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Meeting: Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel
Date: Thursday 24th March, 2022
Time: 9.30 am
Venue: Council Chamber, Cedar Drive, Thrapston, NN14 4LZ

To members of the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel

Councillors David Brackenbury (Chair), Valerie Anslow, Mark Dearing, Barbara Jenney, David Jenney, Steven North and Kevin Thurland

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<p>Adele Wylie, Monitoring Officer North Northamptonshire Council</p>  <p>Proper Officer 16 March 2022</p>			

This agenda has been published by Democratic Services.

Committee Administrator: Louise Tyers - Democratic Services

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Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel

At 9:30am on Monday 21 February 2022

Held as a Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Present:

Members

Councillor David Brackenbury (Chair)

Councillor Valerie Anslow

Councillor Barbara Jenney

Councillor Steven North

Councillor Mark Dearing

Councillor David Jenney

Councillor Kevin Thurland

Officers

Rob Harbour – Assistant Director for Growth & Regeneration

Simon Richardson – Interim Planning Policy Lead Manager

Bernice Turner – Senior Planning Officer (Local Plans)

Simon James – Policy Manager (Strategic Policy, Design and Delivery)

Sue Bateman – Senior Planning Officer

Terry Begley – Principal Local Plans Officer

Richard Palmer – Planning Delivery Manager

Louise Tyers – Senior Democratic Services Officer

Also present

Councillor Mike Tebbutt – Assistant Executive Member

51. APOLOGIES FOR NON-ATTENDANCE

There were no apologies for non-attendance.

52. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare interests in respect of items on the agenda.

Councillors	Item	Nature of Interest	DPI	Other Interest
Mark Dearing	Item 4 – Houses in Multiple Occupation	Was a property investor but did not have any Houses in Multiple Occupation.		Yes

53. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2022 were approved as a correct record.

54. HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION

The Panel considered a report of the Senior Planning Officer (Local Plans), which presented the evidence gathered to date in relation to officers' investigation into the possible use of Article 4 Directions for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) in North Northamptonshire and highlighted the next steps in the process. The report was marked as agenda item 4 on the agenda.

Further to the Panel's meeting in July 2021, significant progress had been made in gathering evidence relating to the location of HMOs in Northamptonshire. A cross-department working group had also been established to guide the investigation into the use of Article 4 Directions and other measures to control the effects of HMOs.

Based on current estimates there were 1,114 known HMOs in North Northamptonshire, with higher concentrations in the urban areas. It was suggested that detailed stage 2 investigations be undertaken for the following wards:

- Clover Hill (Kettering)
- Corby West (Corby)
- Croyland and Swanspool (Wellingborough)
- Finedon (Wellingborough)
- Kingswood (Corby)
- Northall (Kettering)

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. Members thanked officers, including colleagues from all service areas involved, for a very good paper. It was very helpful to see the spread of HMOs across North Northamptonshire, especially that the concentration of HMOs was in the main towns. It would be helpful to have the figures broken down into the different types of HMOs, including nursing home accommodation, student accommodation, nurse's accommodation to give an indication of where the problems were.
- ii. It was clarified that the information provided related to any dwelling recorded as an HMO, including some blocks of flats. It was noted that there were both planning and housing definitions of what an HMO was and it would be helpful to identify which definition we were working to.
- iii. Officers clarified that the number of complaints recorded in the report were not just for HMOs and were all of the complaints made in that ward. Most complaints were likely to be made by neighbours.
- iv. As to why people lived in HMOs, this would be examined in more detail when developing the ward profiles. The main reasons were likely to be house prices and market demand, but evidence was needed. If Article 4 Directions were to be considered, then a detailed evidence base would be needed. This work would also inform the place shaping agenda going forward.
- v. There will be a demand for HMOs for a long time, but this did need to be properly managed. A long-term strategy for social housing was needed as it was the price of housing which was driving HMOs. The onus was on landlords to ensure that there were certain standards in place, and these should be monitored to ensure that they are meeting their licence requirements. It was confirmed that there was mandatory licensing for

HMOs of five or more residents. Less than five did not require a mandatory licence.

- vi. There were a number of pros and cons in having an Article 4 Direction in place as they were required to be for the smallest geographical area possible.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the progress made with the investigation and the evidence gathered to date.
- (ii) To endorse the approach for the investigation considering a wider range of measures than only Article 4 Directions.

55. NORTH NORTHAMPTONSHIRE STRATEGIC PLAN SCOPE AND ISSUES

The Panel considered a report of the Policy Manager (Strategic Policy, Design and Delivery), which presented the draft Scope and Issues consultation document and the approach to consultation. The report was marked as agenda item 5 on the agenda.

The Scope and Issues consultation document recognised that the scope of the Strategic Plan would focus on strategic matters which would, as a minimum, meet the requirement set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, to have a plan that addressed the strategic priorities for the area. The Scope and Issues consultation was the first stage in preparing the new Strategic Plan. Further amendments to the Scope and Issues document prior to consultation, would be prepared with the agreement of the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Director for Place and Economy.

During discussion, the following principal points were noted:

- i. That the former Joint Planning Committee had discussed the possibility of a new settlement and it was questioned whether this should be included as a potential spatial option within the spatial strategy for the distribution of development section. It was confirmed by officers that new settlements had been flagged up as a potential option in the document.
- ii. We needed to consider whether town centres were still relevant to people today and what were the future of both town centres and out of town areas. The huge change in town centres was recognised and officers advised that the Council was about to commission a retail study update to provide evidence for a town centre strategy.

Councillor Valerie Anslow left the meeting at 10.35am.

- iii. Concerns were raised about the relationship NNC had with the OxCam Arc and the need to highlight the advantages North Northamptonshire could bring to the Arc. Officers confirmed that they were mindful of the Arc and the current uncertainty regarding it and had tried to link into its opportunities and the consultation document had been pitched within that context.
- iv. We needed to consider our proximity to other areas, such as Cambridge and Peterborough. Cambridge was becoming very expensive and businesses were now moving out. We needed to be able to attract those 2nd/3rd tier research development companies. The need for higher quality employment

was a key aspiration. The recently commissioned Housing and Employment Needs Assessment (HENA) would be critical to the Strategic Plan.

- v. It was accepted that we were strategically well placed to accept the demand for logistics. However, the cumulative impact of logistics was now starting to develop, including on the highways network, and we needed to consider how to mitigate this. It was advised that SEMLEP would be commissioning a strategic study on logistic demand and our HENA needed to link into that work. Areas that are dependent on a single industry have experienced economic decline and this was a mistake that we must avoid. We needed to be in a position where we were not solely dependent on logistics and employment mix was vital.

RESOLVED:

- (i) To note the draft Scope and Issues consultation document and the approach to consultation.
- (ii) That any further comments on the draft document be forwarded to the Policy Manager (Strategic Policy, Design and Delivery) by the end of Friday 25 February 2022.

56. EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN

The Executive Forward Plan for February to May 2022 was noted.

Members stated that an update on the Sustainable Urban Extensions would be helpful.

57. CLOSE OF MEETING

The Chair thanked Members and officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.20am.

Chair

Date



PLANNING POLICY EXECUTIVE ADVISORY PANEL Thursday 24 March 2022

Report Title	North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement
Report Author	Bernice Turner – Senior Planning Officer (Local Plans) Bernice.Turner@northnorthants.gov.uk
Relevant Executive Member	Councillor David Brackenbury – Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Schedule of representations received during consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement

Appendix B: North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement – post consultation draft (including track changes)

Appendix C: Equalities Screening Assessment

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To outline the responses received during consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), including officers' comments to the representations and resulting changes to the document. The report also seeks agreement from Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel to ask that the revised SCI be recommended to Executive and then Full Council for adoption.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. Public consultation was undertaken for a period of six weeks during December 2021 and January 2022 on the draft SCI. There is no legal requirement for the Council to consult with the public when updating or reviewing their SCI; however, consultation has been undertaken to keep local communities informed and involved in the process, which is considered to be good practice and will ensure the document has greater credibility.

- 2.2. A number of representations were received during the consultation, which has resulted in suggested amendments to the SCI; the full representations along with the Council's comments and resulting actions are appended to the report at Appendix A.
- 2.3. The revised SCI is also appended to this report at Appendix B, with proposed amendments included as track changes for ease of reference.
- 2.4. This report seeks Member endorsement to accept the proposed changes and recommend the Executive agree the document and forward the updated SCI to Full Council for adoption.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel:
 - (a) Note the representations received during public consultation on the draft SCI and officers' response to the representations; and
 - (b) Endorse the revised SCI and ask that it be recommended to the Executive for approval, and that it be forwarded to Full Council for adoption.

Reason for Recommendations:

- 3.2. To ensure the Council has an up-to-date SCI in place in line with government legislation.
- 3.3. *Alternative Options Considered* – Resolve not to endorse the revised SCI as recommended; however, the Council is required to have an up-to-date SCI in place setting out how the Council will consult on development plans and planning applications.

4. Report Background

- 4.1. It is a statutory requirement under planning legislation for the Council as a local planning authority to have an adopted Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The purpose of the SCI is to set out what consultation will take place with the community on planning policy documents and planning applications. It sets out who the Council will consult with, when and how.
- 4.2. A draft SCI for North Northamptonshire was presented to the Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel (PPEAP) on 21 October 2021 and subject to the comments made by Members was endorsed for public consultation.
- 4.3. Public consultation was undertaken on the draft SCI for six weeks between 7 December 2021 and 28 January 2022.
- 4.4. Officers contacted 390 individuals and representatives on the North Northamptonshire Planning Policy consultation database, including specific

consultation bodies; parish and town councils; community groups; developers, agents, landowners and individuals that have expressed an interest to be notified of all planning policy related matters for North Northamptonshire.

- 4.5. Full details of the consultation, including a copy of the draft document and information of how to make comments, were uploaded to the Council's [Consultation Hub](#) through the Council's dedicated consultation and engagement team. Part of this process involved notifying members of the North Northamptonshire Consultation Register and the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel, which includes all individuals and organisations that have requested to be notified of new Council consultation and engagement activities. This was undertaken by the consultation and engagement team in addition to contacting the planning policy consultation database consultees.
- 4.6. Hard copies of the document and a supplementary information sheet were placed in the main North Northamptonshire Council Offices and Libraries including:
 - One Stop Shop, The Corby Cube, Corby
 - Cedar Drive, Thrapston
 - Bowling Green Road, Kettering
 - Swanspool House, Wellingborough
 - Tithe Barn, Wellingborough
 - Corby Library
 - Irthlingborough Library
 - Kettering Library
 - Oundle Library
 - Rushden Library
 - Wellingborough Library
 - Burton Latimer Library (as requested by Town Councillor)
- 4.7. The Council received 49 individual representations to the consultation from 15 respondents including individuals, community groups, organisations and statutory bodies.
- 4.8. The main areas of discussion were the IT arrangements relating to planning applications, details for clarification and requests to be included on the Council's planning policy consultation database for future related consultation activities.
- 4.9. A table outlining the full representations received to the draft SCI, officer's responses to the representations and the actions proposed as a result of the representations received is included at Appendix A. Further discussion on the representations and proposed amendments to the SCI is provided in section 5 of this report.
- 4.10. Public consultation undertaken on the draft SCI and content of the SCI are consistent with the Council's [Consultation and Engagement Framework 2021](#).

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. Representations strongly support the principle of early and meaningful engagement through the planning process, as advocated within the SCI, along with additional community engagement where possible, increased use of social media and the advice and assistance offered by the Council in relation to neighbourhood plans.
- 5.2. The main proposed amendments to the SCI as a result of the consultation, include the following:
 - Table 1, which sets out the specific and general consultation bodies for engaging at consultation stages for local plans, has been updated to include: town councils, parish meetings, lead local flood authorities, and civic societies.
 - Examples of 'hard to reach' groups are included at paragraph 2.16.
 - References and hyperlinks to the Council's Consultation Hub and Scheme of Delegation have been added.
 - Clarification is provided in paragraph 3.8 that the normal period for consultation on a planning application is 24 calendar days from publication.
 - Reference to parish meetings has been included alongside parish and town councils at paragraphs 3.4 and 3.10.
 - Clarification has been provided at paragraph 3.20 that the IT limitations preventing publication of all consultee comments relates specifically to minerals and waste applications, but that comments can be made available upon request.
- 5.3. Other minor changes are proposed where these add clarity or correct a typographical error. The full schedule of representations received during the consultation, officer comments to the representations and resulting actions and changes to the document are included at Appendix A.
- 5.4. The area Development Management teams have been consulted on the representations, comments and resulting changes to the SCI, to ensure a consistent approach is being taken across North Northamptonshire.
- 5.5. The revised SCI incorporating all changes proposed following public consultation, which are shown as tracked changes, is included at Appendix B to this report.
- 5.6. Members are asked to review the proposed changes to the SCI, which are considered to improve the clarity and usability of the document, and take these forward within the final document for endorsement by this Panel prior to presenting to Executive and Full Council for adoption.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Following review and endorsement of the proposed amendments to the SCI within Appendix B, the next step is for the updated SCI to be presented for consideration by the Executive, with a view to adopting the document by Full Council thereafter.
- 6.2. The SCI has been added to the forward plan for consideration by Executive on 14 April 2022.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. The adoption of the SCI will have resource and financial implications in terms of undertaking consultation and engagement activities for plan making and processing planning applications; however, these activities will be carried out by the planning policy and development management teams through existing budgets.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The SCI is a legal requirement of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (section 18) as amended by the Planning Act 2008, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. The adoption of the SCI will contribute to meeting the Council's corporate objectives as outlined within the Corporate Plan 2021-25, in particular objective 5: Connected communities. The preparation and content of the SCI is consistent with the Council's [Consultation and Engagement Framework](#) and Corporate Plan objectives.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. There are no risks arising from the adoption of a new SCI; however, it is a statutory requirement that the Council has an up-to-date adopted SCI in place.

7.5. Consultation

- 7.5.1. National Planning Practice Guidance on Plan Making clarifies that a revised SCI does not have to be subject to consultation, but it is good practice to do so. Public consultation has been undertaken for a period of six weeks between 7 December 2021 and 28 January 2022 on the draft SCI. Comments received are considered as part of this report.

7.6. Consideration by Scrutiny

- 7.6.1. None at this time.

7.7. Equality Implications

- 7.7.1. An Equalities Screening Assessment has been completed for the SCI in consultation with the Council's Equalities team and is appended to the report at Appendix C. This demonstrates that the SCI has a positive impact on identified equality groups.

7.8. Climate Impact

- 7.8.1. The SCI sets out methods to engage members of the public in the planning system, which will increase opportunities to comment on issues relating to climate change.

7.9. Community Impact

- 7.9.1. The purpose of the SCI is to set out how the Council will consult with the local community on planning issues and how the Council will support the preparation of neighbourhood plans. This will have a positive community impact as it will help local communities to shape the environments in which they live.

7.10. Crime and Disorder Impact

- 7.10.1. None directly related to this report.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1. Planning Policy EAP on 21 October 2021 [Report on Statement of Community Involvement for North Northamptonshire](#) (Agenda item 5)

Appendix A – Schedule of representations received during consultation on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

User ID	Rep Number	Organisation	Details of Representation	North Northamptonshire Council Comments	Action
1	1	Northamptonshire Police, Northamptonshire Fire and Rescue Service and Northamptonshire Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner (OPFCC)	<p>Thank you for forwarding this consultation to Northants Fire and Rescue, which is much appreciated.</p> <p>My role is to respond on behalf of Northants Police, Northants Fire and Rescue and the Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire, on planning matters which impact on the resources of these organisations.</p> <p>The growth of North Northamptonshire, has the potential to impact on policing and fire and rescue resources required to meet the needs developments.</p> <p>We would therefore request that Northamptonshire Police is added to the list of consultees on both policy and DM matters, to ensure that consideration can be given to resources, response times and facilities required to serve new developments (both commercial and residential), and seek developer contributions where appropriate.</p> <p>This is a separate role to that of the Crime Prevention Design Advisors, who advise on security, fire protection and Secured by Design.</p> <p>I trust this response is of assistance. Please do not hesitate to contact me, if you require any further information.</p>	<p>The request for Northamptonshire Police to be added as a separate consultee to Northants Fire and Rescue is noted. Northamptonshire Police has been included as a separate contact for Development Management purposes and contact details have now been included on the Council's planning policy consultation database.</p>	<p>Consultee details have been added to the planning policy consultation database and checked and updated where necessary for planning application consultations.</p>

2	1	East Lloyds Community Association	<p>Page 12 item 3.20 IT issues Every application submitted where consultation is requested should have the right to respond to the officer dealing with the application.</p> <p>It is not good enough to say we have IT issues so you can not respond electronically.</p>	<p>Section 3.0 of the document sets out the consultation arrangements for development proposals and planning applications. Any interested party may submit comments relating to development proposals and planning applications. Paragraph 3.5 of the document explains that the Council will review all comments, but only representations relating to material planning considerations will be considered in reaching a decision. Representations can be submitted electronically or in hard copy.</p>	None.
3	1	Hollins Strategic Land	<p>I am writing in response to the invitation to comment on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement - published for consultation.</p> <p>Our comments are as follows:</p> <p>1. We support the general good practice to undertake early community engagement as it can be a positive way to bring forward development. However, the SCI must recognise that this may not always be possible if community representatives are unwilling to engage positively or constructively in that process. In addition, we do not think the SCI should go as far as to suggest it is a mandatory validation requirement as planning law does not require it given that public consultation already forms part of the application process undertaken by Local Authorities. For example, there may be opportunities post-application submission during the determination process for there to be positive engagement from the case officer to amend layouts to take on-board consultee comments. Whilst it is preferable for planning applications to be submitted as if 'best and final', there can be many instances where proposals can be amended and improved to allow for a positive decision.</p>	<p>Support for early engagement in the planning process is noted.</p> <p>The Council encourages early consultation and engagement on all development proposals regardless of size as this may help to reduce delay in determining a planning application once received. Paragraph 3.10 explains that proposals for 'significant development', which are either large in scale or locally significant, are expected to be accompanied by a 'Statement of Local Engagement' outlining the community engagement undertaken and the resulting changes from the proposals. Additional community involvement is considered to be good practice for significant development proposals, given that they will have a more significant impact on the area or create more significant public interest or controversy.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.16 explains that the type and extent of community involvement should relate to the scale and likely impact of the development and the target audiences, therefore the Council recognises this will need to be proportionate and reflect the individual proposal. The Council also offers advice on pre-application consultation on a site-by-site basis and invites applicants to contact the Council before undertaking community involvement to ensure this is undertaken as effectively as possible.</p>	None.

