

# **Richmondshire Local Plan**

## **Statement of Community Involvement**

**December 2017**

UPDATED MARCH 2021



**Contents**

1. Introduction.....2

2. Involvement in Local Planning.....3

    General Planning Principles.....3

    Local Planning Documents.....3

    Who will we involve?.....5

    When will we involve you?.....6

    How will we involve you?.....8

    Neighbourhood Planning.....10

3. Involvement in the Planning Application Process.....11

    Pre-application Consultation.....11

    How we would like to see the community involved in planning proposals.....11

    Post Application Consultation.....13

    Post Decision Notification.....13

### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 It is a statutory requirement that the Council prepares a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI)<sup>1</sup>. The SCI formally sets out the policy and standards for engaging residents, local groups, stakeholders and statutory consultees in preparing development plans and how we will consult on planning applications.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Feb 2019) paragraph 16d states that “Plans should be shaped by early, proportionate and effective engagement between plan-makers and communities, local organisations, businesses, infrastructure providers and operators and statutory consultees”.
- 1.3 As the planning system has the potential to affect everyone who lives, works in or visits the Richmondshire Plan Area we agree that it is only right that all should be able to contribute to the preparation of plans and policies. It is equally important for communities to be involved in the process of development management (which deals with planning applications).
- 1.4 This update of the SCI is required because due to the Covid-19 coronavirus pandemic, the ways in which we are able to consult have changed drastically. The Government have said *‘where any of the policies in the Statement of Community Involvement cannot be complied with due to current guidance to help combat the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19), the local planning authority is encouraged to undertake an immediate review and update the policies where necessary so that plan-making can continue’* (Para 077, Plan-making Guidance). Richmondshire District Council is in the process of reviewing the currently adopted Local Plan (2014), with the Preferred Options Consultation scheduled to take place in May 2021 (following on from the initial Issues and Options Consultation held in September 2018). It is therefore essential that the Statement of Community Involvement is amended as such to reflect current circumstances and ensure the plan review can continue.
- 1.5 Furthermore, this review of the SCI takes account of recent changes in legislation and policy and outlines how people can be involved in the Local Plan review; the preparation of future Local Plan documents; and, decision making. Planning legislation sets out a number of statutory requirements with respect to consultation on planning policy documents and planning applications. This SCI sets out how we will meet these requirements and involve everyone in all aspects of the planning system.

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<sup>1</sup> Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act as amended

## 2.0 Involvement in Local Plan-making

- 2.1 The Government has given local people an opportunity to shape their neighbourhoods. The changes to the planning system set out in the Localism Act 2011 and National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, March 2012) gave communities the opportunity to get more involved in the preparation of planning documents for their areas.
- 2.2 The amended NPPF (February 2019) paragraph 15 states that “*succinct and up-to-date plans should provide a positive vision for the future of each area; a framework for addressing housing needs and other economic, social and environmental priorities; and a platform for local people to shape their surroundings*”.
- 2.2 This part of the SCI sets out how and when you can influence new planning policy documents including the Local Plan review.

### General Principles

- 2.3 When we involve you in the preparation of Local Planning documents we will:
- Explain clearly the reasons why we want to involve you and receive your comments.
  - Keep the process simple by writing in plain English and explain any planning terms that we need to use.
  - Provide information in an accessible format and giving clear advice on how the planning system works when this is asked for
  - Make Local Plan documents available and share information with you on the Council’s website, Local Plan webpage, and where possible and accessible, in local libraries and other meeting places where this is appropriate and effective.
  - Make it easy for you to get involved by explaining when, where and how you can provide your views and make sure you have enough time and notice of the opportunities to get involved.
  - Make use of existing community networks to publicise, inform and involve you in the plan review process and any other planning policy related consultation. Any public planning events held will be made as accessible as possible given current circumstances.
  - Encourage involvement from groups that have not been involved in the planning process in the past.
  - Listen to your views, explain what we can and cannot take into account and provide feedback on how these have been considered.

