups – for example, Young Peoples Panel	*		

Planning for Real – Interactive workshops	*		
Planning Aid	*	*	*
Questionnaires or response forms	*	*	

**Appendix 3 – Potential Methods of Consultation on Supplementary Planning Documents**

Consultation Methods	Thematic/topic based			Site Specific		
	Stages			Stages		
	Public participation in SPD preparation	Consultation on draft SPD	Adoption	Public participation in SPD preparation	Consultation on draft SPD	Adoption
Councils Website – <a href="http://www.bolton.gov.uk">www.bolton.gov.uk</a> and e-mail shot	*	*	*	*	*	*
Social media	*	*	*	*	*	*
Media – local/national press, specialist planning magazines, radio, and TV	*	*	*	*	*	*
Poster campaigns and leaflets/brochures	*	*		*	*	
Development Plan Consultation Database	*	*		*	*	
Public exhibitions/ displays/stalls/road shows	*	*		*	*	
Documents available for inspection at Council offices and libraries during set consultation periods		*	*		*	*
Produce documents in alternative formats	*	*	*	*	*	*
Contact telephone number	*	*	*	*	*	*

Letters to statutory bodies	*	*	*	*	*	*
Public Meetings/Area Forums				*	*	
One-to-one meetings with selected stakeholders	*	*		*	*	
Focus Groups – for example, Young Peoples panel	*			*		
Planning for Real – Interactive workshops	*			*		
Planning Aid	*	*	*	*	*	*
Questionnaires or response forms	*	*		*	*	

**Appendix 4 – Potential methods of publicity by Bolton Council on Neighbourhood Plans**

Consultation methods	Stages					
	Designation of area and forum	Submission of plan / order	Publication of examiner's report and council decision	Referendum	Referendum outcome	Making the Plan / Order
Councils Website – <a href="http://www.bolton.gov.uk">www.bolton.gov.uk</a>	*	*	*	*	*	*
Social media	*	*	*	*	*	*
Media – local/national press, specialist planning magazines, radio, and TV	*	*	*	*	*	*
Development Plan Consultation Database	*	*	*	*	*	*
Documents available for inspection at Council offices and libraries during set consultation periods	*	*	*	*	*	*
Produce documents in alternative formats	*	*	*	*	*	*
Contact telephone no	*	*	*	*	*	*
Letters to statutory bodies	*	*	*	*	*	*
Public Meetings/Area Forums	*	*	*	*	*	*
One-to-one meetings with selected stakeholders	*	*	*	*	*	*
Questionnaires or response forms	*	*				

This table refers only to Bolton Council's responsibility for consultation and publicity. It does not include consultation and publicity that might be carried out by a town council or neighbourhood forum.

## **Appendix 5 – Consultee list**

### **Specific Consultation Bodies**

The following bodies are specific consultation bodies and will be consulted by the council in accordance with the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended:

- A relevant authority, any part of whose area is in or adjoins the area of the local planning authority, including:
  - Adlington Town Council
  - Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council
  - Blackrod Town Council
  - Bury Metropolitan Borough Council
  - Chorley Council
  - Haigh Parish Council
  - Horwich Town Council
  - Lancashire County Council
  - North Turton Parish Council
  - Salford City Council
  - Westhoughton Town Council
  - Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council
- Bolton Clinical Commissioning Group
- British Telecommunications PLC
- Canal and River Trust
- EE
- Electricity North West
- Environment Agency
- Historic England
- Highways England
- Mobile Operators Association (now known as Mobile UK)
- National Grid
- Natural England
- Network Rail
- O2 (UK) LTD
- The Coal Authority
- Homes England
- Transport for Greater Manchester

- United Utilities PLC
- Vodafone LTD
- 3 LTD

### **Government Departments**

The Council will consult with the following Government Departments, where appropriate:

- Ministry of Defence
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- Department for Communities and Local Government
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport
- Department for Education
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs
- Department for Transport
- Department for Work and Pensions
- Department of Health
- HM Treasury
- Ministry of Justice
- The Home Office

### **General Consultation Bodies**

The following are defined as general consultation bodies and will be consulted, as appropriate, in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2012, as amended:

- Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of disabled persons in the authority's area;
- Bodies which represents the interests of persons carrying on business in the authority's area.



## **Appendix 6 - Glossary of Terms**

**The Act:** The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004

**Authority Monitoring Report is produced annually:** It takes into account the implementation of the local development scheme, and the extent to which policies in the Local Plan are being achieved.

**Development Plan Documents (DPDs);** are planning policy documents which make up the Local Plan. They help to guide development within a local planning authority area by setting out the detailed planning policies

**Independent Examination:** A procedure involving means such as discussions and informal hearings, presided over by an Inspector or a Panel of Inspectors appointed by the Secretary of State, to test the 'soundness' of the policies and proposals in the local planning authority's Development Plan Documents. Those who have made representations will have the right to be heard at this.

**Inspector's Report:** A report issued by the Inspector or Panel who conducted the Independent Examination, setting out their conclusions on the matters raised at the Examination and detailing the amendments which they require the local planning authority to make to the Development Plan Documents. .

**Local Development Scheme (LDS):** A public statement identifying which Development Plan Documents will be produced and when.

**Planning Inspectorate (PINS):** The Government Agency responsible for scheduling independent examinations. PINS employ the Planning Inspectors who sit on independent examinations.

**Places for Everyone (PfE);** is a DPD that will provide the overarching framework for the strategic management of sustainable growth and development across most of Greater Manchester.

**The Regulations:** Town and Country Planning (Local Plan) (England) Regulations 2012, (as amended)

**Strategic Environmental Assessment:** Local Planning Authorities must comply with European Union Directive 2001/42/EC which requires a high level, strategic assessment of local development documents (DPDs and, where appropriate, SPDs) and other programmes (e.g. the Local Transport Plan) that are likely to have significant effects on the environment.

**Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** provide detailed guidance on site specific or topic areas to supplement the policies and proposals in DPDs.

**Sustainability Appraisal:** Local Planning Authorities are bound by legislation to appraise the degree to which their plans and policies contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The process of Sustainability Appraisal is similar to Strategic Environmental Assessment but is broader in context, examining the effect of plans and policies on a range of social, economic and environmental factors.