3	2	Hollins Strategic Land	<p>2. We note in the SCI that comments on planning applications may not be available due to IT issues. Comments made on planning applications may raise pertinent issues or queries that applicants should have the opportunity to respond to quickly. It should be made clear that comments can be made available and provided on individual requests to avoid the need for Freedom of Information requests.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Paragraph 3.20 explains that generally comments made by statutory consultees and members of the public will be published on the Council's website; however, there are instances where this may not be possible due to IT limitations. Where this is the case, applicants will be able to request to see comments made on their planning applications by discussing with the relevant case officer and area planning office.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.20 will be amended for clarity, to read: "Generally comments made on a planning application by statutory consultees will be published on the council's websites as will any comments made by members of the public with personal details redacted for data protection purposes. However, it should be noted that due to IT capabilities the ability to upload comments to the website will not be available in relation to <u>planning minerals and waste</u> applications. being dealt with by some of the North Northamptonshire area planning offices. Where comments are available to view on the website this will be until a decision on the application has been made. <u>Comments can be made available upon request to the case officer or area planning office handling the planning application.</u>"</p>	<p>Amend paragraph 3.20 to read:</p> <p>"However, it should be noted that due to IT capabilities the ability to upload comments to the website will not be available in relation to <u>planning minerals and waste</u> applications. being dealt with by some of the North Northamptonshire area planning offices. Where comments are available to view on the website this will be until a decision on the application has been made. <u>Comments can be made available upon request to the case officer or area planning office handling the planning application.</u>"</p>
4	1	Natural England	<p>Consultation on Statement of Community Involvement for North Northamptonshire Council</p> <p>Thank you for your consultation on the above dated</p>	<p>Support for meaningful and early engagement in developing plans and determining planning applications is noted.</p>	<p>None.</p>

			<p>17 December 2021 which was received by Natural England on 17 December 2021.</p> <p>Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.</p> <p>We are supportive of the principle of meaningful and early engagement of the general community, community organisations and statutory bodies in local planning matters, both in terms of shaping policy and participating in the process of determining planning applications.</p> <p>We regret we are unable to comment, in detail, on individual Statements of Community Involvement but information on the planning service we offer, including advice on how to consult us, can be found at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/local-planning-authorities-get-environmental-advice</p> <p>We now ask that all planning consultations are sent electronically to the central hub for our planning and development advisory service at the following address: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk. This system enables us to deliver the most efficient and effective service to our customers.</p>	<p>The Council can confirm that the suggested contact email is included as a Development Management consultee and also on the planning policy consultation database.</p>	
5	1	Apethorpe Village Meeting	<p>The Draft Statement of Community Involvement document has been reviewed by the Officers of the Apethorpe Village Meeting and our Chairman has made the following observation on our behalf:</p> <p>In numerous places in the draft SCI, the requirement to consult with “Town and Parish Councils” is stated. This should also include Parish Meetings. North Northants is a rural area and many of the small parishes do not have a council. We request that the wording be amended to include Parish Meetings, for example: “Town and Parish Councils and Parish</p>	<p>Comments noted. Parish Meetings are consulted in the same way as Town and Parish Councils. The document will be amended to include “Parish Meetings” alongside Town and Parish Councils.</p>	<p>Amend table 1, paragraph 3.4 and paragraph 3.10 to include “parish meetings”</p>

			<p>Meetings”.</p> <p>Without this amendment, there is no stated requirement to consult with Parish Meetings, which is surely an oversight. We look forward to your response.</p>		
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 17</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>1</p> <p>Wilbarston Parish Council</p>	<p>Wilbarston Parish Council discussed the Draft Statement of Community Involvement at its meeting last Thursday.</p> <p>The Parish Council would like clarification as to when the 24 day period for consultation on a planning application starts from. The Parish Council could think of 3 possible options for instance the date of the letter, the date of the advert etc.</p>	<p>Consultation on a planning application begins on the date that the application is published. In most cases the date of validation and publication will be the same, but legislation (Section 15 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015) requires the consultation period to commence from the date of publishing the planning application, which will include publishing on the Council's website, erecting a site notice and notifying consultees. The date by which comments must be submitted to the Council will be included on the site notice and other information notifying of the application and commencement of consultation.</p>	<p>Amend first sentence of paragraph 3.8 to read:</p> <p>“The normal period for consultation on a planning application is 24 days <u>from publication.</u>”</p>

7	1	Wellingborough Civic Society	<p>I am in receipt of your email dated 17 December on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI), which has been published by NNC and is currently out for consultation.</p> <p>Wellingborough Civic Society is pleased to provide the following general and specific observations, and concluding comments:</p> <p>GENERAL OBSERVATIONS</p> <p>We feel it is positive that consultation practices are being updated and the draft SCI is concise, appears pragmatic and is written in relatively Plain English. In speaking with Civic Voice, which is the national charity for the Civic Movement, we understand that the draft, in parts, goes further than the statutory minimum standards.</p> <p>We do wonder however whether more visuality can be provided in the document, and believe that it could benefit from additional diagrams, tables/flowcharts to improve the accessibility of the information for people who are unfamiliar with the planning system.</p>	<p>General support for the document is noted.</p> <p>The SCI has been prepared in accordance with accessibility standards, which recommend only using visual aids where absolutely necessary. Figures 1 and 2 within the SCI show plan making and the process of local plan preparation and consultation in visual form. Table 1 sets out the specific and general consultation bodies in table form and figure 3 shows the neighbourhood plan process in a flow diagram. These visual aids are felt to be sufficient to assist the reader, whilst meeting the required accessibility standards.</p>	None.
7	2	Wellingborough Civic Society	<p>SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS</p> <p><u>Section 2</u></p> <p>Para 2.9 - we would wish to check that Wellingborough Civic Society is clearly listed on your consultee database?</p> <p>Para 2.13 - in Table 1 we would request that Wellingborough Civic Society, or at least a reference to civic societies, is added to the table as a general consultee.</p> <p>Para 2.16 - we feel it would be beneficial if the "hard to reach" groups are clearly identified. This would then help determine how best to engage such groups</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p> <p>Wellingborough Civic Society has been added to the Council's planning policy consultation database.</p> <p>Civic societies will be added to the list of general consultation bodies within table 1.</p> <p>The document will include examples of 'hard to reach' groups.</p> <p>It is not considered necessary to repeat Planning Practice Guidance within the SCI.</p> <p>For clarification, paragraph 3.10 will be amended to read:</p>	<p>Consultee details have been added to the planning policy consultation database.</p> <p>Insert "civic societies" within table 1.</p> <p>Insert the following text at paragraph 2.16:</p>

			<p>in planning.</p> <p><u>Section 3</u></p> <p>In line with the Consultation and Pre-Decision matters section of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance, particularly Paragraph:001, which describes the four main types of planning consultation - we would request that Wellingborough Civic Society is added to the SCI as a non-statutory consultee. We would also suggest that the SCI also refers to the main types of planning consultation to align with the national guidance.</p> <p>Para 3.10 - we request that Wellingborough Civic Society is included alongside town/parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups.</p>	<p>“Where a proposal/application is deemed to be significant by the planning authority by virtue of being large in scale or otherwise locally significant (see below), developers/applicants will be expected to undertake community engagement and involvement in drawing up their proposals. This will include, <u>but is not limited to</u>, town and parish councils, <u>parish meetings</u> and any neighbourhood planning group. Developers/applicants will need to submit a ‘Statement of Local Engagement’ showing how they have engaged the community in their proposals and how it has changed as a consequence.”</p>	<p>“Hard to reach groups include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth • Elderly • Disabled • BME • Isolated / rural communities • Faith groups • Gypsies & travellers • Non-registered local organisations.” <p>Amend part of paragraph 3.10 to read:</p> <p>“This will include, <u>but is not limited to</u>, town and parish councils, <u>parish meetings</u> and any neighbourhood planning group.”</p>
7	3	Wellingborough Civic Society	<p>CONCLUDING COMMENTS</p> <p>Once the document is finalised we believe it very important that the SCI is clearly labelled on the website and easy to locate. This will ensure that the information is widely promoted.</p> <p>Wellingborough Civic Society looks forward to continuing a constructive working relationship with the new Council, and in that light would be very happy to receiving feedback on any of our recent planning</p>	<p>The adopted SCI will be available on the planning policy pages of the Council's website and in hard copy at the main Council offices.</p>	<p>None.</p>

			<p>application responses.</p> <p>We look forward to your reply on our response to the SCI consultation document in due course.</p>		
8	1	Sudborough Parish Council	<p>Introduction</p> <p>North Northamptonshire Council have sought comments on their draft Statement of Community Involvement. This sets out the Council's suggestions about how they will make local people and organisations aware of their proposed future planning policies and development plans, give them a fair opportunity to comment on those proposed policies and plans and then take account of those comments. Likewise, the Statement of Community Involvement sets out the Council's suggestions about how they will make local people and organisations aware of planning applications which have been submitted, give them a fair opportunity to comment on those applications and then take account of those comments.</p>	Noted.	None.
8	2	Sudborough Parish Council	<p>Response</p> <p>General Comments</p> <p>Whatever methods NNC might use to engage with local individuals or communities about planning proposals or planning applications, their planning officers should at all times strive to do so in plain English – avoiding technical jargon as far as possible. For example, instead of saying that an area of land is proposed to be 'designated for employment use', they could say it is proposed to earmark the area for the construction of factories/warehouses/offices (whichever is applicable). Where the use of technical language is unavoidable, an explanation in plain English could be given, or a glossary provided, to make it easier for lay people to understand what is being said.</p> <p>There needs to be a vast improvement in the way in which the ordinary person can gain access to online planning applications and comment on them. One area that particularly requires review is the layout of</p>	<p>Noted. The Council endeavours to use plain English wherever possible or include a glossary within documents where technical jargon is unavoidable.</p> <p>Following unitary reorganisation, the Council's website is undergoing transformation, which will improve consistency and access to planning applications via the Planning Portal.</p>	None.

			<p>planning application pages on the Council's website. The way in which documents are uploaded to the website should be more consistent and greater care should be taken over the way in which documents are described as they are being uploaded.</p>		
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 21</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>3 Sudborough Parish Council</p>	<p>Specific comments Para 2.7 The Council have rightly identified that one of their biggest challenges is making ordinary people aware of what is in the Council's proposed Local Plans (including updated Local Plans). They say there will be increased usage of social media to inform the public about each stage of the consultation process. This is very welcome but more information about the Council's intended social media strategy would be helpful. There needs to be some re-assurance that enough use – in terms of frequency and range - will be made of the various available forms of social media, and of the different available platforms, to enable the Council to reach and engage with the types of people who are unlikely to be reached through more traditional forms of communication.</p> <p>The suggestion that planning officers should attend relevant town and parish council meetings to talk about relevant planning proposals is also welcome.</p>	<p>Support for increased use of social media is noted. Paragraph 2.7 of the SCI states that the most appropriate method of consultation will be used for the different stages of the plan-making process. The SCI also recognises the relevance of electronic communication methods to inform the public about the stages of the consultation process, including social media; which will be carried out in consultation with the Council's Communications team.</p> <p>Furthermore, all Council related consultation and engagement activities are published on the Council's dedicated Consultation Hub. Reference to the Consultation Hub will be included in the SCI.</p>	<p>Insert reference and link to the "Consultation Hub" at paragraph 2.21.</p>

8	4	Sudborough Parish Council	<p>Para 2.9 The Council's willingness to target communities that are likely to be adversely affected by proposed land allocations in their neighbourhood, when Local Plans are being made or reviewed, is also welcome. They say: <i>"In addition to information being made available through the methods mentioned above [i.e. by email to those on the Council's database; via the Council's website; by press release and through social media], the Council will make provision for engaging with the specific communities that could be affected by such an allocation. This could be done through a variety of methods which will be tailored to specific circumstances. Other than this, unless you are included on the consultation database, you will not be notified or consulted directly, and will need to refer to the Council's website and the local press, or [to] other organisations that might promote this such as parish councils, for information about plan consultations."</i></p> <p>It would be helpful if NNC were to set out in this paragraph some practical examples of alternative or additional ways in which they would or could engage with communities that might be affected by proposed land allocations, whether for housing or commercial development purposes.</p>	<p>Paragraph 2.9 explains that engaging with specific communities could be done by a variety of methods that will be tailored to specific circumstances. There is a wealth of best practice on engaging with local communities; therefore, it is not considered necessary to list specific methods within the SCI when these will need to reflect specific circumstances.</p>	None.
8	5	Sudborough Parish Council	<p>Para 2.16 The Council are making a more general commitment to ensure that when they consult with local people on planning policy issues, they will take additional steps to engage with so-called 'hard-to-reach' individuals in the community. This is understood to be a reference to people who, for example, don't have access to computers or who don't read or understand English. The Council says that they will <i>"... try to directly liaise with these 'hard-to-reach' groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that take account of their particular needs."</i> Again, however, it would be helpful if the Council would set out in this paragraph some practical examples of such 'targeted engagement' and of such 'specific techniques'.</p>	<p>Paragraph 2.16 explains that liaising with 'hard to reach' groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques will take account of their particular needs; therefore it is not considered necessary to list specific methods within the SCI that will need to reflect specific circumstances.</p> <p>For clarity, the document will include examples of 'hard to reach' groups.</p>	<p>Insert the following text at paragraph 2.16:</p> <p>"Hard to reach groups include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth • Elderly • Disabled • BME • Isolated / rural communities • Faith groups

					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gypsies & travellers • Non-registered local organisations.”
8	6	Sudborough Parish Council	<p>Para 3.4</p> <p>The Council says that when it comes to publicising planning applications, neighbouring parish and town councils are statutory consultees and have to be consulted. However, it isn't explained exactly how this works in practice – particularly with applications for large developments. How does the Council decide which town and/or parish councils, if any, should be notified other than the town or parish council for the area in which the application site is located? Our recent experience with one former Borough Council is that they did not cast their net widely enough. In particular, insufficient thought was given to which towns or parishes situated away from the proposed development would or might nevertheless be adversely affected by it as a result of, for example, significantly increased traffic levels or a raised risk of rivers flooding.</p>	<p>Paragraph 3.4 states “Other consultees depend on the application and may include immediate and not so immediate neighbours to the proposed development”. In practice the Development Management case officer will make a judgement on the extent of consultation and engagement having regard to the characteristics of the application and its conformity with national and local planning policy.</p> <p>The final sentence of paragraph 3.4 will be amended for clarity to read: “Others <u>could be directly impacted by consultees depend on</u> the application and may include immediate and not so immediate neighbours <u>and parish councils</u> to the proposed development, <u>and in those cases they will also be consulted as appropriate.</u>”</p>	<p>Amend final sentence of paragraph 3.4 to read:</p> <p>“Others <u>could be directly impacted by consultees depend on</u> the application and may include immediate and not so immediate neighbours <u>and parish councils</u> to the proposed development, <u>and in those cases they will also be consulted as appropriate.</u>”</p>
8	7	Sudborough Parish Council	<p>Para 3.5</p> <p>This is the section of the document dealing with how the Council will publicise planning applications. They say: “<i>We will listen to what people have to say but will make clear in publicity that only representations relating to material planning considerations will be taken into account in reaching a decision. Matters such as loss of a private view, or the character or motivations of the applicant (as examples) are not material planning considerations and, consequently, cannot be considered in determining an application.</i>”</p> <p>This wording could be seen as being designed to discourage objections to planning applications. It</p>	<p>National Planning Practice Guidance (Paragraphs: 008 and 009 Reference ID: 21b-008-20140306 and 21b-009-20140306) offer further guidance of what constitutes a material planning consideration and the weight that can be attached to these. It is not considered necessary to repeat national planning guidance within the SCI.</p> <p>Paragraphs 3.17-20 explain how responses to planning applications will be considered in determining a planning application, including whether the application will be determined by a case officer under delegated authority or by a planning</p>	None.

			<p>would be helpful (and provide more balance) if the Council were to give some practical examples in the paragraph of things which generally are considered to be material planning considerations. It would also be helpful to provide an objective explanation of who, in any particular planning application, will actually decide what is, and what is not, a material planning consideration and what weight should be attached to those considerations which are found to be material. People might be surprised to learn that these are matters which are ultimately decided by whoever is determining the planning application (i.e. by councillors on planning committees or, as the case may be, by Council planning officers) and are generally not susceptible to appeal.</p>	<p>committee. The information provided is considered to be sufficiently clear.</p>	
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 24</p>	<p>8</p>	<p>8 Sudborough Parish Council</p>	<p>Para 3.7 The Council say: "<i>When an application has been submitted, consultation can take many forms.... Comments received will help the Council to be responsive to the needs of stakeholders and improve the quality of development.</i>"</p> <p>This is an over-simplification of the purpose of consultation and arguably gives the impression, intentionally or otherwise, that the Council's expectation is that planning applications will be granted as a matter of course but that as a result of the consultation exercise, additional conditions (and/or a s106 agreement) may be attached to the grant of planning permission in order to cater for the 'needs' of local people and to improve the quality of the build. This section of the text should at the very least be expanded to make it clear that one of the purposes of consulting on a planning application is to help the Council to decide whether or not the application should be granted.</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework requires development plans and planning decisions to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. For decision-making this means approving proposals for development unless they conflict with the development plan or material planning considerations indicate otherwise.</p> <p>Consultation offers the opportunity for individuals and organisations to inform the Council of material issues for consideration in determining development proposals, but also to help shape the proposals if permitted. Paragraphs 3.17-20 explain how responses to planning applications will be considered in determining a planning application, which is considered to be sufficiently clear.</p>	<p>None.</p>

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Sudborough Parish Council

Para 3.8

The Council say: “*The normal period for consultation on a planning application is 24 days.*” However, they don’t make clear whether this is calendar days or working days. Nor do they explain from what date or event the period of 24 days begins to run. Also, it would be helpful to know when some period other than the “normal” period of 24 days would or might apply.

Later in the paragraph the Council say: “*Any subsequent consultations on changes to the application may be shorter than the 24 days and are at the discretion of the Council.*” It would be helpful if there was clarification here about (a) what type(s) of changes to a planning application would trigger a further or subsequent consultation, (b) the circumstances in which such subsequent consultations would be for less than 24 days and (c) whether the Council’s discretion is limited to the length of such subsequent consultations or also extends to whether in any particular situation to hold a subsequent consultation.

Consultation on a planning application begins on the date that the application is published. The period of consultation relates to calendar days and will be specified in the text.

Where a consultation is not for the normal period of 24 days, this will be clearly set out within the information notifying of the application and commencement of consultation.

Similarly, where subsequent consultations take place that are shorter than 24 days, this will be clearly communicated within the information notifying of the application and commencement of subsequent consultation.

Amend first sentence of paragraph 3.8 to read:

“The normal period for consultation on a planning application is 24 calendar days from publication.”

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Sudborough Parish Council

Para 3.17

The Council say that although some planning applications are determined by planning officers under delegated powers, more significant applications are usually determined by a planning committee. Two points require clarification here. First, with any particular application, how in practice is it decided whether the application is suitable for determination by a planning officer? Second, as the Council has two types of planning committee, how is it decided which applications should be determined by the strategic planning committee and which by the local area planning committee?

The Council’s Scheme of Delegation, as referred to in paragraph 3.17, is included within the Constitution on the Council’s website. A link will be inserted within the SCI at paragraph 3.17.

Insert link to Scheme of Delegation¹ at paragraph 3.17.