### Local Planning Documents

- 2.4 Local Plan will be made up of the following documents:
- **Local Development Scheme (LDS)** – sets out what local development documents will be produced and when we expect to produce them. All of our planning consultations will be carried out in line with the latest LDS timetable and are available on the Councils website.

[www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning/](http://www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning/)

- **Local Development Documents** – Form the development plan for Richmondshire outside of the Yorkshire Dales National Park. They are the legal framework for all development and lay the foundations for future growth, while protecting our most valuable built and natural environmental assets. They set out the policies, guidance, land use designations and site allocations against which all planning applications and other development proposals in the plan area will be assessed.

Local Planning Authorities (LPA) can incorporate all of these elements within a single Local Development Document called a Local Plan or they can produce multiple documents known as Development Plan Documents (DPD) which each contain certain elements. Government planning regulations current preference is for LPAs to produce a single Local Plan document.

The Local Plan 2012-2028 Core Strategy (LPCS) is the Councils currently adopted Local Development Document which sets the overall scale of development and where it could go across the plan area. It also sets the policies which protect local heritage, environment and community resources. It was examined by the Planning Inspectorate and adopted by the Council in December 2014. We are now in the process of reviewing this and will be producing detailed development management policies, updating settlement development limits and identifying strategic site allocations. These will be produced in a single Local Plan document or separate Local Development Documents and we will give you a number of opportunities to comment as they are prepared, the next stage of consultation being Preferred Options scheduled to take place in May 2021.

- **Community Infrastructure** – Will be provided through developers' contributions towards projects such as local school places.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)** - Are prepared to provide further guidance on specific policies. SPDs can be produced more quickly and do not need to be examined by a Planning Inspector.
- **Annual Monitoring Reports (AMRs)** – Sets out our progress in producing our local plan documents, what development has happened and how this affects the Council's adopted development plan policies and proposals.
- **Sustainability Appraisal** - We assess the social, environmental and economic impacts of each Local Development Document and relevant Supplementary Planning Documents when we prepare plans. This Sustainability Appraisal is to make sure that the way forward is the best on overall and we have minimised any potentially adverse impacts of

## Richmondshire Local Plan – Statement of Community Involvement

our planning policies. This process will also involve the assessment of any health and equality impacts. We will also carry out a Habitat Regulations Assessment of our emerging planning documents to show how our plans help to protect the most sensitive and protected natural areas.

- **Evidence Base** – we need to gather a great deal of evidence about the local area when we are preparing planning policies. For example about how the local population is changing, the state of the local economy or flood risk. This is necessary to justify our proposals and provide robust reasoning when proposals come forward which do not comply with Local Plan policies.

2.5 You can find out about all of these on the Council's website [www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning](http://www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning)

### Who will we involve?

- 2.6 We want everyone to have the chance to have their say on the Council's Local development documents. We will involve individuals, groups and organisations in the preparation of our new planning documents so that everyone has the chance to shape the future of the District.
- 2.7 We seek to involve and consult a wide range of other interest groups and organisations, developers and consultants, as well as local residents and businesses.
- 2.8 We also hold and maintain a database of people who have asked to be kept informed of any Local Planning consultations. The database is reviewed and updated regularly and any individual or an organisation may ask to be added or removed from the database at any time. If an email address is provided we will contact you by this method in the first instance. Please let us know if you would like to be added onto our database, or need to amend your existing contact details.
- 2.9 The Council must consult with certain organisations, who are identified in Government planning regulations as 'specific consultation bodies', at key stages in the preparation of the Local Plan. These are:
- Neighbouring local planning authorities:
    - Craven District Council
    - Durham County Council
    - Darlington Borough Council
    - Hambleton District Council
    - Harrogate Borough Council
    - North Yorkshire County Council
    - Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority
  - Civil Aviation Authority
  - Coal Authority
  - Environment Agency
  - Highways England (formerly Highways Agency)

