

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

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Consultees

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Planning Policy Executive Advisory Panel	<u>Full public and stakeholder consultation between 17 December 2021 and 28 January 2022</u>

Distribution List

Internal	External
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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

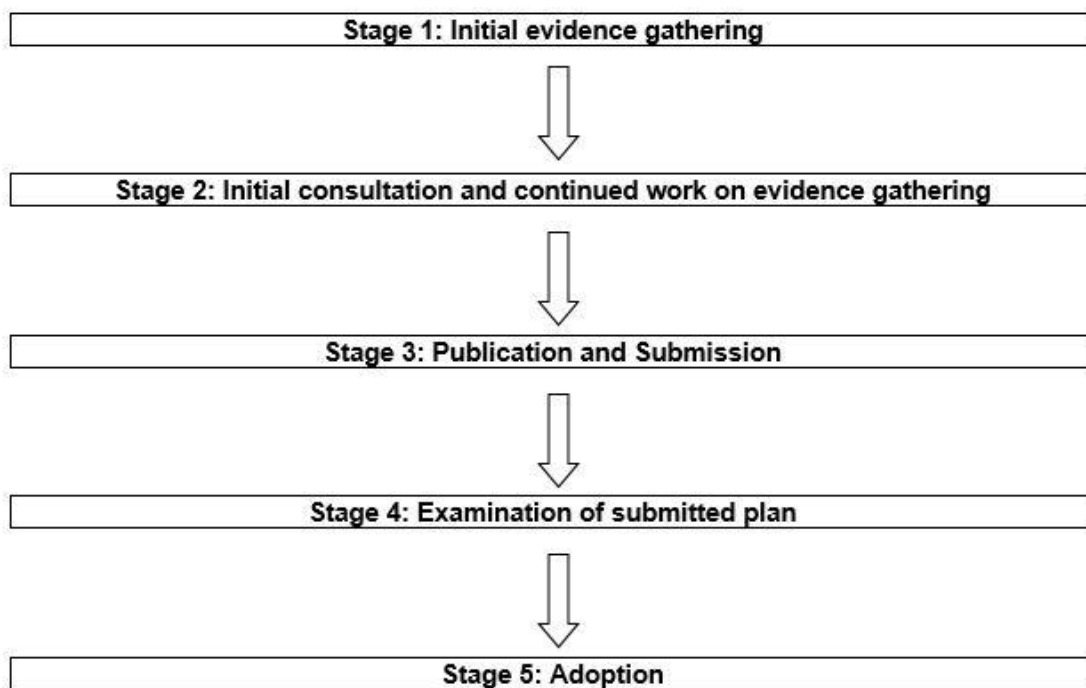
2.4 Local plans are prepared in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. The Government's Planning Practice Guidance states that there is considerable flexibility for local planning authorities in how they carry out the initial stages of local plan production, 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

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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

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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.

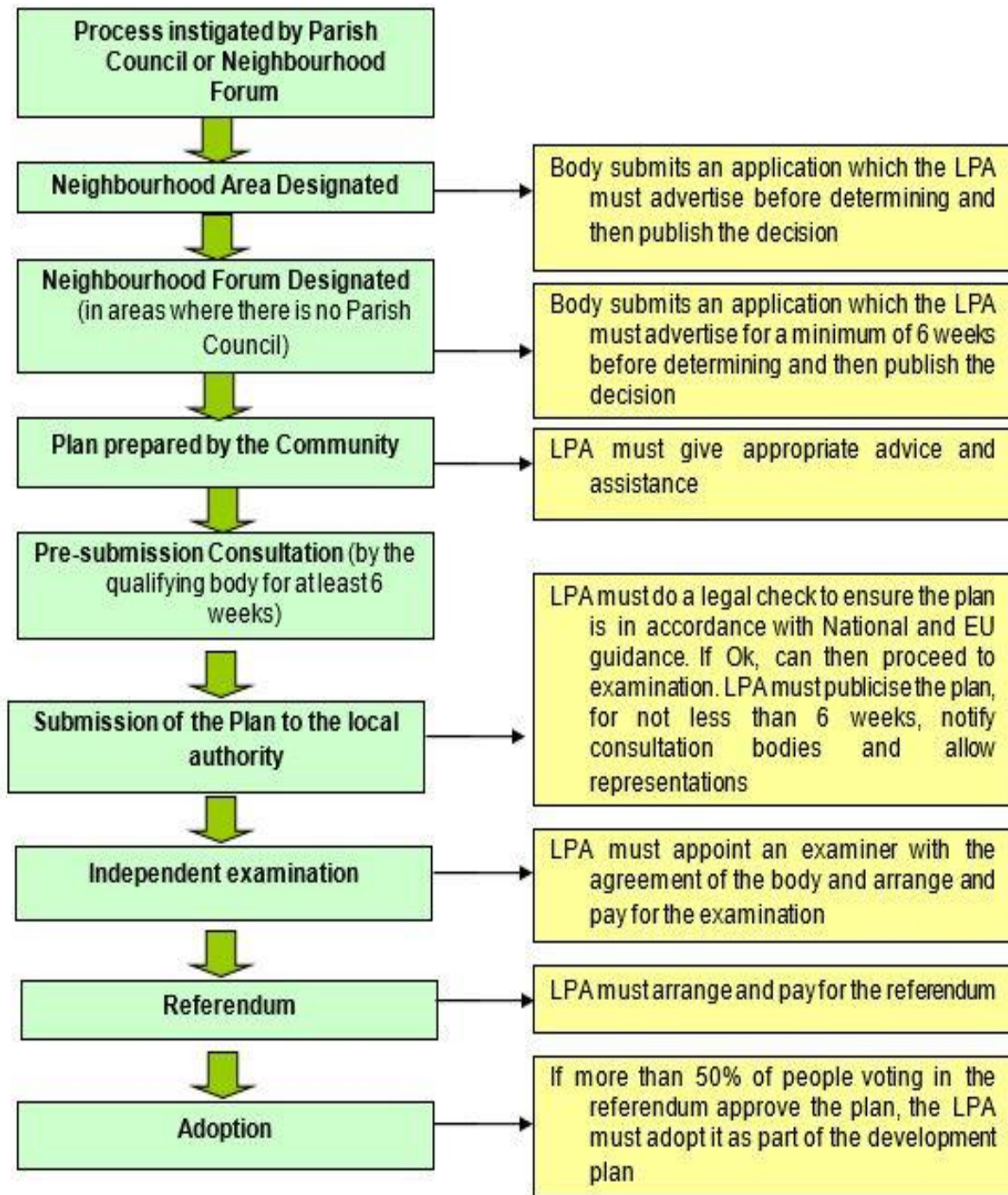
4.3 North Northamptonshire Council will designate neighbourhood areas (and forums if required), advise/assist communities in the preparation of a plan, check a submitted plan meets legal requirements, arrange the independent examination of the plan as well as bring the plan into force. In addition to 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.