¹ [North Northamptonshire Council Constitution](#)

8	11	Sudborough Parish Council	<p>Para 3.18 This paragraph deals with planning committee meetings and, given the current very restrictive arrangements in the NNC Constitution for public participation at planning committee meetings, it is perhaps surprising to read the following statement by the Council: “<i>Members of the public can attend committee meetings and those who wish to speak in relation to an application will normally be given the opportunity to do so – the process for this will be set out in the notification letter/email.</i>” Hopefully this is an encouraging sign of how it is intended to improve the arrangements for public participation in planning meetings when this part of the Council’s constitution is reviewed.</p>	Noted.	None.
8	12	Sudborough Parish Council	<p>Para 3.20 The Council say: “<i>Generally comments made on a planning application by statutory consultees will be published on the Council’s websites as will any comments made by members of the public with personal details redacted for data protection purposes.</i>” It would be helpful if the Council could explain the use of the word “generally” here. In what circumstances would comments made by either a statutory consultee or a member of the public not be published? Our experience is that although the initial responses of statutory consultees are invariably uploaded to the relevant page on the Council’s website, follow-up responses and other relevant written communications between the planning officers and the consultees are frequently not uploaded. Likewise, whether consultation responses from members of the public are, or are not, uploaded to the relevant page on the Council’s website can sometimes be rather hit or miss. It is noted that “<i>due to IT capabilities the ability to upload comments to the website will not be available in relation to planning applications being dealt with by some of the North Northamptonshire area planning offices.</i>” However, that state of affairs is unacceptable and must be remedied without delay.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Paragraph 3.20 explains that generally comments made by statutory consultees and members of the public will be published on the Council’s website; however, there are instances where this may not be possible due to IT limitations. Where this is the case, interested parties will be able to request to see comments made on individual planning applications by discussing with the relevant case officer and area planning office.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.20 will be amended for clarity, to read: “Generally comments made on a planning application by statutory consultees will be published on the council’s websites as will any comments made by members of the public with personal details redacted for data protection purposes. However, it should be noted that due to IT capabilities the ability to upload comments to the website will not be available in relation to <u>planning minerals and waste</u> applications. <u>being dealt with by some of the North Northamptonshire area planning offices.</u> Where comments are available to view on the website this will be until a decision on the application has been made. <u>Comments can be made available upon request to the case officer or area planning office handling the planning application.</u>”</p>	<p>Amend paragraph 3.20 to read:</p> <p>“However, it should be noted that due to IT capabilities the ability to upload comments to the website will not be available in relation to <u>planning minerals and waste</u> applications. <u>being dealt with by some of the North Northamptonshire area planning offices.</u> Where comments are available to view on the website this will be until a decision on the</p>

			<p>The final sentence of this paragraph (“<i>Where comments are available to view on the website this will be until a decision on the application has been made</i>”) does not match up with our experience which is that once comments on a planning application have been uploaded, they remain on the website even after a decision on the application has been made. Does this sentence need to be re-phrased?</p>	<p>Comments relating to the final sentence of paragraph 3.20 are noted. This sentence will be deleted.</p>	<p>application has been made. <u>Comments can be made available upon request to the case officer or area planning office handling the planning application.</u></p>
9	1	Braybrooke Parish Council	<p>This is a response to the consultation on the Statement of Community Consultation.</p> <p>The elephant in the room, in this policy statement, is the transition to Unitary Status. That will mean, inevitably as the Unitary organisation is increasingly rationalised and centralised, an increasing distance from the communities that the council serves and reduced local knowledge amongst the planners. It is happening already because staff shortages have reduced the amount of communication between planners and parish councils.</p> <p>So one would expect the statement of consultation to change in some way to recognise a need for more cooperation with the Town and Parish Councils who, unlike the other consultation bodies, are not lobbying for a particular interest or topic but relate to their communities across the board and can draw on local knowledge. The Town and Parish Councils are in a position to help the work of planners and promote it with their communities, or to dispute and oppose it, depending on whether the relationship is a positive one.</p>	<p>Comments noted. The Council recognises the importance of engaging parish/town councils and neighbourhood planning groups in plan making and planning decisions.</p> <p>Table 1 includes parish councils within the list of specific consultation bodies to be consulted in the plan making process and parish and town councils are identified as statutory consultees when publicising planning applications. Table 1 will be updated to also include town councils as a specific consultation body.</p> <p>The SCI aims to build on existing relationships with parish and town councils and encourages early engagement through plan making and when involving local communities in the planning application process.</p>	<p>Insert “town councils” within table 1.</p>

9	2	Braybrooke Parish Council	<p>That being so, it is surprising that Table 1 of the draft, under the heading General Consultation Bodies, refers to residents groups and to Neighbourhood Planning Groups and Forums but not to Town and Parish Councils. I note that NNC's Consultation and Engagement Framework 2021, at para 5.6, says "In addition, we will ensure that Town and Parish Councils are informed and involved in decisions affecting their local area". I would have hoped that the SCI would contain a statement at least as strong as that - preferably stronger. And it should not be impliedly confined to those issues on which the T&PCs must be consulted by regulation.</p>	<p>Table 1 includes parish councils within the list of specific consultation bodies to be consulted in the plan making process and parish and town councils are identified as statutory consultees when publicising planning applications. Table 1 will be updated to also include town councils as a specific consultation body.</p>	<p>Insert "town councils" within table 1.</p>
9	3	Braybrooke Parish Council	<p>Picking up that latter point, section 3 strongly implies that consultations will be confined to those required by regulation. I suggest that Town and Parish Councils should be consulted or at least informed, either formally or informally, on all matters affecting their parish, including on applications where formal consultation is not required. These include applications for work on trees in conservation areas; applications for certificates of permitted development; applications in closely neighbouring locations etc etc. These are all matters in which local knowledge may be relevant. What is more, the relationship created by a pattern of informal consultation can have wider advantages.</p> <p>I make this latter point because there are recent indications of planning officers confining their consultation strictly to "what they are required to do". This is an understandable reaction to time pressures, but adding an address to an email is not onerous.</p>	<p>Comments noted. Paragraph 3.3 explains that many permitted development works do not require an application to the Council, and as a result no consultation is undertaken.</p> <p>Paragraph 3.6 explains that the minimum scale and type of consultation required on planning applications will relate to the impact of the proposal and is set by regulation. The SCI does, however, encourage applicants to discuss proposals with occupiers and owners of neighbouring land and properties before submitting an application to provide an early opportunity to address concerns and help to reduce delays in determining applications.</p> <p>In particular for 'significant' developments the Council encourages developers and applicants to involve the community at the earliest opportunity.</p>	<p>None.</p>

10	1	Historic England	<p>North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement Consultation draft</p> <p>Thank you for consulting Historic England on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for North Northamptonshire. As the Government's adviser on the historic environment Historic England is keen to ensure that the protection of the historic environment is fully taken into account at all stages and levels of the local planning process.</p> <p>We support the general aims and approach to the draft Statement of Community Involvement. We welcome the acknowledgement of Historic England as a statutory consultee with respect to Local Plans in Table 1, paragraph 2.13.</p>	Support noted.	None.
10	2	Historic England	<p>With regards to neighbourhood planning, we would welcome notification of proposed neighbourhood planning areas as well as consultation on draft plans. The regulations state that Historic England should be consulted on draft plans where our interests are considered to be affected. We have guidance on neighbourhood planning, which can be found at: https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/planning/plan-making/improve-yourneighbourhood/</p> <p>Reference to the appropriate consultation bodies, which includes Historic England as it is now known, as set out in Schedule 1 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 is welcomed.</p> <p>We would welcome consultation at an informal level, in addition to the requirements of the legislation, where issues may benefit from our early involvement. We hope that the above comments are of assistance. If you would like any clarification or would like to discuss the above please do not hesitate to contact me.</p>	Noted. The Council will continue to consult Historic England as an appropriate consultation body.	None.

11	1	Higham Ferrers Town Council	<p>The Council considered the consultation at their meeting last night and agreed the following response:-</p> <p><i>That the Council have no comments to make on the body of the document, but are disappointed at the timing of the consultation which started on 17th December, just before a major holiday period. Timing of consultations needs to be considered as part of the process.</i></p>	<p>Noted. There is no requirement in legislation for the Council to consult when reviewing or updating the SCI; however, consultation was undertaken to keep the local community informed and involved.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.18 explains that all consultation will meet statutory requirements; however, these will be extended to take account of key holiday periods.</p>	None.
12	1	Environment Agency – Lincolnshire and Northamptonshire Area	<p>Thank you for consulting us on the Draft Statement of Community Involvement.</p> <p>We are pleased that we are identified within Table 1 as a specific consultation body. Within the general consultation bodies: Who this means, the SoCI may want to include Risk Management Authorities to encompass all those who are responsible for managing flood risk and also those not specifically identified such as reservoir undertakers.</p> <p>Should you wish to discuss my comments please contact me using the details below.</p>	<p>Noted. Further discussions have taken place with the Environment Agency and table 1 will be updated to include Lead Local Flood Authorities.</p>	Insert “Lead Local Flood Authorities” within table 1.
13	1	Civic Voice	<p>RE: North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement – consultation draft (December 2021)</p> <p>Civic Voice is the national charity for the civic movement. We are campaigning for a more accessible, balanced, collaborative, and democratic system, as set out in our Manifesto 2020-23. Since we set up in 2010, we have been joined by hundreds of volunteer-led, community based civic societies with over 76,000 individual members.</p> <p>Civic societies exist in over 70% of local authority areas and are some of the most numerous participants in the planning system. They seek to improve the quality of the built, historic, and natural environment in the places where we live, for the benefit of all.</p>	Noted.	None.

			<p>Civic Voice has been alerted to your consultation by one of our members, Wellingborough Civic Society. We offer the following comments on your draft Statement of Community of Involvement (SCI) in the spirit of helpfulness and recommend that they be incorporated into your final SCI.</p> <p>You may also be interested to read our recent research into SCIs nationally, which was undertaken by the University of Reading: ‘Paper Tigers: A Critical Review of Statements of Community Involvement in England’ (2021), to see how your draft SCI compares nationally.</p>		
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 31</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>2 Civic Voice</p>	<p>General comments</p> <p>Overall, Civic Voice welcomes the draft SCI and the opportunity to comment. We are pleased to see you consult with Wellingborough Civic Society for feedback on the draft SCI. It is also positive that your new unitary authority is updating its consultation practices, following significant local administrative change.</p> <p>In our view, the draft SCI is concise, written in Plain English and pragmatic. Civic Voice particularly welcomes North Northamptonshire Council’s aims to go further than the statutory minimum standards for consultation, particularly in section 3.0 Consultation on Development Proposals and Planning Applications regarding additional community engagement for ‘significant developments’.</p> <p>However, Civic Voice recommends the following changes to improve the SCI and wider community engagement on planning matters, particularly for civic societies.</p> <p>Whilst the draft SCI is written in Plain English, it is not very visual and would benefit from additional diagrams, tables, or flowcharts to improve the</p>	<p>Support for the document is noted.</p> <p>The SCI has been prepared in accordance with accessibility standards, which recommend only using visual aids where absolutely necessary. Figures 1 and 2 within the SCI show plan making and the process of local plan preparation and consultation in visual form. Table 1 sets out the specific and general consultation bodies in table form and figure 3 shows the neighbourhood plan process in a flow diagram. These visual aids are felt to be sufficient to assist the reader, whilst meeting the required accessibility standards.</p> <p>The document will include examples of ‘hard to reach’ groups.</p>	<p>Insert the following text at paragraph 2.16:</p> <p>“Hard to reach groups include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth • Elderly • Disabled • BME • Isolated / rural communities • Faith groups • Gypsies & travellers • Non-registered local organisations.”

			<p>accessibility of the information for people who are unfamiliar with the planning system.</p> <p>Civic Voice welcomes that North Northamptonshire Council aims to directly liaise with 'hard to reach' groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that takes account of their needs (Para. 2.16). However, we would advise that you need to explain who the 'hard to reach' groups are in North Northamptonshire that you are seeking to engage. This will help determine how best to engage such groups of people in planning.</p>		
13	3	Civic Voice	<p>Engagement with civic societies</p> <p>There are two Civic Voice member societies within your area, Wellingborough Civic Society and Desborough Civic Society.</p> <p>Civic Voice recommends that the Council specifically names civic societies within your area as consultees on planning matters.</p> <p>Other local authorities have named civic societies in their SCIs. We draw your attention to Blackpool Civic Trust, Bollington Civic Society, Epsom Civic Society, Harlow Civic Society and Isleworth Society for information.</p> <p>The specifics of which planning matters individual civic societies wish to engage on can be agreed locally. For example, we know that Wellingborough Civic Society is open to a conversation with Council officers to discuss this further.</p> <p>We would also draw your attention to the Consultation and pre-decision matters section of the Government's Planning Practice Guidance, particularly Paragraph: 001, which describes the four main types of planning consultation. Civic Voice recommends that North Northamptonshire Council adds civic societies to the SCI as a non-statutory</p>	<p>Noted. Civic societies will be added to the list of general consultation bodies within table 1.</p> <p>It is not considered necessary to repeat national guidance within the SCI.</p>	<p>Insert "civic societies" within table 1.</p>

			<p>consultee, as per this guidance. We also recommend that the Council refers to the main types of planning consultation e.g. non-statutory consultees in the SCI, particularly in section 3.0, to align with national guidance.</p>		
13	4	Civic Voice	<p>Turning to specific sections of the draft SCI:</p> <p>2.0 Consultation on North Northamptonshire's Plans</p> <p>Table 1 – We recommend that Wellingborough Civic Society and Desborough Civic Society (or as a minimum, civic societies) are added to this table as general consultees.</p>	Noted. Civic societies will be added to the list of general consultation bodies within table 1.	Insert “civic societies” within table 1.
13	5	Civic Voice	<p>3.0 Consultation on Development Proposals and Planning Applications</p> <p>Civic Voice welcomes North Northamptonshire Council defining circumstances where additional community engagement is required – ‘large-scale developments’ or ‘locally significant developments’. This is positive and goes above minimum standards.</p> <p>In Para. 3.10 we recommend that ‘civic societies’ is included (alongside town and parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups). In Para. 3.16, please note that many civic societies welcome being involved in pre-application discussions and local authorities often direct developers to the local civic society for advice, guidance and help with wider consultation with the community. This may be something the civic societies in your area may welcome, we’d advise that you speak with them directly to discuss.</p> <p>We hope that this consultation response is helpful as you work towards finalising the North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement. If Civic Voice can help with additional advice on community engagement or you wish to</p>	<p>Support for additional community engagement is noted.</p> <p>The requirement to consult parish/town councils and neighbourhood planning groups accords with the legislation. Paragraph 3.16 of the SCI explains that community involvement will relate to the scale and likely impact of the development and to the target audience, therefore a proportionate and pragmatic approach will be taken on a case-by-case basis.</p>	None.

			discuss our response further, do not hesitate to contact me on the above details.		
14	1	STAUNCH (Save Titchmarsh and Upper Nene Valley Countryside and Habitats)	<p>STAUNCH welcomes this new Statement of Community Involvement, and the consultation that the council has launched on it.</p> <p>We have the following comments on the proposals:</p> <p>1. The document sets out in some detail how consultation on local plans will be conducted. We welcome the commitment to helping parishes and other communities to develop neighbourhood plans, and the offer of help to seek funding for the process. However, it would be good to insert some more flexibility into the process for examining higher-level Local Plans.</p> <p>There are often cases where, for good reasons, a parish council (or other consultees) will not comment in early rounds of public consultation on local plans, simply because there are no major changes proposed to site allocations, or policies, that will effect the immediate area. However, if a developer then seeks to alter the local plan to accommodate a new development, it does not seem reasonable to deny the local parish council, or another consultee, a seat at the table (or the right to appear at the public enquiry) simply because they did not comment before.</p> <p>We hope the SCI can be adjusted to say that discretion, and common sense, will be applied, to allow such bodies to make representations on local plans which have changed during the consultation process, even if they did not comment initially. There is a specific issue here in Titchmarsh, with a large proposal for warehousing on a greenfield site that was not allocated for development in the first draft of the local plan, which a developer is now seeking to change to allow development there.</p>	The Council welcomes comments from all parties at public consultation stages on an emerging Plan. Not commenting on a previous consultation does not preclude individuals or organisations from commenting at subsequent stages; however, in order to appear at the examination in public, which would be at the invitation of an independent Inspector, a consultee must have commented at the Publication (Regulation 19) stage and comments must relate exclusively to the soundness of the Plan.	None.

14	2	STAUNCH (Save Titchmarsh and Upper Nene Valley Countryside and Habitats)	<p>2. The document is silent on consultation on, or notifications about, “screening” applications for Environmental Impact Assessments or other similar regulations.</p> <p>In Titchmarsh, the parish council was recently not notified of a screening application for a large warehouse site, at which the developer was arguing that a full EIA was not necessary. The first that the parish council heard about the proposed huge development was by accident, not from North Northants council, after the application was spotted by an eagle-eyed villager who was trawling through the council's website and found the screening application.</p> <p>The council should insist on pre-consultation by developers with parishes before this sort of EIA application is made, or else tell villages and communities affected about the scale of proposed development if a developer refuses to do so. In all cases, the emphasis should be on developers, and if necessary, the council, to notify local communities of development proposals as soon as they are in the public domain, rather than just put details of EIA screening applications etc on the council's website without any notification. The SCI document rightly says that notification of planning applications is largely “a reactive process”, responding to applications as they come in. But more should be done to make it more of a proactive process, with developers required to do pre-application consultation before EIA screening applications for very large developments are submitted.</p>	<p>The National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance highlight the importance of considering environmental issues at the pre-application stage, which is encouraged within the SCI.</p> <p>At paragraph 3.10 the SCI explains that where a proposal is deemed to be significant by virtue of being large in scale or otherwise locally significant then developers or applicants will be expected to undertake community engagement and involvement in drawing up their proposals. This may include proposals requiring submission of an Environmental Impact Assessment.</p>	None
14	3	STAUNCH (Save Titchmarsh and Upper Nene Valley Countryside and Habitats)	<p>3. The Draft SCI says that, when planning applications come to committee for determination, “Members of the public can attend committee meetings and those who wish to speak in relation to an application will normally be given the opportunity to do so- the process for this will be set out in the notification letter/email.” We hope this means that</p>	<p>Any person can request to speak at planning committee meetings, these requests should be made through the Council's committee services team. Paragraph 3.16 explains that the process for this will be set out in the notification letter or email publicising the individual planning application.</p>	None.

			<p>more than one objector will be allowed to speak, as we aware of some disquiet over a recent planning application in the Kettering area (Weekley Hall Woods), on which the council only allowed one or two objectors to speak at the planning committee meeting when it was determined. We accept that a planning committee meeting is not the “be all and end all” of the planning process, and that is sometimes necessary to limit the number of speakers, and how long they can speak for, to avoid repetition and to ensure that meetings do not last too long. But giving local communities only a few minutes to speak on such huge developments before councillors vote on them is not good for public confidence in the planning process, and we hope the SCI can codify more clearly what the guidelines are, how time will be allocated if there are multiple speakers for and/or against applications, and what discretion the planning committee chair has.</p>		
Page 36	14	4 STAUNCH (Save Titchmarsh and Upper Nene Valley Countryside and Habitats)	<p>4. The document is also silent about consultation on how section 106 or Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money is spent. We hope that a new section can be added, setting out how local communities will be consulted on local needs, and what amelioration is required, if large developments in the locality are granted consent.</p>	<p>The SCI is not required to set out how developer contributions will be spent. The Council is required to publish annually an Infrastructure Funding Statement outlining matters relating to Section 106 monies and CIL where appropriate.</p>	None.
15	1	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>Section 1: CPC welcomes this attempt to harmonise the various former SCIs and the ethos of ensuring, in particular, that processes and communications concerning Planning Applications are brought up to a uniform, verifiable high standard. We urge all involved to take an honest, self-aware approach so that the outcome is the best of former practices and omits the, frankly, sometimes awful methods, practices and attitudes that have so often been our experience of Corby's Planning Department</p>	Noted.	None.