## Richmondshire Local Plan – Statement of Community Involvement

- Historic England (formerly English Heritage, the Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England)
- Homes and Communities Agency (HCA)
- Ministry of Defence
- Natural England
- NHS Hambleton Richmondshire and Whitby Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Commissioning Board (formerly Primary Care Trust)
- North Yorkshire, York and East Riding Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)
- Northern Gas Networks Ltd.
- North Yorkshire Police (the local policing authority)
- Northumbrian Water (one of the water and sewerage companies)
- Northern Powergrid
- Network Rail
- Office of Rail Regulation
- Yorkshire Water (one of the water and sewerage companies)
- Other relevant gas, electricity and electronic communications network infrastructure providers.

2.10 The Council will also consult with certain organisations, who are identified in Government planning regulations as ‘general consultation bodies’, at key stages in the preparation of the Local Plan. These are:

- Town and Parish councils;
- Voluntary bodies whose activities benefit any part of the Richmondshire Plan area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of different needs groups in the Richmondshire Plan area;
- Bodies which represent the interests of people carrying out businesses in the Richmondshire Plan area.

### Duty to Cooperate

2.11 The Localism Act 2011 also sets out a ‘duty to co-operate’. It is a requirement that we will engage with neighbouring local authorities and other statutory bodies to consider joint approaches to plan-making. We are committed to meeting this duty and are already working closely with neighbouring authorities, other partner organisations and stakeholders. A schedule will be produced evidencing how the ‘duty to cooperate’ has been complied with.

### **When will we involve you?**

#### Local Development Documents

2.12 There are a number of key stages involved in the preparation of Local Development Documents. These stages are designed to enable consultation and to ensure that the process is as open and transparent as possible. They are set out by Government planning regulations which state that there must be a minimum of two consultation periods through the preparation of Local Development Documents.

2.13 The diagram illustrates the key stages in the production of Local Development Documents. The Council encourages involvement in the earliest stages of preparation as this provides the best opportunity for people to have their views taken in to account and be more directly involved in the creation of policies.

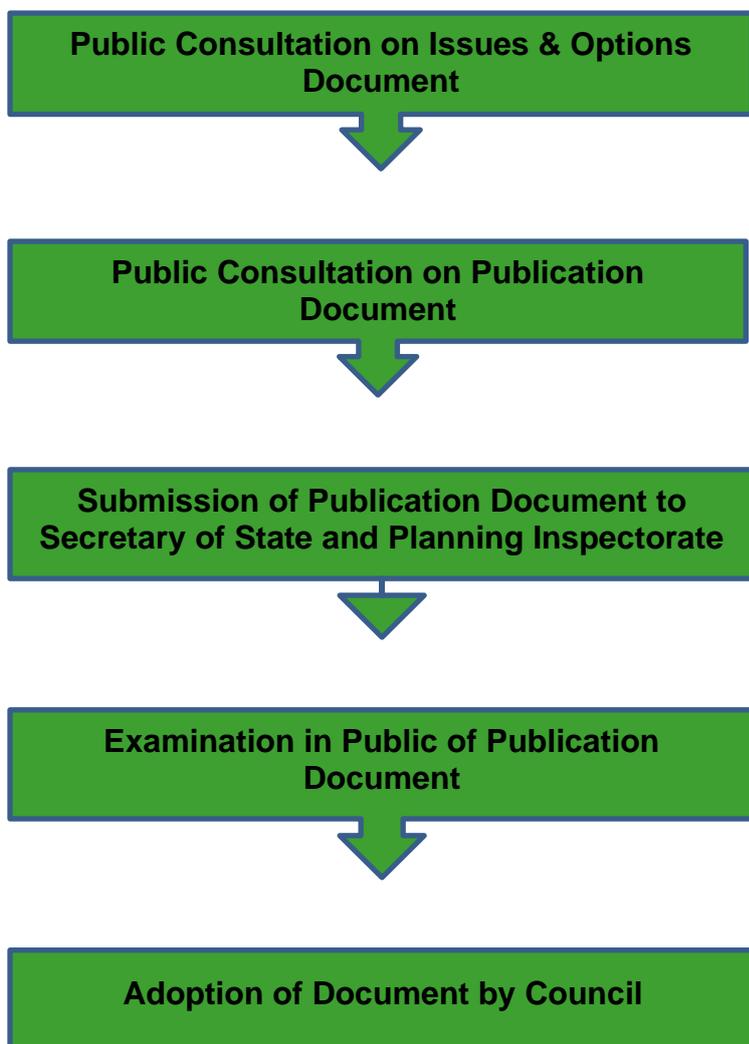


Figure 1: Key stages in the preparation of Local Development Documents

2.14 The first consultation relates to the Issues and Options proposed that the Local Development Document should address. This consultation was held in September-October 2018, the results of which can be found on our website. The second consultation will be at the Publication stage outlining the preferred options, taking account of the previous comments received, and will take place in May 2021. The third consultation will be at the Submission stage, prior to the submission of the Local Development Document to the Secretary of State for Examination in Public. This will be chaired by a planning inspector who will be provided with copies of all representations received at the

## Richmondshire Local Plan – Statement of Community Involvement

publication stage. Everyone who has made a formal representation at the publication stage will be able to speak at the Examination in Public.

- 2.15 The formal Public Consultations on Local Development Documents are required by Government planning regulations to last for a minimum of six weeks. Consultation periods, when not fixed by regulation, may be extended at the Councils discretion when they overlap with holiday periods (e.g. Christmas, Easter and August).

### Supplementary Planning Documents

- 2.16 There are less stages required by Government planning regulations in the preparation of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) as these documents contain guidance rather than policy and are not required to be formally submitted for examination in public by a Planning Inspector. The stages that do exist however are still designed to enable consultation and to ensure the process is as open and transparent as possible.
- 2.17 The diagram illustrates the key stages in the production of Supplementary Planning Documents.

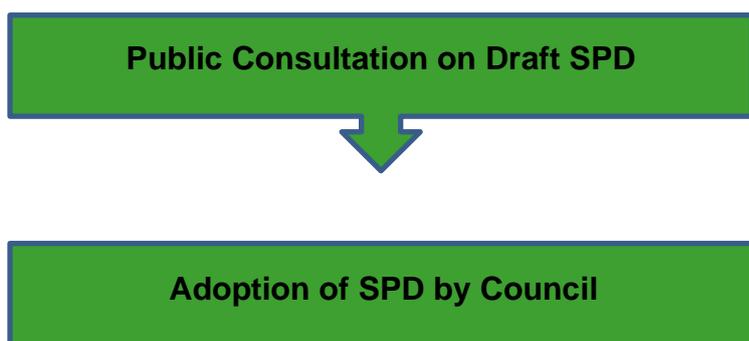


Figure 2: Key stages in the preparation of SPDs

- 2.18 One stage of public consultation will be completed on the Draft SPD. The issues raised in the consultation will be addressed prior to the adoption of the SPD. If the changes required following the consultation are considered to significantly change the SPD then a further consultation on the revised SPD will be carried out.
- 2.19 The formal Public Consultation on SPDs is required by Government planning regulations to last for a minimum of 4 weeks. Consultation periods, when not fixed by regulation, may be extended at the Councils discretion when they overlap with holiday periods (e.g. Christmas, Easter and August).