15	2	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>2.2 ... Neighbourhood Plans, when brought into force, become part of the statutory development plan for the area that they cover alongside any relevant local plans:</p> <p>CPC welcomes the inclusion of this explicit statement</p>	Support noted.	None.
15	3	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>2.8 and 2.9:</p> <p>CPC welcomes the attention to detail about proposed methods of informing, consulting and reporting in these two sub-sections. However, we feel they stop short of being a properly formed, coherent, proactive Communication Plan. They read more like a list of media and channels that NNC may or may not employ.</p>	<p>Paragraph 2.9 is clear in explaining that notifying those on the consultation database will form the main basis of communicating consultation information with interested parties relating to local plan preparation. Other measures are identified, which will be employed where considered necessary and effective.</p> <p>Paragraph 2.5 also explains that the Council may carry out more extensive measures than required by the regulations, depending on the nature, coverage and scope of the local plan.</p>	
15	4	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>2.20 ... A charge to cover costs may be made for other requests:</p> <p>It is extremely unfortunate that someone thought that such a statement has any place in a document whose principle aim is to engage, involve and motivate people.</p>	Noted.	None.
15	5	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>3.3 ... advisable to avoid unnecessary risk, expense and retrospective applications:</p> <p>Is it within the legal powers of NNC to do more to actively discourage, penalise or even ban, retrospective applications?</p>	The Council encourages developers and applicants to obtain advice from the Council in the first instance to avoid unnecessary risk, expense and retrospective applications; however, the Council is required to consider and determine a retrospective planning application as with any other planning application.	None.
15	6	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>3.4 ... There are a number of consultees, for example government bodies, neighbouring councils and parish and town councils, that are statutory consultees and have to be consulted:</p> <p>NNC Planning Officers and several NNC Councillors are no doubt already aware of the intense frustration and anger expressed by CPC and other Parish Councils at Corby Borough Council's, and now NNC's, appalling lack of proactivity in notification,</p>	Noted.	None.

			responding to queries and consulting generally on Planning Applications		
15	7	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>3.8 ... Statutory consultees should also respond within 24 days...:</p> <p>CPC feel that this sub-section, and others referencing this matter, inadequately address the legal obligations pertaining to NNC's consultation with Parish Councils. These obligations are largely set out in Article 25 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015, revised 2018. Putting the Act's requirements into the relevant context, the Legislation specifically requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NNC to notify CPC at least 21 days before NNC holds a decision-making hearing of any planning application pertaining to the parish of Cottingham • CPC to inform NNC of its intention to respond or otherwise within 21 days of receipt of notification • NNC not to determine any application in respect of which CPC is required to be given information before one of the following has occurred (whichever occurs first) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Either the CPC inform NNC that they do not propose to make any representations ○ Or representations are made by CPC ○ Or the period of 21 days explained above has elapsed • In determining the application NNC must take into account any representations received from CPC <p>We have recorded many examples of NNC failing to comply with these legal obligations. Hopefully this revised and harmonised SCI will ensure this stops happening.</p>	Comments noted. The Council will endeavour to meet the legal requirements as a minimum.	None.
15	8	Cottingham Parish Council	3.10 to 3.16:	Support noted.	None.

			CPC welcomes the clarity and detail around NNC's stipulations and process regarding Significant, Large Scale and Locally Significant Developments		
15	9	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>3.17 and 3.19:</p> <p>Of all the sections in the SCI draft, the most concerning for CPC is the prospect of any great use of delegated powers of decision to Officers. Perhaps when the well-publicised manpower resource shortage, and reliance on contracting officers passes, we may start to feel some confidence that Officers can be trusted to make sensible, well-reasoned decisions or advise Members about applications. We have a sad litany of local examples where Officer contact and communications with applicants and CPC alike could only be described as the antithesis of what this SCI document is trying to achieve.</p> <p>We should like to add, however, that our dealings with certain officers during the various stages of our Neighbourhood Plan have been very positive, collaborative and productive.</p>	<p>Noted. The Council's Scheme of Delegation, as referred to in paragraph 3.17, sets out when planning applications will be delegated and when they will be determined by committee. A link will be inserted within the SCI at paragraph 3.17 to the Scheme of Delegation which is include within the Council's Constitution.</p> <p>Positive neighbourhood planning experience is noted.</p>	Insert link to Scheme of Delegation ² at paragraph 3.17.
15	10	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>Section 4 and Appendix 1:</p> <p>CPC welcomes the thoroughness and weighting given to the processes and status of Neighbourhood Plans in the SCI, and NNC's clear commitment to their place in NNC's Planning strategies.</p>	Support in relation to neighbourhood plans is noted.	None.
15	11	Cottingham Parish Council	<p>And finally...</p> <p>For us the glaring omission in this SCI is any reference to Enforcement. This has become a major topic across the North Northants area and we earnestly urge you to include a section on it in the new version of SCI.</p>	The SCI is not required to detail matters relating to planning enforcement.	None.

² [North Northamptonshire Council Constitution](#)

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Statement of Community Involvement – post consultation draft (including track changes)

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Consultees

Internal	External
e.g. Individual(s) / Group / Section	e.g. Stakeholders / Partners / Organisation(s)
Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel	<u>Full public and stakeholder consultation between 17 December 2021 and 28 January 2022</u>

Distribution List

Internal	External
e.g. Individual(s) / Group / Section	e.g. Stakeholders / Partners / Organisation(s)

Links to other documents

Document	Link

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1.0 What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

1.1 The planning system touches the lives of everyone across North Northamptonshire. However, for many of us we come into contact with it only when we find out about a nearby planning application. What is often not known is that the planning application also has to fit into the wider plan for an area. However, what is always the case is that for any plans we produce and any planning applications that are submitted to us to determine, we need to consult and engage with people and organisations in making our decisions.

1.2 To help set out how we will go about this North Northamptonshire Council has prepared this Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). It is a requirement for the Council as planning authority to prepare a SCI. This Statement replaces the previous SCIs that covered the area. North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) is a new authority formed from the previous local authorities that served our part of Northamptonshire: Corby, East Northamptonshire, Kettering and Wellingborough District and Borough Councils and Northamptonshire County Council. As a unitary council it means that it is now the sole planning authority for the area. Although under the previous arrangements the four districts and boroughs and the former North Northamptonshire Joint Planning Committee had a combined SCI, the former county council had their own and there therefore needs to be a combined revised document.

1.3 This SCI for North Northamptonshire Council therefore covers all the consultations that will be undertaken in relation to any development plans we will prepare as well as for all planning applications that are submitted to us. It also sets out the advice and assistance that the Council will provide to communities in relation to Neighbourhood Plans and/or Neighbourhood Development Orders.

1.4 In undertaking consultation and engagement in relation to both plans and planning applications the Council will have regard to national planning and other legislation and guidance applicable (including any temporary emergency legislation/guidance that may over-ride or affect certain elements of the SCI and therefore should be read alongside the SCI) as well as the wider Council policies on consultation and engagement and to the following:

- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
- Human Rights Act
- Freedom of Information Act
- Equality Act

2.0 Consultation on North Northamptonshire's Plans

The local planning framework for North Northamptonshire

2.1 The planning framework for North Northamptonshire is set through its Local Plan which is comprised of a number of what are formally known as development plan documents, but which are more commonly known as local plans. These have all been through statutory processes and together they set out the spatial/land use strategy for North Northamptonshire. These documents prepared by the predecessor authorities to North Northamptonshire stay in force until policies within them are replaced. The Council also must produce a Local Development Scheme (LDS) that sets out the timetable for the revision, updating and replacement of policies in the various adopted plan documents. It should be noted that the documents that contain policies do not have to cover the whole of the North Northamptonshire area, they can provide coverage for parts of it (as appropriate) as a number of the currently adopted local plans already do; furthermore joint local plans covering North Northamptonshire and one or more other planning authority areas can also be produced and that is currently the case with minerals and waste policies which are shared with West Northamptonshire Council.

2.2 Along with the documents comprising the Local Plan there are a number of what are known as Neighbourhood Plans, prepared by town/parish councils and neighbourhood forums which are able to provide more targeted local policies for specific North Northamptonshire communities. Neighbourhood Plans, when brought into force, become part of the statutory development plan for the area that they cover alongside any relevant local plans.

2.3 North Northamptonshire's local plan documents are also supported by a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) that provide detailed guidance on various planning matters which explain and amplify the policies in them. Consultation on these documents is governed by separate regulations, but will be undertaken consistent with the methods set out in this SCI.

Figure 1: Plan Making in North Northamptonshire



The plan preparation process

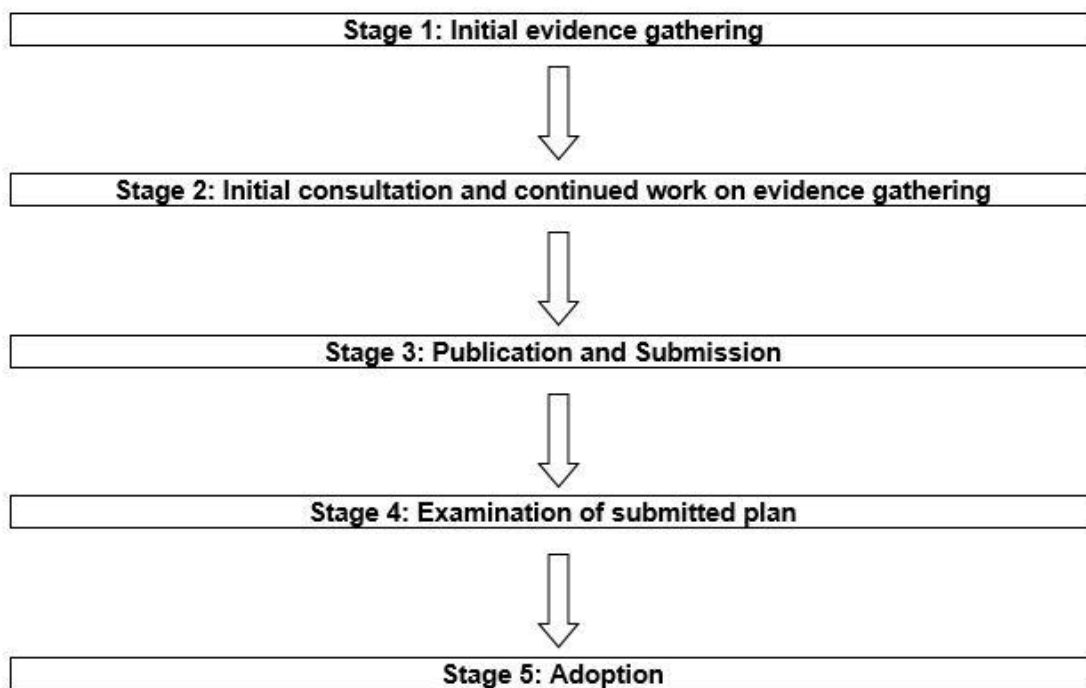
2.4 Local plans are prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance states that there is considerable flexibility for local planning authorities in how they carry out the initial stages of local plan production, provided they comply with the specific requirements in regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2012 on consultation. This includes notifying consultation bodies/persons of the subject of the proposed local plan and inviting them to make representations to the local planning authority

5 | North Northamptonshire Council – Statement of Community Involvement – [post](#) consultation draft [\(including track changes\)](#)

about what the local plan should contain. However, the latter stages are more formally guided by regulations in that local planning authorities must make available each of the proposed submission documents that they intend to submit to the Planning Inspectorate for examination to enable representations to come forward that can be considered at examination. Figure 2 below shows key stages in the preparation of individual local plans.

2.5 When preparing local plans, planning authorities may carry out more extensive consultation than required by the regulations to ensure that on-going feedback can be obtained during the development of the local plan. In the case of North Northamptonshire, the use of greater consultation and engagement will depend on the nature, coverage and scope of the respective local plan.

Figure 2: Process of local plan preparation and consultation



2.6 A key aim of consultation and engagement is to attempt to build consensus for the way forward in relation to development and to conform to government requirements on the duty to co-operate (see paragraph 2.14). Whilst it is accepted that full consensus may not be possible, greater understanding may help minimise conflict in plan preparation and in the determination of planning applications.

2.7 The most appropriate method of consultation will be used for the different stages of the plan-making process. Electronic communication and online representations will be used as widely as possible as well as increased usage of social media to inform the public about each stage of the consultation process. It will be particularly important to keep the public and other stakeholders informed about the initial stages of the local plan process including evidence gathering and survey work. As much information as possible will be made available on the North Northamptonshire Council website, including seeking to publish documents forming part of the evidence base when they are completed rather than waiting for specific consultation stages. The Local Development Scheme (LDS), which programmes when the various plans that make up the wider development plan will be prepared and updated as necessary- is also published on the council website. It is recognised that 'hard to reach groups' may not have access to a computer; in such cases a hard copy of the documents can be made available, and letters will be sent to inform on consultation stages and that written representations will still be accepted. Where appropriate, press releases will be issued to seek local publicity. Where a plan directly affects a particular community planning officers may attend meetings of the relevant town and parish councils. Due to limited resources forums and combined meetings will be preferred where plans affect a number of communities.

Who will be consulted on local plans?

2.8 The councils that have come together to create North Northamptonshire Council have a long history of engagement with local residents, parish and town councils, businesses, stakeholders, community groups, voluntary organisations and others in preparing local plans.

2.9 In part due to these previous engagement exercises the council has an extensive consultation database. Anyone can be added to this in order to receive information about consultation documents. Notification of those on the consultation database will form the main basis of communicating consultation information with interested parties in relation to relevant local plans that are being prepared. The Council will also use its website and other measures such as local media to promote engagement and consultation. With regard to emphasis on early engagement with communities, it is increasingly important to ensure that the public are made aware of issues that can arise within the early stages of the plan making process, such as potential local plan allocation sites. In addition to information being made available through the methods mentioned above, the Council will make provision for engaging with the specific communities that could be affected by such an allocation. This could be done through a variety of methods which will be tailored to specific circumstances. Other than this unless you are included on the consultation database, you will not be notified or consulted directly, and will need to refer to the Council's web-site and the local press, or for other organisations that may promote this such as parish councils, for information about plan consultations. To request inclusion on the database, please contact us on planningpolicy@northnorthants.gov.uk.

2.10 The 2018 Data Protection Act¹ comprehensively updated legislation with regards to the handing and treatment of personal data. This, and associated secondary legislation (Data Protection Regulations 2018), have implications for public consultations, for both planning applications and the development plan. Consultations and the management of consultee databases must be undertaken in accordance with the requirements of this legislation.

2.11 If you have provided comments in response to a plan consultation you will normally be added to the consultation database and, unless you have requested not to be included, will remain on that database until the plan you responded to has been adopted. From time to time the Council will review its database and contact you by email or post to find out if you would like to remain on it. As of May 2018, it was made a lawful requirement through new General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) for councils to gain consent from those on consultation databases to continue holding their personal information. The Council has a privacy statement which sets out how personal data will be held and used.

2.12 Consultation with certain consultees is a statutory requirement, whereas others are discretionary. There are two main groups: specific consultation bodies and general consultation bodies. Specific consultation bodies include government agencies, utility providers and other local authorities, which we are required to consult on local plans. General consultation bodies primarily relate to interest groups, which are considered for consultation as appropriate.

2.13 Table 1 below provides information on who we should engage with at each consultation stage. Interested parties or individuals can be added to our list of consultees if they wish to be notified of consultations and in turn can request to be removed from this list in light of new GDPR regulations.

Table 1: Engagement at consultation stages for local plans

Audience targeted	Who this means
Specific consultation bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environment Agency• Historic England• Natural England• Network Rail• National Highways• Local authorities, <u>town and</u> parish councils, <u>parish meetings</u> and policing body in or adjoining the planning authority area

¹ [Data Protection Act 2018](#)

Audience targeted	Who this means
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire and Rescue • Communication operators/facility owners (e.g. mobile phone masts) • <u>Electricity, gas, sewerage and water companies</u> • <u>Lead Local Flood Authorities</u> • Homes England • The National Health Service • South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) • Civil Aviation Authority
General consultation bodies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary/community/local charitable bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the authority's area • Bodies which represent the interests of the elderly in the authority's area • Local schools in the authority's area • Bodies representing racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area • Bodies representing the interests of different religious groups in the authority's area • Bodies representing disabled persons in the authority's area • Gypsies, travellers and travelling show people in the authority's area • Bodies representing business in the area- i.e. Local Enterprise Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce • Landowners and developers with interests in the authority's area as well as agents that may represent these • Residents groups in the local authority area • <u>Neighbourhood Planning Groups/Forums</u> • <u>Civic Societies</u>

Duty to Cooperate

2.14 The Localism Act 2011 introduced the 'duty to cooperate', whereby local planning authorities are required to work with neighbouring authorities and other prescribed bodies in preparing the development plan for their area. A number of issues, such as transportation, housing provision, strategic infrastructure projects, flood risk and waste management, have implications that cross administrative boundaries and local councils and other public bodies are required to work jointly on strategic matters of this nature as part of the duty to cooperate process.

2.15 The duty to cooperate is not a duty to agree. But local planning authorities should make every effort to secure the necessary cooperation on strategic cross boundary matters before they submit their Local Plans for examination. In order to demonstrate on-going joint working strategic plan making authorities are required to prepare and maintain statements of common ground documenting the cross-boundary matters being addressed and progress in cooperating to address these. These need to be produced using an approach set out in national guidance and will be made publicly available.

Reaching everyone

2.16 We appreciate that there are some groups who have been traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises. The Council will try to directly liaise with these 'hard to reach' groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that takes account of their particular needs. 'Hard to reach' groups include but are not limited to:

- Youth

- [Elderly](#)
- [Disabled](#)
- [BME](#)
- [Isolated / rural communities](#)
- [Faith groups](#)
- [Gypsies and travellers](#)
- [Non-registered local organisations](#)

2.17 The Council is committed to eliminating any forms of discrimination, ensuring that the impacts of the services provided and policies produced are minimised. Some plans or planning documents may affect certain communities differently and more significantly than others. Such impacts may need to be subjected to an equality impact assessment to identify any negative or differential impacts. These should be mitigated if they cannot be avoided. There is a requirement for local plans to have an equality impact assessment at its submission for examination. Other planning policy documents produced by the Council will be screened to establish if an equality impact assessment is required.

Consultation periods

2.18 All consultation will normally be for a minimum of six weeks, unless legislation states otherwise or circumstances require the need for consultations to be reduced to less; but where possible we will extend to eight weeks or, if the consultation period would cover key holiday periods, for longer. Where possible advance notice will be given ahead of statutory consultation periods to allow additional time for consultees to develop their responses.

Availability of consultation documents

2.19 Although most residents, businesses, stakeholders and others with an interest in the area will now view documents online, there are nevertheless some people who do not have access to electronic documentation or who prefer to use physical copies of documents. All consultation documents and key supporting material should normally also be made available in hard copy as well as in electronic format. In such instances these hard copies will be made available for viewing at the [appropriate main NNC offices and libraries](#) ~~and other primary offices of NNC as well as NNC main libraries.~~

2.20 Hard copies of consultation documents will be sent on request to specific and general consultation bodies or hard to reach groups who do not have access to a computer. A charge to cover costs may be made for other requests.

2.21 All supporting documents will be available on the Council's website, [via the Consultation Hub²](#) and can also be emailed on request.

Dealing with the conclusions from the consultation

2.22 Once a consultation period is over, all representations will be collated and a report prepared summarising the main issues raised and recommending how these should be addressed. This will include identifying if and how the emerging plan should be amended in the light of the representations.

2.23 This report will be considered by the appropriate Committee of the Council. Members of the public can speak for a set time provided they request to do so in advance of the meeting.

2.24 A Statement of Publicity and Consultation will be prepared to accompany a pre-submission local plan. This will set out the consultation undertaken, the nature of the response and how the main issues have been addressed in the plan.

² [North Northamptonshire Council Consultation Hub](#)

3.0 Consultation on Development Proposals and Planning Applications

What planning applications are covered by this SCI?

3.1 This statement sets out how the community can become involved with planning applications ranging from minor development such as house extensions to major housing, employment and shopping schemes as well as encompassing minerals and waste development.

3.2 Development can be either “permitted development” where a formal planning permission is not required, or development requiring the submission of a planning application. An increasing amount of development is coming forward which falls within the definition of permitted development. Types of applications include outline and reserved matters, as well as full applications. Outline applications are usually submitted to establish development principles. Also, applications for advertisement consent and listed building consent as well as prior notification and permission in principle. Many permitted development works do not require an application to the Council, and as a result no consultation is undertaken.

3.3 If you are unsure whether or not you need planning permission, or other planning related consents, for the development you are considering you can obtain advice from the Council. This advice may be chargeable in some instances, but is advisable to avoid unnecessary risk, expense and retrospective applications. Up-to-date information on how to make planning applications is also available on the Council and Planning Portal websites.

Publicising planning applications

3.4 Development management (also known as development control) is the submission and processing of planning applications. It is largely a reactive process, responding to proposals submitted by developers and individuals and therefore consultation and engagement cannot normally be scheduled in advance. Consultation will take place once a planning application is submitted. There are a number of consultees, for example government bodies, neighbouring councils, ~~and~~ parish and town councils and parish meetings, that are statutory consultees and have to be consulted. Others could be directly impacted by consultees depend on the application and may include immediate and not so immediate neighbours and parish councils to the proposed development, and in those cases they will also be consulted as appropriate.

3.5 We will listen to what people have to say but will make clear in publicity that only representations relating to material planning considerations will be taken into account in reaching a decision. Matters such as loss of a private view, or the character or motivations of the applicant (as examples) are **not** material planning considerations and, consequently, cannot be considered in determining an application. The Council will not normally reply to any representations received.

3.6 The minimum scale and type of consultation required on planning applications will relate to the impact of the proposal and is set by regulation. The majority of planning applications received are for small developments such as house extensions. It is recommended that applicants discuss such proposals with occupiers and owners of neighbouring land and properties before submitting an application. This can provide an early opportunity to address any concerns expressed by neighbours and may help to reduce delay in determining the planning application once received.

3.7 When an application has been submitted, consultation can take many forms, including letters or e-mails to neighbours, businesses, agencies or residents’ groups, site notices and advertisements in newspapers. Comments received will help the Council to be responsive to the needs of stakeholders and improve the quality of development.

3.8 The normal period for consultation on a planning application is 24 calendar days from publication. Any comments will be placed on the planning application file and will be available for public inspection. Due to the national targets imposed on the Council as planning authority in respect of determining applications, responses should be received within the period requested or they may not be able to be fully taken into

10 | North Northamptonshire Council – Statement of Community Involvement – post consultation draft (including track changes)

account. Furthermore, if a response is not received within the time period specified it might be too late to bring it to the attention of those determining the application (either the Committee of Councillors or the planning officer if being determined under delegated authority). Statutory consultees should also respond within 24 days. Any subsequent consultations on changes to the application may be shorter than the 24 days and are at the discretion of the Council. Any anonymous comments or comments made via social media will not be taken into account.

3.9 The period of community involvement undertaken by the Council on all planning applications will be of a length that gives an appropriate time for a response to be made, but which also acknowledges that planning applications have to be determined by the local authority within 8 weeks, or 13 weeks for a major application* unless a longer period is agreed in writing with the applicant.

*This is defined in this context by the Government as a proposal for residential development of 10 or more dwellings or a site area of 0.5 hectares or greater where the number of dwellings is not known. Furthermore, all minerals and waste applications, regardless of their size, are also counted as major applications. In respect of other land uses the definition includes proposals where the sum of the floor area within the building is 1,000 metres square or greater.

‘Significant’ developments

3.10 Where a proposal/application is deemed to be significant by the planning authority by virtue of being large in scale or otherwise locally significant (see below), developers/applicants will be expected to undertake community engagement and involvement in drawing up their proposals. This will include, but is not limited to, town and parish councils, parish meetings and any neighbourhood planning group. Developers/applicants will need to submit a ‘Statement of Local Engagement’ showing how they have engaged the community in their proposals and how it has changed as a consequence. Planning applications deemed significant that are not accompanied by a Statement of Local Engagement when submitted may not be registered as a valid application by the planning authority. If in doubt applicants should discuss, if they are unclear, with the local authority if the proposal is significant. Developers and applicants should consider the benefits of involving the community in developing proposals and preparing schemes even when the proposal is not deemed to be ‘significant’.

Large-scale developments

3.11 For the purposes of this SCI a large-scale development includes proposals for residential development of 100 or more dwellings, or a site area of 3 hectares or greater where the number of dwellings is not known. In respect of other land, the definition includes proposals where the sum of the floor area within the building is 1000 m² or the site area is 1 hectare or greater.

3.12 In relation to minerals and waste proposals:

- Applications for mineral extraction of over 2 hectares in area on a site where there is no existing planning permission.
- Applications for a waste processing facility having a throughput of 50,000 tonnes pa or greater.
- Any applications for disposal of waste.

3.13 In relation to applications submitted by the council for its own development:

- Any standalone development of more than 1 hectare in area on a greenfield site (except for road proposals – see below).
- Any new school within a built-up area.
- Any road proposal of more than 2km in length unless it is part of a larger development area. Any road proposal less than 2km in length involving demolition of residential/commercial property.

3.14 Large-scale development applications are likely to require additional community involvement if the proposal will have a significant impact on the area or create significant public interest or controversy.

Locally significant developments

3.15 Some proposals that are not of sufficient scale to be defined as large-scale development may have a wider impact beyond neighbouring owners and occupiers. This category includes any proposal that, in the opinion of the local planning authority, would alter the overall character of the locality by reason of its scale, use or visual appearance. It also includes development on sites that are sensitive to development pressures such as proposals for substantial demolition in a conservation area, or proposals for development next to a listed building.

3.16 The type and extent of community involvement will need to be related to the scale and likely impact of the development and to the target audiences. It will also be appropriate to take account of whether or not the proposal has already been consulted on through the development plan process and the extent of community involvement undertaken by the applicants at the pre-application stage. The Council offers advice on pre-application consultation on a site-by-site basis and applicants are therefore invited to contact us before undertaking community involvement in order to agree the method(s) that should be used, the scale of the consultation and any special or community groups that ought to be involved. Various methods can be used by developers/applicants in seeking to involve the community at an early stage in drawing up their proposals. The following methods, and others, could be used to engage the community:

- Letters and leaflets that together with easily readable plans and diagrams explain proposals in a clear and straightforward manner.
- Public meetings.
- Public exhibitions.
- Citizen's workshops.

Dealing with the conclusions of engagement

3.17 Some planning application decisions are determined by officers using delegated powers given by the Council, more significant planning applications are usually determined at a planning committee. As part of its constitution the Council has a Scheme of Delegation³ that gives more detail in relation to when planning applications will normally be delegated and when they will be determined by committee; this is available on the Council's website.

3.18 For each planning application to be determined by a Committee, a report will be drafted setting out the key issues, highlighting responses from the consultation on the application and containing a recommendation from the planning officer as to whether or not planning permission should be granted. For applications that go to Committee all of those who made representations on the planning application will be informed when the application is to be determined. Members of the public can attend committee meetings and those who wish to speak in relation to an application will normally be given the opportunity to do so; the process for this will be set out in the notification letter/email.

3.19 Minor and non-contentious applications will normally be determined by council officers under delegated powers. A delegated report will be produced for each application determined in this manner. Other applications not subject to a delegated decision will be reported to members of the respective planning committees for determination. The role of case officers in determining planning applications is to interpret planning policy and material planning matters submitted by stakeholders and third-parties, and give weight to each in making a balanced recommendation or determination.

3.20 Generally comments made on a planning application by statutory consultees will be published on the council's website as will any comments made by members of the public with personal details redacted for data protection purposes. However, it should be noted that due to IT capabilities the ability to upload comments to the website will not be available in relation to planning minerals and waste applications. ~~being dealt with by some of the North Northamptonshire area planning offices. Where comments are available to view on the website this will be until a decision on the application has been made. Comments can be made available upon request to the case officer or area planning office handling the planning application.~~

³ [North Northamptonshire Council Constitution](#)

4.0 Consultation: Neighbourhood Plans

4.1 Neighbourhood Plans were introduced under the Localism Act 2011 to give communities rights and powers to shape growth and development in their area by taking a more active role in the preparation of planning policies at a local level. Under this act the Council has a statutory duty to provide advice and assistance to those communities choosing to undertake a Neighbourhood Plan. In some instances Neighbourhood Plan Groups are undertaking a first review of their initial Made Neighbourhood Plan.

4.2 Neighbourhood Plans are normally led and financed by the Parish/Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum in the local area, although Locality⁴ do provide financial support based around an application process. Neighbourhood Plans can be used for many reasons, for example they can; identify new housing and employment land and set out preferences for the design of buildings.

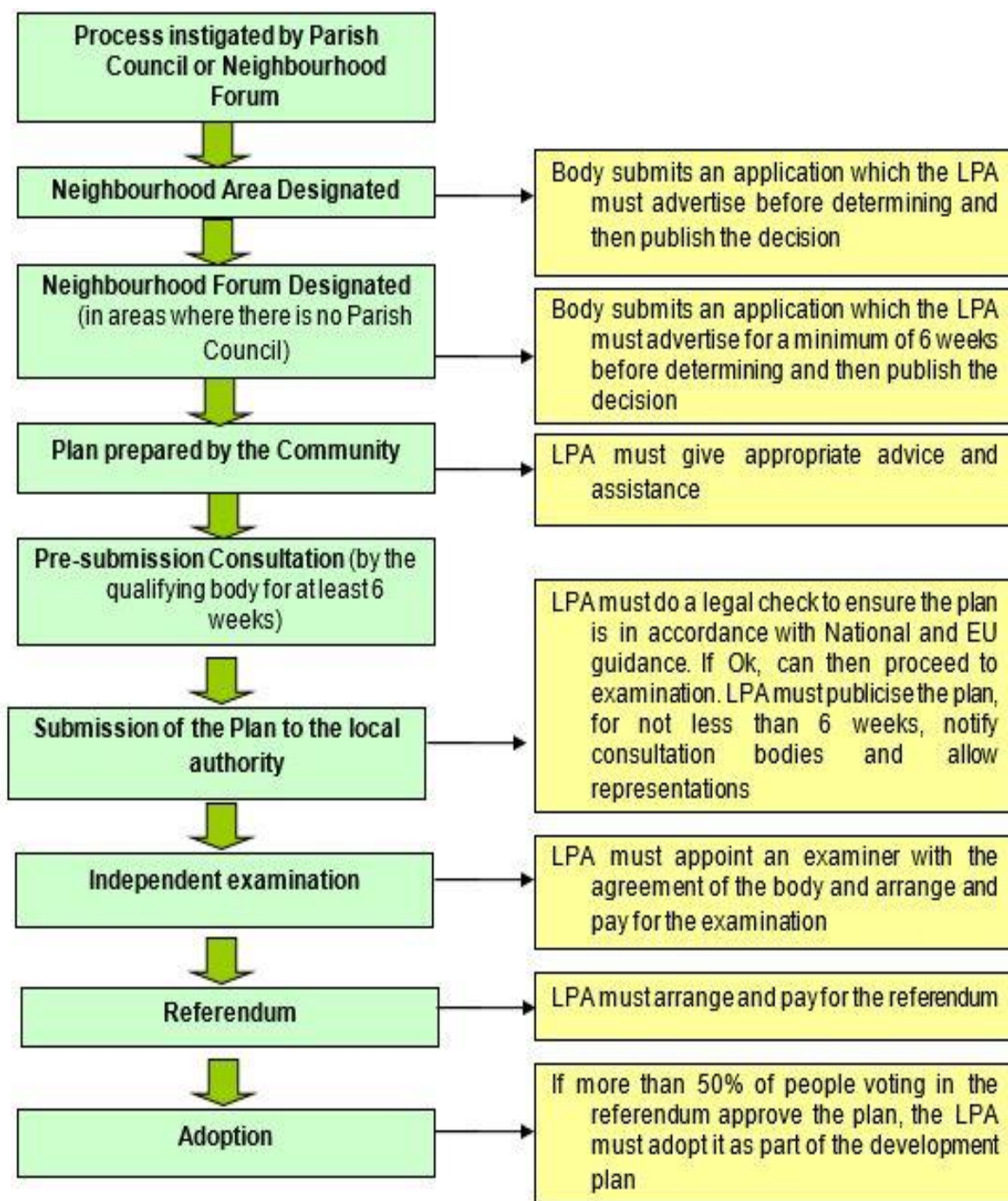
4.3 North Northamptonshire Council will designate neighbourhood areas (and forums if required), advise/assist communities in the preparation of a plan, check a submitted plan meets legal requirements, arrange the independent examination of the plan as well as bring the plan into force. In addition to this the Council can supply other forms of support, such as give advice on funding streams and provide assistance with mapping. Figure 3 sets out the general Neighbourhood Plan Process that should be followed.

4.4 The Council will publicise and consult on neighbourhood area applications, where there is a requirement to do so. Once the neighbourhood area is designated this will be published on the Council's website. Consultation will then take place on draft plans and subsequently pre-submission plans in a similar way to the local plan process. The appropriate consultation bodies are set out in Schedule 1 to the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

4.5 The level of advice and assistance that the Council will provide for preparing Neighbourhood Plans is set out in Appendix 1 overleaf.

⁴ [Locality](#)

Figure 3: Neighbourhood Plan Process



Appendix 1: Advice and Assistance that North Northamptonshire Council will provide in relation to Neighbourhood Plans

Determining the need for a Neighbourhood Plan

- Advice on the role of Neighbourhood Plans and what they can, cannot and must achieve.
- Advice on issues that are 'neighbourhood planning matters' and can adequately be dealt with within your plan.
- An outline of the alternatives to Neighbourhood Planning that exist to communities, including Parish Plans, Village Design Statements, input into the Local Plan consultation process etc.
- An outline of the first steps involved in the delivery of your Neighbourhood Plan.

Identifying the scope of your plan

- Advice on the first steps your community will need to undertake to ensure that the organisational structure is in place locally to successfully deliver a Neighbourhood Plan.
- Advice on consultation techniques and the best way to engage your community.
- Advice on the requirement of your plan to conform with the adopted development plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and what this may mean for your community.
- An overview of the other legislative requirements of your plan, including the need to comply with EU Directives.

Designating Neighbourhood Areas / Business Areas and Forums

- Publicity of the application for a Neighbourhood Area or Business Area, when required, in such a manner that is considered likely to bring the application to the attention of people who work or carry out business in the area to which the application relates for a minimum of six weeks. This includes through Council and Parish Council's web pages, local and/or parish newspapers, local notice boards and libraries where relevant.
- The statutory consultation and approval of the boundary of the area to be covered by the Neighbourhood Area or Business Area.
- The publication of the area and/or forum's adoption on the council's website, in local and parish newspapers and newsletters where relevant as soon as practical after formal designation.
- Mapping of Neighbourhood Area boundaries required for the designation of the Neighbourhood Plan Area or Business Area.

Supporting Neighbourhood Plan making

- Sharing existing information and pre-existing evidence base work held by the local planning authority, as appropriate and subject to any data protection or confidentiality issues.
- Contact details of local partners and/or organisations to help community liaison subject to any data protection or confidentiality issues.
- Providing comments on the emerging plan and other supporting documents (e.g. basic condition statement) prior to formal submission.
- Advice and support for the screening of any Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) or Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) required and liaison with the relevant statutory consultees.
- North Northamptonshire Council encourages Town and Parish Councils, and other local groups, by providing support and advice in the preparation of their Neighbourhood Plans. In addition, Locality provides support to neighbourhood planning groups on behalf of the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in terms of grant funding and technical support (professional assistance and advice).

Independent Examination

- The validation of a Neighbourhood Plan on receipt, checking that all the necessary supporting documents have been produced and that all of the correct procedures have been undertaken. A review of the plan will also be undertaken to ensure that it stands a reasonable chance of success at examination (with or without amendments to be suggested by the examiner).

- Publication of the Neighbourhood Plans on the council website for a minimum of six weeks and give details of how to respond to it in advance of the Independent Examination (in line with the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations).
- The appointment of and funding for the Independent Examiner, who will check the plan meets the 'basic conditions' (note: the examiner to be appointed will firstly have to be agreed on by the Parish Council or Neighbourhood Forum).
- An examination venue, if a hearing is required, and if no other suitable town/village venue can be provided.
- Written confirmation of the Council's position following the recommendation of the examiner, relating to any amendments that may need to be made to the plan before it proceeds to referendum, any enlargement of the referendum area, whether the plan may proceed to directly to referendum or whether its passage should be refused.

Referendum

- The organisation of, and funding for, the public referendum (it must be noted that two referendums will be required for Business Areas – one for residents and one for businesses).

'Making' the plan

- If the Neighbourhood Plan receives support from more than half of those voting in the public referendum, then the Council will formally make the Neighbourhood Plan. Once made, the plan will form part of the Development Plan and will be a primary consideration in determining planning applications within the Neighbourhood or Business Area.



Equality Screening Assessment

The Equality Screening Assessment form must be completed to evidence what impact the proposal may have on equality groups within our community or workforce. Any proposal that identifies a negative impact must have a full Equality Impact Assessment completed before the proposal progresses further.