## How will we involve you?

### Consultation Methods

## Richmondshire Local Plan – Statement of Community Involvement

- 2.20 We will keep you informed of consultations and updates of Local Planning documents through a variety of methods including:
- Letters and e-mails;
  - Our designated Local Plan webpages;
  - Social media;
  - Press releases in the local media;
  - Formal notices in the local media;
  - Virtual meetings, and where possible, public meetings, exhibitions and workshops;
- 2.21 We will also speak with your Parish or Town Councils or any other interest groups who want to discuss their areas of interest with us. You can contact the Council's Community Development Team at any time and not just during specific consultation activities who are available to answer your questions on local planning policy matters.
- 2.22 Your local District Councillor also has an important role to play in supporting you and your neighbours to take part in Local Plan issues. In the Local Plan process District Councillors:
- Represent their wards, listen to residents' concerns on Local Plan issues and speak on their behalf;
  - Explain the Council's business to their constituents;
  - Makes decisions on individual planning applications based on Local Plan policies through the Planning Committee;
  - Make decisions on planning policy and adopt statutory planning policy through the Council.
- 2.23 At all stages of the preparation of our new Local Plan we will make copies of relevant documents available. All of our planning documents will be available to download from our website. Where and if possible, copies of consultation draft planning documents and background documents will be made available in local libraries and Council Offices. Please contact the Policy Team using the details at the end of this document if you require a hard copy of the documents, however please be aware that charges may apply for additional printed copies and for some background papers.
- 2.24 We can include far more information on the planning pages on the Council's website and designated Local Plan webpage than we could within newspaper adverts. You can also browse this information at a time more convenient to you. We will update these pages regularly with all the latest information on development plan progress and provide you with opportunities to contact us.

### Making Comments

- 2.25 You can comment in a written format via feedback forms, questionnaires, letter, e-mail or online forms. In the Local Plan process formal responses are called representations and these can be objections to or support the Council's proposed plans and policies. Representations can only be formally taken in to account when you make them in writing within the specified time for a

## **Richmondshire Local Plan – Statement of Community Involvement**

particular consultation. Representations will be made public and read by a Planning Inspector.

### **Consultation Feedback**

- 2.26 We will formally acknowledge receipt of all email and letter consultation responses and request additional information from you where comments are not clear.
- 2.27 At the end of a consultation period, a Consultation Statement will be produced, in accordance with statutory requirements, which will outline the full extent of the consultation, who was consulted, how they were consulted, and a summary of the main issues raised as a result of those consultations. It will also outline the Council's response to these issues raised in the consultation and how these have been acted upon. This will be available on the Council's website as well as be submitted with the Local Development Document to the Secretary of State, alongside other evidence, for independent examination.

### **Neighbourhood Planning**

- 2.28 Neighbourhood Plans are plans for guiding the future development and growth of a local area which can be produced by communities. The preparation of, and consultation on, Neighbourhood Plans is governed by the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The community/group producing a Neighbourhood Plan is responsible for undertaking consultation and engagement during its preparation in accordance with the relevant legislation and guidance. Where local people express an interest in neighbourhood planning, the Council will support them with initial advice about the process; provide advice and information during Plan preparation; and; provide assistance during examination and referendum. Further information on Neighbourhood Planning is available at:  
<http://www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning>

### **Community Development Team Contact Details**

Website: [www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning](http://www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning)

Email: [localplan@richmondshire.gov.uk](mailto:localplan@richmondshire.gov.uk)

Phone: 01748 829100

### **3. Involvement in Planning Application Process**

- 3.1 Government is keen to increase community engagement in the planning system by encouraging developers to work with communities before submitting development proposals, particularly major schemes. Please note, at this stage the Government has not made pre-application consultation compulsory, except for wind turbine proposals.

#### **Pre-application consultation**

- 3.2 The Council considers it good practice for all applicants to consult with the community and other stakeholders as appropriate before finalising their schemes. Potentially, everyone benefits. Developers can ‘test’ local public reaction and identify potential areas of conflict, whilst the community is given a chance to influence proposals before they reach an advanced stage. Open and constructive debate at this early stage helps to flag up issues, voice concerns and allow alternative solutions to be explored before submitting an application. Pre-application consultation offers the chance to see how much of a consensus can be achieved and may reduce avoidable objections. But it may not be possible to meet all concerns and does not prejudice the outcome of any subsequent application.
- 3.3 We encourage developers to discuss their proposals with the Council’s Development Management Team at an early stage. This helps to identify issues and constraints as well as providing the chance to consider alternative ways in which proposals might be revised to overcome potential concerns. We can advise whether a development is likely to be “sensitive”, the need for pre-application consultation and the level at which it should be pitched, including any diversity issues.
- 3.4 We cannot refuse to register an otherwise valid application that has not been subject to a pre-application community consultation. But, developers should consider the benefits of early and appropriate community consultation as part of any pre-application discussion. This could help to identify potential problems or areas of conflict that could be addressed before an application is

## **Richmondshire Local Plan – Statement of Community Involvement**

made. It could also avoid requests for additional information, delays in determining the application or a refusal. Essentially we are seeking to encourage good practice.