1: Proposal

Page 57

Requirement	Detail
Title of proposal	North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).
Type of proposal: new policy / change to policy / new service / change to service / removal of service / project / event/ budget	Updated policy.
What is the objective of this proposal?	<p>The SCI sets out how the Council will consult and engage on development plans and planning applications, and how the Council will support neighbourhood plans.</p> <p>The SCI sets out the Council's commitment to eliminate any forms of discrimination and ensure that consultation reaches everyone, including 'hard to reach' groups who have traditionally been under-represented in consultation exercises.</p>

Requirement	Detail
	<p>The requirement to consult on the preparation of development plans and determination of planning applications is set within planning legislation; however, the SCI proposes measures that go beyond the legal requirements to encourage early and meaningful engagement to help local communities positively shape the areas where they live.</p>
<p>Has there been/when will there be consultation on this proposal? (List all the groups / communities, including dates)</p>	<p>Consultation on the draft SCI was undertaken for a period of six weeks between 7 December 2021 and 28 January 2022. 390 individuals and representatives on the Councils planning policy consultation database were contacted, including specific consultation bodies; parish and town councils; community groups; developers, agents, landowners and individuals that have expressed an interest to be notified of all planning policy related matters for North Northamptonshire.</p> <p>The draft SCI and supporting information were made available on the Council's Consultation Hub, with members of the North Northamptonshire Consultation Register and the North Northamptonshire Residents' Panel also notified.</p> <p>Hard copies of the document and supporting information were made available to view in the main North Northamptonshire Council Offices and Libraries.</p> <p>Public consultation undertaken on the draft SCI and content of the SCI are consistent with the Council's Consultation and engagement framework 2021.</p>

Requirement	Detail
Did the consultation on this proposal highlight any positive or negative impact on protected groups? (If yes, give details)	No specific impacts were highlighted through public consultation on the SCI; however, it is considered the consultation and engagement promoted through the SCI promotes equality of opportunity and positively impacts on all sections of the community in North Northamptonshire, including those who share a protected characteristic.
What processes are in place to monitor and review the impact of this proposal?	Planning legislation requires the SCI is to be updated every five years, or sooner if a change in circumstances requires it.
Who will approve this proposal? (Committee, CLT)	Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel; Executive; and Full Council.

Page 59 2: Equality Consideration

In turn, consider each protected group to ensure we meet our legal obligations of the Equality Act (2010).

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	<p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
<p>Age</p> <p>Different age groups that may be affected by the proposal in different ways.</p>	The SCI recognises that there are some groups of the community that are traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises, particularly related to plan making. This can affect young people and the elderly, depending on their access to information and willingness to engage. The SCI explains that the Council is		<p>Positive</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? <p>committed to eliminating discrimination and will try to directly liaise with 'hard to reach' groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that take account of their particular needs, which aims to encourage younger and older groups within the community to engage with the planning system to ensure they are fully represented.</p> <p>For both plan making and the processing of planning applications the Council will take appropriate measures to consult and engage with local communities, including through town and parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups. This may include more traditional methods of consultation, such as providing hard copies of documents at centrally accessible locations, which are often preferred by older people, but the Council will also make use of electronic communication and online representations to consult as widely as possible, to encourage younger people to engage with the planning system. The combined methods of engagement will allow younger and older groups within the community to positively influence local development plans,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	<p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<p>neighbourhood plans and development proposals within their local areas, which will help to foster good relations with these protected groups.</p> <p>Table 1 within the SCI sets out who will be consulted at specific stages in the formal plan preparation process. The general consultation bodies within table 1 include 'bodies which represent the interests of the elderly in the authority's area' and 'Local schools in the authority's area'. The identified 'hard to reach' groups within the SCI also include youth and the elderly.</p>		
<p>Sex</p> <p>Is one sex affected more than another or are they affected the same?</p>	<p>The SCI is inclusive to all members of the community and makes no distinction based on gender. The benefits of the SCI would apply equally to this protected group as they do to the public generally.</p> <p>The SCI itself does not specifically impact one gender over another, but the engagement and consultation proposed through the SCI offers all members of this equality group the opportunity to positively shape the areas where they live.</p>		<p>Positive</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
<p>Disability</p> <p>It is likely to have an effect on a particular type of disability? Why?</p>	<p>The SCI recognises that there are some groups of the community that are traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises, particularly related to plan making, which can affect individuals with a disability, especially where they have limited access to information. The SCI explains that the Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and will try to directly liaise with 'hard to reach' groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that take account of their particular needs. The identified 'hard to reach' groups within the SCI include those with a disability.</p> <p>More traditional methods of consultation are promoted through the SCI, such as providing hard copies of documents at centrally accessible locations, which can help to eliminate discrimination for those with a physical disability, but the Council will also make use of electronic communication and online representations to consult as widely as possible, which may also include an increased use of social media where appropriate. All electronic documents are made available in accessible formats to</p>		<p>Positive Neutral Negative</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? <p>meet with accessibility requirements and assist those with visual disabilities. The SCI supports making hard copies of consultation documents available to 'hard to reach' groups, who do not have access to a computer, but all documentation can be made available in alternative formats, such as braille, on request.</p> <p>Table 1 within the SCI sets out who will be consulted at specific stages in the plan preparation process. The general consultation bodies within table 1 includes 'bodies representing disabled persons in the authority's area'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
<p>Gender Reassignment</p> <p>Will there be an impact on trans males and/or trans females?</p>	<p>The SCI is inclusive to all members of the community and makes no distinction based on gender reassignment. The benefits of the SCI would apply equally to this protected group as they do to the public generally.</p> <p>The SCI itself does not differentially impact an individual based on gender reassignment, but the engagement and consultation proposed through the SCI aims to ensure all groups within the community are represented</p>		<p>Positive</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
<p>Race</p> <p>Are people from one ethnic group affected more than people from another ethnic group?</p>	<p>The SCI recognises that there are some groups of the community that are traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises, particularly related to plan making, which can include those from different ethnic groups. The SCI explains that the Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and will try to directly liaise with ‘hard to reach’ groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that take account of their particular needs. The identified ‘hard to reach’ groups within the SCI includes those from different ethnic groups.</p> <p>The SCI supports making hard copies of consultation documents available to ‘hard to reach’ groups, who do not have access to a computer, but all documentation can be made available in alternative formats, or different languages, on request.</p>		<p>Positive</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? <p>The SCI also recognises that some plans or planning documents may affect certain communities differently and more significantly than others; where this is the case these will be subjected to an equality impact assessment to identify any negative or differential impacts; which if cannot be avoided should be mitigated.</p> <p>Table 1 within the SCI sets out who will be consulted at specific stages in the plan preparation process. The general consultation bodies within table 1 includes 'bodies representing racial, ethnic or national groups in the authority's area'.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
<p>Sexual Orientation</p> <p>Are people of one sexual orientation affected differently to people of another sexual orientation?</p>	<p>The SCI is inclusive to all members of the community and makes no distinction based on sexual orientation. The benefits of the SCI would apply equally to this protected group as they do to the public generally.</p> <p>The SCI itself does not differentially impact an individual based on sexual orientation, but the engagement and consultation proposed through the SCI aims to ensure all groups within the community are represented within the planning system and in doing so offers all members</p>		<p>Positive</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
<p>Marriage & Civil Partnership</p> <p>Are people in a Marriage or Civil Partnership treated less favourably?</p>	<p>The SCI is inclusive to all members of the community and makes no distinction based on their marriage or civil partnership status. The benefits of the SCI would apply equally to this protected group as they do to the public generally.</p> <p>The SCI itself does not differentially impact an individual based on whether they are married or in a civil partnership, but the engagement and consultation proposed through the SCI aims to ensure all groups within the community are represented within the planning system and in doing so offers all members of this equality group the opportunity to positively shape the areas where they live.</p>		<p>Positive</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative</p>
<p>Pregnancy & Maternity</p> <p>Are people who are pregnant, or have a baby of 6 months old or younger, effected by this proposal?</p>	<p>The SCI is inclusive to all members of the community and makes no distinction based on whether they are pregnant or have a young baby. The benefits of the SCI would apply equally to this protected group as they do to the public generally.</p>	<p>Consider targeted engagement techniques to increase representation of this protected group within the planning system.</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	<p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>
<p>Religion or Belief</p> <p>Does the proposal effect people differently depending on whether they have or do not have a religion or a belief?</p>	<p>The SCI recognises that there are some groups of the community that are traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises, particularly related to plan making, which may relate to those with different religious beliefs. The SCI explains that the Council is committed to eliminating discrimination and will try to directly liaise with ‘hard to reach’ groups through targeted engagement or specific techniques that take account of their particular needs. The identified ‘hard to reach’ groups within the SCI includes faith groups and non-registered local organisations.</p> <p>Table 1 within the SCI sets out who will be consulted at specific stages in the plan preparation process. The general consultation bodies within table 1 includes</p>	<p>Consider targeted engagement techniques to increase representation of this protected group within the planning system.</p>	<p>Positive</p> <p>Neutral</p> <p>Negative</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
<p>Health & Wellbeing</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Health behaviours (E.g. diet, exercise, alcohol, smoking) 2. Support (E.g. community cohesion, rural isolation) 3. Socio economic (E.g. income, education). 4. Environment (E.g. green spaces, fuel poverty, housing standards). 	<p>The SCI is inclusive to all members of the community, but also recognises that there are some groups of the community that are traditionally under-represented in consultation exercises, particularly related to plan making, such as ‘isolated and rural communities’ which identified within the SCI ‘hard to reach’ groups.</p> <p>The SCI supports more traditional methods of consultation, such as providing hard copies of documents at centrally accessible locations, which can help to eliminate discrimination for those without access to a computer such as low income individuals, but the</p>		Positive Neutral Negative

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? <p>Council will also make use of electronic communication and online representations to consult as widely as possible, which may also include an increased use of social media where appropriate; this may help to encourage isolated and rural communities to engage with the planning process. The SCI supports making hard copies of consultation documents available to 'hard to reach' groups, who do not have access to a computer, but all documentation can be made available in alternative formats on request.</p> <p>The benefits of the SCI would apply equally to some members of this protected group as they do to the public generally, such as those with specific health behaviours or those affected by environmental factors. The SCI does; however, positively impact those with varying levels of support and those affected by varying socio-economic factors by encouraging access to information.</p> <p>The overall aim of the engagement and consultation proposed through the SCI is to ensure all groups within the community are represented within the planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	<p>Delete as appropriate.</p> <p>There can be more than one answer per protected group.</p>

Protected Groups	General Equality Duty Considerations	Changes	Impact
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include factual evidence of how people in this group may be affected. • Consider the outcomes and processes. • Does this seek to eliminate discrimination? • Does this promote fostering good relations? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What changes can be made to mitigate any negative impact? • Are there opportunities to remove possible barriers or disadvantages that a group may face? 	Delete as appropriate. There can be more than one answer per protected group.
	system and in doing so offers all members of this equality group the opportunity to positively shape the areas where they live.		

3: Equality Impact

Question	Response
What overall impact does the proposal have on the protected groups? If a negative impact is identified anywhere in section 2, the response will be Negative Impact.	Positive Impact
Does an Equality Impact Assessment need to be completed? (Yes, if any negative impact is found.)	No
Copy attached to relevant report?	Yes
Is this document going to be published with the relevant report?	Yes

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4: Ownership

Question	Response
Directorate	Place and Economy
Service area	Planning Policy
Lead officer's name	Bernice Turner
Lead officer's job title	Senior Planning Officer (Local Plans)

Question	Response
Lead officer's contact details	Bernice.Turner@northnorthants.gov.uk
Lead officer's signature	[Signature removed]
Date completed	15 March 2022

Completed forms must be sent to Equalities@northnorthants.gov.uk

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Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel 24 March 2022

Report Title	Consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation
Report Author	Sue Bateman, Senior Planning Officer, sue.bateman@northnorthants.gov.uk and Andra Stopforth, Principal Planning Officer Andra.stopforth@northnorthants.gov.uk
Executive Member	Councillor David Brackenbury – Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration

List of Appendices

Appendix A - Summary process diagram for proposals as they would apply to Town and Country Planning Act development

Appendix B – Draft response to Consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To raise awareness of the implications of biodiversity net gain and for the Advisory Panel to provide feedback to inform a council response to the consultation on biodiversity net gain regulations and implementation.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. The report sets out details of the current consultation from the Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) on proposals for how biodiversity net gain will work in practice. Feedback from the consultation is intended to shape developing legislation, processes and guidance. This will help ensure the requirement for mandatory biodiversity net gain delivers positive outcomes for nature, improves the process for developers, and creates better places for local communities.
- 2.2. A draft response to the consultation is provided and the Panel's views are sought to assist in providing a council response to the consultation.
- 2.3. The report also sets out some of the potential implications for the council of the introduction of biodiversity net gain.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Panel consider the report and provide any feedback on the draft response in Appendix B to enable the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy to submit a response to the consultation on biodiversity net gain regulations and implementation by 5 April 2022.
- 3.2. *(Reason for Recommendations – to provide a response on behalf of North Northamptonshire Council to help shape developing legislation, processes and guidance)*
- 3.3. *(Alternative Options Considered – the council is not required to respond to the consultation so could choose not to respond, however it is important as a council we have an opportunity to feed our views back to help shape the secondary legislation, policy and delivery plans to ensure that they are practical and deliverable.)*

4. Report Background

- 4.1. The Environment Act 2021 passed into UK law in November 2021. It sets out legislation to protect and enhance our environment for future generations. This included measures to clean up the country's air, restore natural habitats, increase biodiversity, reduce waste and make better use of our resources. These changes will be driven by new legally binding environmental targets enforced by a new independent Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) which will hold government and public bodies to account on their environmental obligations.
- 4.2. A key requirement of the Act is to ensure that developments deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity. The current consultation from DEFRA relates to the practical and legal implementation details of this new biodiversity net gain requirement for development. The Act sets out the framework for biodiversity net gain requirements but leaves some detail to be provided through secondary legislation, policy and guidance. The Environment Act's biodiversity net gain provisions apply:
 - for development for which planning permission is granted under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990
 - for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects consented under the Planning Act 2008
- 4.3. Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development which means that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than they were in before the development. Achieving biodiversity net gain means that natural habitats will be extended or improved as part of a development or project. Development

will be designed in a way that provides benefits to people and nature and reduces its impacts on the wider environment. Mandating biodiversity net gain through the Environment Act is intended to establish a consistent set of requirements and necessary exemptions which give developers clarity as to how they can meet their net gain obligations.

4.4. Mandatory biodiversity net gain policy and processes will fundamentally change the way that habitat losses are considered as part of development. There is currently uncertainty in practice about what biodiversity net gain means, the responses to this consultation will shape the secondary legislation, policy and delivery plans which will deliver the Environment Act's aims.

4.5. Mandatory biodiversity net gain is not the only policy being developed to meet the ambitions set out in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. It is helpful to consider wider policy proposals and planning reforms when considering the implications of biodiversity net gain. The most relevant of these policies are outlined below:

- **conservation covenants** – a new voluntary, and standalone legal mechanism that can secure long term conservation management obligations on land to secure habitat enhancements for biodiversity gain.
- **Environmental Land Management Schemes (ELMS)** – an agri-environment scheme which will work alongside mandatory biodiversity net gain as another source of income to enhance biodiversity and the wider environment.
- **Environmental Net Gain** – means building on biodiversity net gain and going further to achieve increases in the capacity of affected natural capital to deliver ecosystem services and make a scheme's wider impacts on natural capital positive.
- **Local Nature Recovery Strategies** – are locally produced spatial planning frameworks for nature, informed by national maps and priorities. Each strategy will, for the area it covers, agree priorities for nature's recovery, map the most valuable existing areas for nature and map specific proposals for creating or improving habitat for nature and wider environmental goals.
- **Nature Recovery Network** – an expanded, improved and connected network of places for nature that is rich in wildlife and more resilient to climate change.
- **Species abundance target** - an additional legally binding target on species abundance for 2030 to halt the decline of nature. Creating new and better habitats through biodiversity net gain will contribute towards limiting biodiversity loss and accelerating its recovery, thereby supporting the meeting of the new species abundance target.
- **Species conservation strategies and protected site strategies** - are designed to provide a more strategic approach to the complex challenge of protecting and restoring species and habitats. The Act places a duty on planning authorities to cooperate with Natural England, and other planning authorities and public bodies, in the establishment and operation of the strategies.

- **Strengthened biodiversity duty** - Public authorities subject to the duty, including planning authorities, will need to report on how they are considering and enhancing biodiversity. For planning authorities, this must include references to their delivery and support of biodiversity net gain. Public bodies might wish to enhance habitat on their own land in response to this duty and, should this require funding, they may sell the generated 'biodiversity units' to fund the enhancement.
- **Planning reforms** - The Planning for the Future White Paper published in August 2020 proposed wider reforms to the planning system and was clear that any reformed planning system will have improving biodiversity as a core objective.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1. The consultation from DEFRA opened on 11 January 2022 and closes on 5 April 2022. There is a consultation document which is supported by an impact assessment, market analysis study and a financial & economic appraisal for major infrastructure projects. In addition to inviting comments on the consultation document targeted stakeholder engagement will take place including on the biodiversity metric. Consultation questions within the document are split into three parts, each of which covers several themes:
- 1) defining the scope of the biodiversity net gain requirement for Town and Country Planning Act 1990 development
 - Exemptions
 - development within statutory designated sites for nature conservation
 - irreplaceable habitat
 - 2) applying the biodiversity gain objective to different types of development
 - phased development and development subject to subsequent applications
 - small sites
 - Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
 - 3) how the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement will work for Town and Country Planning Act 1990 development
 - biodiversity gain plan
 - off-site biodiversity gains
 - the market for biodiversity units
 - habitat banking
 - the biodiversity gain site register
 - additionality
 - statutory biodiversity credits
 - reporting, evaluation, and monitoring
- 5.2. Suggested responses to the consultation questions are set out Appendix B. Members are invited to provide any feedback on these to enable the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive

Director of Place and Economy to submit a response to the consultation by 5 April 2022. Key implications of the consultation are discussed below.

- 5.3. As a local planning authority, the sections relating to delivering and evaluating development proposals that require planning permission are of particular interest. The mandatory requirement is to achieve at least a 10% biodiversity net gain increase from the pre-development biodiversity value. The requirement is framed as a pre-commencement condition, meaning that the biodiversity gain condition must be discharged before development can begin.
- 5.4. To discharge the condition, the planning authority must approve the development's biodiversity gain plan. This biodiversity gain plan approval must take place before development starts. However, it is proposed to require applicants for planning permission to include biodiversity gain information with their application. This biodiversity gain information can help aid decision-making by providing planning authorities, and consultees, with an understanding of how proposed development intends to meet the biodiversity gain objective. A summary of how the process is intended to apply is included as Appendix A.
- 5.5. It is currently intended that mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain will commence two years after royal assent of the Act, so in November 2023. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) already encourage net gains and it is sought by Policy 4 of the North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy. This means that this authority can already ask for biodiversity net gain as part of development proposals. There is however at this current time no specific local target or agreed method of measuring it.
- 5.6. Mandatory net gain will be implemented through the planning system. Developers will be required to demonstrate that they will deliver a minimum 10% net gain of biodiversity units for area-based habitats and any relevant linear habitats (hedgerows, lines of trees, and watercourses). The 10% will be a mandatory requirement but should not be viewed as a cap on the aspirations of developers that want to voluntarily go further or for local planning authorities seeking a higher aspiration through policies.
- 5.7. The biodiversity gains and losses of a development will be measured in 'biodiversity units', using a metric which uses habitats as a proxy for biodiversity and calculates units by taking account of the type, extent and condition of habitats. Natural England has recently published a biodiversity metric (known as [Biodiversity Metric 3.0](#)) which, subject to further consultation and any further updates, is expected to be the metric specified for mandatory biodiversity net gain.
- 5.8. Biodiversity net gain complements and works with the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy set out in the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 180a. To achieve net gain in a way that is consistent with the mitigation hierarchy and reflecting the 'spatial hierarchy' preference for local enhancements, developers should follow these steps in order:

1. aim to avoid or reduce biodiversity impacts through site selection and layout
 2. enhance and restore biodiversity on-site
 3. create or enhance off-site habitats, either on their own land or by purchasing biodiversity units on the market, and
 4. as a last resort to prevent undue delays, purchase statutory biodiversity credits from the UK Government where they can demonstrate that they are unable to achieve biodiversity net gain through the available on-site and off-site options.
- 5.9. The UK Government published a biodiversity net gain impact assessment in 2019 which outlined their analysis of the costs and benefits. This recognised that implementing mandatory biodiversity net gain will place additional demands on local authority resources. The UK Government has committed to fully fund new burdens placed upon planning authorities arising from the new mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement.
- 5.10. As part of the press release relating to this consultation a new funding pot of over £4 million was announced to help local planning authorities to prepare for biodiversity net gain. The funding is intended to help authorities expand ecological resource and upskill ecologist teams. To date it has not been announced how this funding might be distributed or when. It has also been suggested that government funding in addition to this might be required to support the full implications for local authorities. Again, there is currently no further information on this.
- 5.11. Ecological support for planning applications is currently provided through a joint service available to both the North and West Northamptonshire Councils. The service is hosted by NNC but both Council's pay to use it. Assessing the required biodiversity metric and biodiversity plans to ensure they are robust would provide additional demands upon the service for which there is no current capacity.
- 5.12. Where it is not possible to avoid negative impacts and mitigate impacts on-site, developers will be able to create or enhance habitat off-site. The establishment of a market for purchasing biodiversity units will ensure that a supply of off-site biodiversity units is available to developments that need them. Landowners or managers who can create or enhance habitat to the required standards on their land will be able to sell the resulting biodiversity units to developers. Intermediaries such as brokers may facilitate these transactions.
- 5.13. Market analysis estimated that the introduction of mandatory biodiversity net gain would generate annual demand for around 6,200 off-site biodiversity units with a market value in the region of £135 million. It concluded that the market has the potential to meet demand for off-site biodiversity gains. However, shortages of supply are a risk in the early years of the market and for highly urban areas, islands, and some habitat types. The consultation document expects that most instances of local shortages are likely to be alleviated by allowing development to use biodiversity units purchased from outside of the local area.

- 5.14. Policy and guidance will encourage off-site biodiversity gains to be delivered locally to the development site, which is incentivised by the biodiversity metric's spatial risk multiplier. Where the available local opportunities for off-site habitat creation or enhancement are insufficient for developers to meet their net gain requirements, off-site delivery outside of the local area will be allowed.
- 5.15. Spatial nature strategies, such as Local Nature Recovery Strategies, should be used to target delivery of off-site biodiversity gains, and habitat delivery in strategic areas will be incentivised by the biodiversity metric's strategic significance score.
- 5.16. In determining whether to grant permission or approve the plan, whether the developer has adequately considered the on-site and local off-site options before looking further afield may be a relevant consideration.
- 5.17. To count towards a development's net gain requirement, off-site biodiversity gains will need to be secured through a conservation covenant or planning obligation and registered prior to final approval of the biodiversity gain plan. The Environment Act states that biodiversity gain sites (off site) must be maintained for at least 30 years after the completion of the works to create or enhance the habitat.
- 5.18. Any landowners or managers will be able to create or enhance habitat for the purpose of selling biodiversity units, provided that they are able to meet the requirements of the policy, including additionality and register eligibility requirements, and demonstrate no significant adverse impacts on protected and priority habitats.
- 5.19. Suppliers of biodiversity units will be able to sell to developers anywhere in England, provided that the use of those units is appropriate for the development in question and the distance between the development and the off-site habitat is properly accounted for in the biodiversity metric.
- 5.20. Planning authorities will be able to sell biodiversity units from their own land or act as a broker for third party units. Where planning authorities choose to participate in the market, they will be expected to manage any associated conflicts of interest and will need to comply with the same rules and requirements that apply to other biodiversity unit suppliers.
- 5.21. Biodiversity net gain will not enable planning authorities to direct developers to purchase biodiversity units from them in preference to other market suppliers that are able to deliver equivalent or better outcomes in relation to the requirements of the policy. Planning authorities will not be able to charge developers a general tariff for delivery of off-site gains which is not associated with specific gain sites that are registered and allocated to the development in question.
- 5.22. The price for biodiversity units is expected to be agreed between buyers and sellers, and for them to ensure that it is sufficient to cover the costs of creating

or enhancing the habitat and maintaining it for a minimum of 30 years. It will also be for the buyer, seller, and any other parties to the agreement to agree payment terms, for example whether there would be one lump-sum payment, staged payments, or payment by results. The market analysis accompanying the consultation used estimates of £20K - £25K per biodiversity unit. This cost however is likely to vary dependent on habitat type and location. Some suggestions are that a figure of £30K+ might be more realistic in this part of the country.

- 5.23. A choice of local options for buying biodiversity units would provide the most benefits to the local environment and the local community as well as offering suitable options to facilitate development. Officers have started to have some initial discussions with potential providers. In order to ensure projects have the greatest benefit it would be preferable to have these identified through the Nature Recovery Strategy as soon as practical. These provide the opportunity to identify landscape scale creation or restoration projects.
- 5.24. The government has consulted on requirements for Nature Recovery Strategies, but, at present, there are no final decisions on the content or timing. It is likely that the responsibility to produce them will rest with local authorities. This council will be well placed to commence work on a strategy for the area as considerable work has already taken place on Habitat Opportunity Mapping with the Local Nature Partnership. Work has also started on a Natural Capital Investment Plan for Northamptonshire and Peterborough which will feed into this process. Additional resources are however likely to be needed to undertake this important piece of work.
- 5.25. The council will also need to decide as a landowner whether we want to sell biodiversity units. In order to do this a net gain assessment would be needed of relevant council owned land with a view to creating a land bank. This could offer a good opportunity to deliver offsets locally where they would be of most benefit to residents, and it would be able to deal with small offsets. This would, however, involve a significant amount of work including identifying a potential cost per unit, but it could generate much needed funding for council parks for example as well as boosting the delivery of local projects.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1. Following feedback on the draft responses to the consultation the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Economy will agree a response to submit to the consultation on biodiversity net gain regulations and implementation by 5 April 2022.
- 6.2. Further discussion will be necessary on some of the potential implications for the authority of the introduction of biodiversity net gain and these will be brought back to the advisory panel or Executive as appropriate.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1. Resources and Financial

- 7.1.1. There are no direct financial or resource implications as a result of submitting a response to the consultation. There will however be implications as a result of the introduction of biodiversity net gain.
- 7.1.2. Additional ecological resource will be required to support the determination of planning applications. The biodiversity metric is only a tool to aid decision making. It requires ecological evaluation and advise alongside it. Development management officers will also have additional implications to consider within their reports to assess the suitability of applications and the discharge of pre-commencement conditions. Additional training is likely to be necessary to support this. There are also monitoring requirements which need to be set as planning conditions or obligations. Failure to deliver outcomes may result in the need for the authority to undertake enforcement action. In addition, there are requirements to publish Biodiversity Reports every 5 years. The government has indicated that this extra burden will be funded, but there are no details as of yet as to what level of funding the council might receive and when.
- 7.1.3. The production of Nature Recovery Strategies is a requirement of The Environment Act 2021. DEFRA will appoint a responsible authority for each area to lead its preparation. This is likely to be the local authority. These will establish priorities and map proposals for nature recovery. They will therefore be important in identifying local opportunities for biodiversity net gain. The ambition is that they are created using genuine local collaboration with a partnership of organisations and individuals working closely with each responsible authority. Whilst a great deal of evidence gathering has already taken place in Northamptonshire in partnership with local stakeholders, production of a Nature Recovery Strategy will also require additional resource.
- 7.1.4. Should the council wish to consider selling biodiversity units as a landowner a project would need to be initiated to identify the potential and then deliver and manage the units for 30 years. If units were provided on land managed by the council, then there would be implications for grounds maintenance teams. The full cost of administering the scheme and providing staff and equipment is expected to be able to be covered in the pricing of the units.
- 7.1.5. The current Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document will require updating to reflect biodiversity net gain. To ensure that biodiversity net gain is seen as part of the wider need for environmental net gain a natural capital or environmental net gain Supplementary Planning Document is also proposed. These are already identified within the Planning Policy work programme but will require resource to progress.

7.2. Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1. The Environment Act 2021 places new duties and responsibilities on the council. Biodiversity net gain will become a mandatory part of the planning process, which as a planning authority the council must implement.
- 7.2.2. The Act strengthens the biodiversity duty. Public authorities subject to the duty, including planning authorities, will need to report on how they are considering and enhancing biodiversity. For planning authorities, this must include references to their delivery and support of biodiversity net gain.

7.3. Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1. A key commitment of the corporate plan is for a '*green, sustainable environment. Taking a lead on improving the green environment making the area more sustainable for generations to come*'. Biodiversity net gain is an important mechanism for improving the natural environment. There are opportunities for the authority to show clear leadership for the environment, by the production of the Nature Recovery Strategy, Supplementary Planning Documents and selling biodiversity credits.
- 7.3.2. The North Northants Joint Core Strategy already includes a requirement to seek a biodiversity net gain through Policy 4. The review of this plan through the preparation of the North Northants Strategic Plan provides a significant opportunity to strengthen this approach. This is addressed in the Scope and Issues consultation which is due to commence in March.

7.4. Risk

- 7.4.1. There are no significant risks relating to responding to the consultation, however the response of local authorities should help to shape the secondary legislation, policy and delivery plans to ensure that they are practical and deliverable.
- 7.4.2. The Environment Act 2021 places new duties on the authority, failure to undertake these duties appropriately would risk reputational damage. Given that there will be reporting requirements to the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), there may be further consequences.
- 7.4.3. In order to ensure that the council undertakes its duties suitable resources will need to be made available. This will be considered as part of the ongoing staffing structure and resources review across the authority.
- 7.4.4. Failure to deliver the Nature Recovery Strategy in a timely manner may lead to non-priority projects being used to deliver biodiversity net gain. If there are not sufficient local opportunities to deliver net gain, identified net gain will need to be delivered outside of the local area. This would lead to reduced benefits to the local environment and local communities.

7.5. Consultation

7.5.1. This report has been prepared with collaboration of officers across the authority. Any subsequent work undertaken to address biodiversity net gain would be subject to consultation with stakeholders in accordance with corporate guidelines. Consultation on supplementary planning documents would be in accordance with the council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)

7.6. Consideration by Scrutiny

7.6.1. There is no identified need for wider consideration by scrutiny although should members of the Scrutiny Commission request it to go into the work programme, they can do so.

7.7. Equality Implications

7.7.1. There are no identified equality implications of responding to the consultation.

7.7.2. Any future proposals or policies put forward to respond to biodiversity net gain would be accompanied by an Equality Screening Assessment to provide evidence that the impact of the proposal on equality groups has been considered.

7.8. Climate Impact

7.8.1. Delivering biodiversity net gain will provide key positive impacts in respect of climate change. Habitat restoration and creation can for example assist with carbon sequestration through tree planting or natural flood risk management. Should the council decide to operate a land bank and sell biodiversity credits this would provide opportunities for the organisation to reduce its own carbon footprint.

7.9. Community Impact

7.9.1. Biodiversity net gain provides opportunities for greater access to the natural environment and all the benefits that this provides. This includes improved health and well-being and opportunities for community engagement.

7.10. Crime and Disorder Impact

7.10.1. There are no identified impacts in relation to crime and disorder in the area.

8. Background Papers

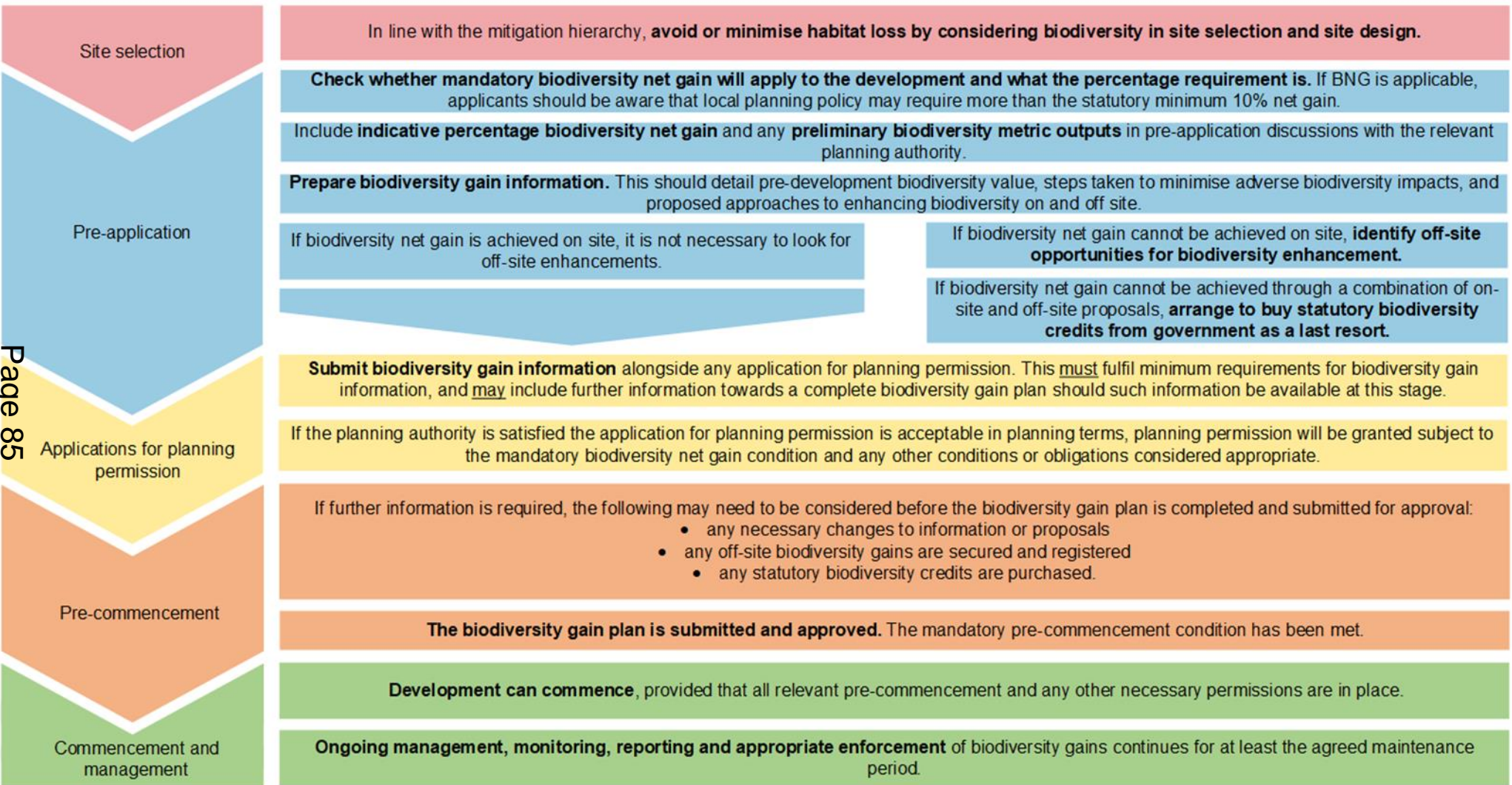
8.1. [The Environment Act 2021](#)

8.2. [Consultation on Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation](#)

8.3. [Biodiversity Metric 3.0](#)

- 8.4. [Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document](#) for Northamptonshire, August 2015
- 8.5. [North Northamptonshire Joint Core Strategy](#)
- 8.6. [National Planning Policy Framework](#)
- 8.7. [National Planning Practice Guidance](#)

Proposed biodiversity net gain process for Town and Country Planning Act 1990 development (indicative process only – not representative of all routes to permission)



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Draft Consultation Responses on Biodiversity Net Gain Regulations and Implementation

These responses need to be read alongside the consultation document.

https://consult.defra.gov.uk/defra-net-gain-consultation-team/consultation-on-biodiversity-net-gain-regulations/supporting_documents/Consultation%20on%20Biodiversity%20Net%20Gain%20Regulations%20and%20Implementation_January2022.pdf

Question 1

Do you agree with our proposal to exempt development which falls below a de minimis threshold from the biodiversity net gain requirement?

a) for area-based habitat: [Yes (which of the following thresholds do you think is most appropriate: 2m², 5m², 10m², 20m², 50m², other threshold – please specify)

b) for linear habitat (hedgerows, lines of trees, and watercourses): [Yes (which of the following thresholds you think is most appropriate: 2m, 5m, 10m, 20m, 50m, other threshold – please specify)

Yes, but only when it is truly de minimis so therefore the smallest thresholds that have been suggested would be appropriate, 2m² for habitat and 2m of linear habitat of habitat that is of low or medium distinctiveness.

Question 2

Do you agree with our proposal to exempt householder applications from the biodiversity net gain requirement?

Yes, we agree that this is a pragmatic approach, whilst some household development will be able to make some provision for net gain, to achieve 10% is very unlikely and therefore would have an impact on people making extensions to their property. The wording of the exemption needs to be done carefully to allow a local authority, where the evidence exists, to include policies that will necessitate some gain within an appropriate householder application, such as a bee, bat or swift bricks for instance.

Question 3

Do you agree with our proposal to exempt change of use applications from the biodiversity net gain requirement?

This is more complicated, depending on the scale of change of use and also what will occur on the site. It is arguable that some changes would have an impact on biodiversity and would be able to provide gains on, or off site. It is considered that changes of use of buildings could be exempt if it is solely the building that is subject to the change. If however the change of use relates to land then there are likely to be BNG implications.

Question 4

Do you think developments which are undertaken exclusively for mandatory biodiversity gains should be exempt from the mandatory net gain requirement?

Yes, where the entirety of the development site is for biodiversity net gain.

Question 5

Do you think self-builds and custom housebuilding developments should be exempt from the mandatory net gain requirement?

No, self and custom build developments should still be required to provide 10% net gain, as they have the same impact as all other types of dwelling. This can be achieved on or off site, but the impact that they have still needs to be mitigated. Some areas for self and custom build can be extensive and shouldn't be treated any different to any other development.

Question 6

Do you agree with our proposal not to exempt brownfield sites, based on the rationale set out above?

Yes, brownfield sites should be required to meet the minimum 10% net gain, or local adopted policy.

Question 7

Do you agree with our proposal not to exempt temporary applications from the biodiversity net gain requirement?

Yes, temporary applications should be required to meet the requirements.

Question 8

Do you agree with our proposal not to exempt developments which would be permitted development but are not on account of their location in conservation areas, such as in areas of outstanding natural beauty or national parks?

Yes,

Question 9

Are there any further development types which have not been considered above or in the previous net gain consultation, but which should be exempt from the biodiversity net gain requirement or be subject to a modified requirement?