- 3.5 Please note that the Council does charge a fee for the provision of pre-application advice for most ‘major’ developments and any proposal involving the provision of additional dwellings (whether new build or conversion). Details of the fee levels can be found on the Council’s web site. [www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning](http://www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning)

### **How we would like to see the community involved in planning proposals**

- 3.6 Pre-application community consultation should be tailored in its scale, nature and complexity. Several consultation methods are available, including: online visual exhibitions, video workshops, virtual open meetings and postal surveys. Where and if possible other consultation methods could include public exhibitions, workshops and surveys. However not all will be appropriate in every case and thus should be proportionate.
- 3.7 We recommend early contact with the Town and Parish Councils/Meetings on all development proposals. They provide a local community focus for planning matters and a useful source of local opinion.
- 3.8 If a proposal is likely to be controversial, it is vital to ensure that community engagement is fair and equitable, which may mean that Council Officers and Members will be unable to take an active role at this early stage.
- 3.9 For large and complex applications, including:
- Major development proposals
    - Housing development for 10 or more units or where a site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more
    - Where the floorspace of building(s) to be created is 1000 square metres or more
    - Where a site has an area of 1 hectare or more
  - Developments requiring Environmental Impact Assessments which are accompanied by an Environmental Statement
  - Proposals that clearly depart from the Council’s Development Plan
  - Proposals the Council advises are likely to be “sensitive”.
- 3.10 Developers should:
- Assess the nature and scale of the community consultation exercise.
  - Carry out the exercise and submit a report with their application explaining the process they have followed, a summary of responses received and show how they have been taken into account in the submitted scheme.
- 3.11 For other development proposals we encourage applicants to:

## Richmondshire Local Plan – Statement of Community Involvement

- Explain proposals to neighbours or the local community and Local Town/Parish Council.
- Request views on the draft proposals.
- Consider any views received and where appropriate, revise the proposals to take account of any views, or demonstrate why it has not been possible to take account of any such views.
- Submit with the application, a summary explaining the process they have followed and how neighbour / community views have been taken into account.

### Post application consultation

3.12 Community consultation is already part of the process to determine planning applications once they have been received and includes:

- Newspaper advertisements
- Display of site notices
- Neighbour consultations where properties are considered to be immediately adjacent and directly affected by development proposals
- Consultation with Parish / Town Councils and Parish meetings
- Consultation with specialist bodies and statutory agencies
- Publication of weekly lists of submitted applications, including on the Council web-site

3.13 Further details about the process for dealing with and consultation on applications; dates for meetings of the Planning Committee; reports for applications to be determined by Planning Committee; and arrangements for speaking at Committee, are provided on the Council's web site. We will continue to keep all of these processes under review in the light of feedback which we receive.

### Post decision notification

3.14 The Council publishes on the 'Planning Public Access' area of its web site details of all decisions that have been issued. Copies of formal decision notices, which set out the reasons for the decision and any conditions which may be attached, are also available there along with the approved plans and documents for recently determined applications.

### Development Management Team Contact details

Website: [www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning](http://www.richmondshire.gov.uk/planning)

Planning 'Public Access': <https://planning.richmondshire.gov.uk/online-applications/>

Phone: 01748 829100

**Richmondshire Local Plan – Statement of Community Involvement**

Duty Planner: 01748 901131 [Duty.Planner@richmondshire.gov.uk](mailto:Duty.Planner@richmondshire.gov.uk)

This information is available in alternative formats and languages



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