No

Question 10

Do you agree with our proposal not to exempt development within statutory designated sites for nature conservation from the biodiversity gain requirement?

Yes. If it is for a visitor centre, then the impact on the biodiversity could be great and therefore should be mitigated. It is considered that other nature conservation bodies will own and be managing the site and therefore it is likely that any impact would be mitigated without provision in an Act. However there may be cases where this isn't so and therefore a requirement set out in legislation will ensure that these designated sites are treated in the same way and the valuable habitat that is found in these sites is protected and further enhanced if development of whatever scale is due to take place.

Question 11

Do you agree with the stated proposals for development (or component parts of a development) on irreplaceable habitats, specifically:

- a) *The exclusion of such development from the quantitative mandatory biodiversity gain objective?*

Yes, providing the wording of the secondary legislation around irreplaceable habitats is strong enough and set out by Natural England and specialist advisors.

- b) *The inclusion of a requirement to submit a version of a biodiversity gain plan for development (or component parts of a development) on irreplaceable habitats to increase proposal transparency?*

Yes, essential to understand the site.

- c) *Where there are no negative impacts to irreplaceable habitat, to allow use of the biodiversity metric to calculate the value of enhancements of irreplaceable habitat?*

Yes

- d) *To use the powers in biodiversity net gain legislation to set out a definition of irreplaceable habitat, which would be supported by guidance on interpretation?*

Yes

- e) *The provision of guidance on what constitutes irreplaceable habitat to support the formation of bespoke compensation agreements?*

Yes, essential.

Question 12

Do you agree with our proposed approach that applications for outline planning permission or permissions which have the effect of permitting development in phases should be subject to a condition which requires approval of a biodiversity gain plan prior to commencement of each phase?

Yes – however we would like to see that large sites can be reviewed if they secure permission before November 2023. Some sites may try to secure a permission before this date to bypass the 10% gain requirement on subsequent reserved matters. On large sites this will be a significant lost opportunity that could be resolved through a review of large scale permissions at an appropriate time.

There needs to be certainty that reserved matters applications do not try to deviate or lessen their provision. This is especially so on very large sites where different housebuilders may deliver different phases. The local authority will need to have sufficient legislation to ensure that any amendments are the most appropriate whilst meeting the requirements.

Question 13

Do you agree with the proposals for how phased development, variation applications and minerals permissions would be treated?

Wording around frontloading will need to be enforceable and if not achievable on site at the beginning of the development consideration of an offsite to mitigate at the early stages of development in addition to that planned for the rest of the site.

Yes, it is agreed that if there are any changes then a new biodiversity plan will need to be approved before development continues.

In relation to minerals permissions, Reviews of Old Minerals Permissions (ROMPS) should not be excluded as they are a good opportunity to achieve gains and to exclude biodiversity net gain from modern conditions would not appear to make sense in the context of the other regulations proposed.

Question 14

Do you agree that a small sites metric might help to reduce any time and cost burdens introduced by the biodiversity gain condition?

A small sites metric that meets the requirements of small sites and helps these developments through the process would be beneficial. The metric should be proportionate to the scale of development proposed and enable these developments to be suitably assessed without unnecessary cost burdens or undue delay. There are however some concerns that the initial small sites metric does not appear to include any offsite provision. It is likely that small sites will need to have an element of offsetting required. Small sites by their nature are intensely developed and therefore leave little space for onsite BNG. It is considered that these sites will predominantly need to have an element of offsite provision required in their plan. Some examples of the small site metric used against real examples would be helpful to understand the usefulness of the small sites metric.

Question 15

Do you think a slightly extended transition period for small sites beyond the general 2- year period would be appropriate and helpful?

No, a two year period is sufficient for all scale of development to be aware and consider the requirements of the Act.

Question 16

Are there any additional process simplifications (beyond a small sites metric and a slightly extended transition period) that you feel would be helpful in reducing the burden for developers of small sites?

The LPA, if provided with the right resources, may be able to further support small sites to meet their obligations. The provision of case studies would be useful on how small sites can meet the gains required.

Please note that questions 17 to 27 relate to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects and NNC would not be the determining authority in these cases. NSIP applications could still be determined within the NNC area, but it is not considered necessary to respond to these questions separately.

Part 3: How the mandatory biodiversity net gain requirement will work for Town and Country Planning Act 1990 development

Question 28

a) Do you agree with the proposed content of the biodiversity gain information and biodiversity gain plan?

Yes, the contents of the information and plan are necessary to undertake an accurate assessment of the development proposals and to ensure that the development is providing the required level of information to allow consideration by the local authority.

b) Do you agree with the proposed procedure for the submission and approval of biodiversity gain information and the biodiversity gain plan?

The submission and approval process is appropriate. Standardised templates will be helpful. There will however be a challenge for many local authorities who will simply not have the necessary skills and resources to assess the plans that have been submitted in any meaningful way. Extra burdens and transition funding will be necessary to upskill and support local authorities and this must be sufficient to fully address the additional requirements. The outcomes desired from the Act will only come to fruition if local authorities are enabled to fully and meaningfully comply with the requirements.

Question 29

We will continue to work with external stakeholders and industry on the form and content of the template. Do you agree with the proposed information to be included in a biodiversity gain plan as shown in the draft template?

Yes. This seems appropriate. A worked example would be useful to see.

Question 30

Do you agree that further guidance is needed to support decision-making about what constitutes appropriate off-site biodiversity gains for a given development?

Some worked examples would be good to show the different options available to each development. There will be uncertainty on the most appropriate off site gains at the introduction of the legislation, so further guidance would be appreciated in order to secure the best outcomes in different scenarios. Or a flow chart to demonstrate the best way to be considering the appropriateness of off site gains.

Further detail about what constitutes an appropriate conservation covenant is needed and examples of wording for S106 agreements would be helpful.

Guidance would be helpful to explain how local authorities could best target local habitat gain priorities through Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Green Infrastructure Plans or local plan allocations/policies.

Question 31

How should the UK Government encourage or enable developers and landowners to secure biodiversity gain sites for longer than the minimum 30-year period?

Include it in the legislation.

Question 32

Do you agree with our proposals for who can supply biodiversity units and the circumstances in which they may do so?

The proposals seem fair, it must be ensured that all those involved are held accountable and fully understand the implications of supplying the units and maintaining these for the required length of time. Suppliers should be fully aware of taking on the risk that it may cost more due to other interventions and will then be required to accept the burden and ensure the habitat provision is not diminished in anyway.

Question 33

Do you agree that developers which are able to exceed the biodiversity gain objective for a given development should be allowed to use or sell the excess biodiversity units as off-site gains for another development, provided there is genuine additionality?

Yes, this seems a fair approach. It is imperative that additionality is demonstrated and that the basic policy requirements are achieved and delivered before any biodiversity units can be used for other sites off set credits.

Question 34

Do you agree with the proposed scope of the UK Government's role in facilitating the market, as set out above?

The off site gains register will need to be easy to access for all and also able to be updated and added to easily to ensure it is up to date and fit for purpose. It is considered that a central maintained database is the only way that this can happen.

Support should be provided to local authorities to help them to identify a pipeline of suitable projects to enable the sale of biodiversity units. This is particularly likely to assist very small sites in identifying suitable offsetting opportunities locally. It will also provide an important opportunity for funding to support enhancement of publicly owned sites. Advice on identifying the full cost of management for pricing of biodiversity units would be beneficial. This should expand on all the costs which can be included in calculating the price of management for 30 years including staffing and equipment costs.

Question 35

Are the proposals outlined here sufficient to enable and encourage habitat banking?

Yes

Question 36

Do you agree with our proposal that to be eligible to supply biodiversity units for mandatory biodiversity net gain, habitat must be created or enhanced on or after a specified date, proposed to be 30 January 2020?

Yes

Question 37

Should there be a time limit on how long biodiversity units can be banked before they are allocated to a development? What would you consider to be an appropriate time limit?

It would seem appropriate that biodiversity units can be retained for an indefinite period, so no time limit applied and is down to the landowner's discretion should they want to consider alternatives if they are not allocated. However, this would apply to a whole site as it would be much more difficult to subdivide sites that may have been partially allocated with the biodiversity interdependencies that may be on site. At the very least a review of the

biodiversity and deliverability would need to be undertaken periodically to account for any changes on site.

Question 38

Do you agree that the eligibility criteria for adding sites to the biodiversity gain site register are sufficient?

Yes

Question 39

Do you agree that the register operator should determine an application within a maximum of 28 days unless otherwise agreed between both parties?

Yes, there could be the option of a fast track approach at an extra fee to be determined by the assessor.

Question 40

Do you agree that this list of information requirements will be sufficient to demonstrate that a biodiversity gain site is legitimate and meets the eligibility criteria?

Yes, it will need to be completed in full to allow it to be registered.

Question 41

Do you agree that the UK Government should require a habitat management plan, or outline plan, for habitat enhancement to be included on the register?

Yes

Question 42

Do you agree that the UK Government should allow the register operator to: a) set a fee for registration in line with the principle of cost recovery? b) impose financial penalties for provision of false or misleading information?

Yes

Question 43

Do you agree with our proposal to allow applicants to appeal a decision by the register operator where the applicant believes that the registration criteria have not been appropriately applied?

Yes

Question 44

Do you agree with our proposals for additionality with respect to:

a) *measures delivered within development sites?*

Yes, it will need to be clear on how aspects are measured in the metric, it is acknowledged that all parts of a new development need to deliver and therefore multifunctionality of all aspects is considered best practice, as long as they are meeting the requirements.

b) *protected species and off-site impacts to protected sites?*

Yes, it is important with these aspects of additionality that there is a clear rationale for it.

c) *on-site impacts on protected sites, and any associated mitigation and compensation?*

yes

d) *achievement of River Basin Management Plan Objectives?*

Yes

e) *the strengthened NERC Act duty on public authorities?*

Yes that NERC authorities may generate and sell biodiversity units.

Question 45

Do you think that A) the non-designated features or areas of statutory protected sites and/or

B) local wildlife sites and local nature reserves, should be eligible for enhancement through biodiversity net gain?

Yes, both.

Question 46

Do you agree that the enhancement of habitats, including designated features, within statutory protected sites should be allowed in the coastal, intertidal and marine environment as defined above?

No answer to this question as not relevant to NNC.

Question 47

Do you agree with our proposed approach to combining payments for biodiversity units with other payments for environmental services from the same parcel of land?

Yes, this seems like a sensible approach to start to secure delivery on the ground in a competing market for land and the policy driver in this instance to create more land for biodiversity. It also aligns with the fact that land management can create multifunctional benefits and that these may require more enhanced management and therefore cost that should be recognised by combining payments. Monitoring of land that has used a

combination of payments will need to take place to ensure that there are no impacts on the desired outcomes and that the outcomes do provide actual additionality. It is considered that the cost of monitoring of these sites will need to be factored in on a full cost recovery model, which may mean that these sites are then too costly to deliver. There needs to be a balanced approach between multifunctional benefits and the ability to monitor these.

Question 48

Are these proposals for statutory biodiversity credits sufficient to:

a) *Ensure, when supported by suitable guidance, that they are only used by developers as a last resort?*

Yes

b) *Mitigate the market risk associated with the sale of statutory biodiversity credits by the UK Government?*

Yes

Question 49

Do you think there are any alternatives to our preferred approach to credit sales, such as those outlined above, which could be more effective at supporting the market while also providing a last resort option for developers?

No. The price needs to be set that it is considered a last resort, however for areas where there are no local offsets and no mechanisms then the fee needs to reflect any viability concerns for bringing forward development. Could the fee be on an escalated approach, and extra costs added where there are local schemes available. It shouldn't be a barrier to development.

[Yes (please explain the alternatives and your reasoning) / No (please explain why not) / Other (please tell us more) / Do not know]

Question 50

Do the principles for how we will set, and review credit price cover the relevant considerations?

We don't consider it clear enough for the transition period that will ensure it is a last resort measure, whilst still allowing development in areas where there are no local schemes in place to be able to progress with development.

Question 51

Do you agree with the proposed principles for credit investment?

Yes

Question 52

Do the above project-level management, monitoring, enforcement, and reporting proposals seem sufficient, achievable, and not overly burdensome on practitioners, developers, or planning authorities?

The requirements seem reasonable, in particular the proposal that it is the landowners or developers responsibility to ensure that project monitoring and reporting obligations are fulfilled. However, in respect of a local authority setting up systems across the council to understand and adhere to the requirements will be burdensome in the first few years until processes are set up. The requirements for enforcement where there is a failure to deliver outcomes secured may also prove challenging, both in terms of resources and expertise. It is considered that the extra burdens grant will need to be sufficient to support the suitable set up of processes and systems across the council as well as expanding ecological support and upskilling staff. Councils will need to have an early understanding of the level of funding the government intends to make available and when this will be provided to enable them to plan resources effectively.

A way to ease monitoring requirements would be to have this as a digital and GIS record held at a central resource, the local biodiversity records centre for example, although funding would be required to support the establishment of this.

Question 53

Do you think earned recognition has potential to help focus enforcement and scrutiny of biodiversity net gain assessments, reporting and monitoring?

By earned recognition it is assumed that an organisation has passed a set of stringent tests and can demonstrate that they are competent and accountable for the provision of biodiversity, and therefore enforcement and scrutiny can be focused on those that do not have any recognition. This could be a sensible way forward, as long as there are regular checks on those sites where earned recognition organisations have been involved. There needs to be more clarity on this area.

Question 54

Do the above proposals for policy-level reporting, evaluation and enforcement seem sufficient and achievable?

Yes, they seem sufficient to monitor the success or otherwise of the Environment Act requirements. However, there will be extra burdens placed on local authorities to meet the proposals set out in the consultation. It is considered that extra burden payments will ensure that these aspects can be achieved at a local authority. This will need to be front loaded to ensure that the local authorities are ready to start recording at the implementation stage of the Act requirements.

Question 55

Considering the data requirements set out above and in greater detail in Annex C:

- a) *is there any additional data that you think should be included in the Biodiversity Reports?*

No, this appears to set out the data needed for a local authority to monitor biodiversity within their area.

- b) *is there any data included here that should not be required as part of the Biodiversity Reports?*

No



North
Northamptonshire
Council

North Northamptonshire Council

1 MARCH 2022 TO 30 JUNE 2022

Published by: Democratic Services

Leader of North Northamptonshire Council: Councillor Jason Smithers

INTRODUCTION

This is the North Northamptonshire Council's Forward Plan. It is published pursuant to The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012. Its purpose is to provide the required 28 days notice of the Council's intention to take 'key decisions' and to hold meetings or parts of meetings in private. It gives advance notice of all the "key decisions" and "exempt decisions" which the Executive or another body or officer so authorised are likely to take over a four month period. The Plan is updated on a rolling monthly basis.

The Members of the Executive are:	
Councillor Jason Smithers	Leader of North Northamptonshire Council
Councillor Helen Howell	Deputy Leader of North Northamptonshire Council Sport, Leisure, Culture and Tourism
Councillor Helen Harrison	Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Scott Edwards	Children, Families, Education and Skills
Councillor Harriet Pentland	Climate and Green Environment
Councillor Lloyd Bunday	Finance and Transformation
Councillor David Brackenbury	Growth and Regeneration
Councillor Graham Lawman	Highways, Travel and Assets
Councillor Andy Mercer	Housing and Community
Councillor David Howes	Rural Communities and Localism

The concept of a "key decision" is intended to capture the most important or significant decisions. "Key decisions" will normally be made at meetings open to the press and public. The press and public will only be excluded from such meetings as and when the Council's Monitoring Officer considers that this is necessary in order to avoid the public disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

The authority has decided that a Key Decision is one which is likely:-

- (a) to result in the authority incurring expenditure of which is, or the making of savings which are, significant; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more electoral wards in the area of the authority."

The Council has decided that significant expenditure or savings are those amounting to above £500,000.

In determining the meaning of "*significant*" for these purposes North Northamptonshire Council will also have regard to any guidance for the time being issued by the Secretary of State in accordance with section 9Q of the Local Government Act 2000.

At times it may be necessary for the North Northamptonshire Council to give consideration to items where the public may be excluded from the meeting. Members of the public are excluded from meetings whenever it is likely that, in the view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that confidential information would be disclosed. This includes exclusion from access to any pertinent documents. Details of the exemption categories can be found in the 'Access to Information Procedure Rules' section in the Council's [Constitution](#). This plan provides advance notice of any items which may be held in private.

Paragraph 5 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 provides for members of the public to make representations to the Council on why an exempt item should be considered in public, rather than in private. Persons wishing to make such representations and/or obtain further details in respect of any issues referred to in the Plan should contact the undermentioned officer.

The Monitoring Officer may also include in the Forward Plan references to such other decisions, which are to be taken by the Council or any of its Committees or Sub-Committee or officers as they consider appropriate. These will be those decisions that are considered to be significant or sufficiently important and/or sensitive so that it is reasonable for a member of the public to expect it to be recorded and published.

All general questions or queries about the contents of this Forward Plan or about the arrangements for taking key decisions should be raised with David Pope, Democratic Services.

Please email: democraticservices@northnorthants.gov.uk

March 2022

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
Budget Forecast Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director of Finance	
Capital Programme Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director of Finance	
Gallery, Museum and Library (GLM) Site Business Plan	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Voluntary Sector Grant Agreements for 2022/23 and 2023/24	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Annual Inflationary Uplift – Adult Care and Support	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Tree Strategy and Policy	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	
Pollinator Strategy	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	
Towns Fund – Sixth Form College	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	

Department for Transport Highways Funding	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	
Income Management Solution Project	Executive	Yes	No		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director of Finance	
WNorse: Fleet	Executive	Yes	No Fully exempt		17 Mar 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	

April 2022

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
Budget Forecast Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		14 Apr 2022	Executive Director of Finance	
Capital Programme Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		14 Apr 2022	Executive Director of Finance	
Housing Development - Former Grange Methodist Church Site, Kettering	Executive	Yes	No Part exempt		14 Apr 2022	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Community Asset Transfer Policy	Executive	Yes	No		14 Apr 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	
Priors Hall Golf Course	Executive	Yes	No		14 Apr 2022	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Asset of Community Value Policy	Executive	Yes	No		14 Apr 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	
Adoption of the Cottingham Neighbourhood Plan	Executive	Yes	No		14 Apr 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	
Stanton Cross Development of Governance Arrangements	Executive	Yes	No		14 Apr 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	

May 2022

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
Capital Programme Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		19 May 2022	Executive Director of Finance	
Budget Forecast Update 2021/22	Executive	Yes	No		19 May 2022	Executive Director of Finance	
Towns Fund – Train Station to Town Centre Link Road & Smart and Connected Corby Combined Projects	Executive	Yes	No		19 May 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	
Towns Fund – Multi-use Building	Executive	Yes	No		19 May 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	
Rough Sleeping Initiative 2022-2025	Executive	Yes	No		19 May 2022	Executive Director - Adults, Communities and Wellbeing	
Adoption of the North Northamptonshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)	Executive	Yes	No		19 May 2022	Executive Director – Place & Economy	

June 2022

Subject of the Decision:	Decision Maker	Is it a key decision?	Will it contain exempt information? /Reasons for exemption, if any	Consultation undertaken	Anticipated Date of Decision:	Report Author	Support documents (if any)
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There are currently no reports scheduled for June