How we consult with you

Plymouth’s Statement of Community Involvement and Compact Code of Practice

Improving partnership working between the public and third sectors
1 Statement of Community Involvement

1.1 What is the Statement of Community Involvement?

What is this all about?

This Statement provides consistent standards for involvement in decision making in the city. It sets a minimum standard.

It is for everybody who wants to get involved in influencing Plymouth’s future. This includes individual people who want to start getting involved or be proactive in raising issues and ideas.

It forms part of Plymouth’s Local Strategic Partnership Compact. The Compact sets out a shared vision, establishes principles for the relationship between partners and clarifies the expectations the partners have of each other. All relevant statutory bodies and community-based groups who are represented in the LSP can aspire to the spirit of the LSP Compact and will sign up to it.

Many groups and organisations will have much higher, or more detailed standards for community involvement, they set these out as an appendix to this document.

**Statement of Community Involvement**

Everyone needs to be involved in making Plymouth a great place to live, work and play. If you live in Plymouth, you know what is happening in your community and how it could be improved. If you are a local group or business in the city you will have information and ideas that can help shape the future of the city. By taking part you can make sure that decisions being made are the best for you and the city.

What is this statement for?

Community involvement is vital to make sure that Plymouth achieves its vision:

‘To become one of Europe’s most vibrant waterfront cities, where an outstanding quality of life is enjoyed by everyone.’
This requires consistent good quality, coordinated engagement by all the organisations who want to help improve the City, and for people to understand how to get involved in making decisions. This statement sets out these values and standards.

Plymouth’s Local Strategic Partnership is called Plymouth 2020. Many issues facing the city and its community can only be tackled and resolved if all parts of the community work together.

The Partnership brings together many organisations and groups that are involved in making decisions that affect the future well-being of the people of Plymouth. The voluntary, community, business and public sectors are all represented within Plymouth 2020 Partnership.

Everyone in the Local Strategic Partnership will be asked to follow these commitments.

When you see this logo you know an organisation is a member of the LSP.

Who is this statement for?

This statement is for anyone who is interested in playing a part in improving Plymouth’s future. This includes public and private organisations, the third sector (such as voluntary and community groups) and individuals.

This statement is written to be used by two groups of people:

- **People who are getting involved in making decisions**
  This includes individuals, community groups, businesses, voluntary organisations and anyone else who may get involved with helping to make a decision.

- **Organisations who are involving people in making decisions**
  This includes private businesses, public organisations such as the Council or the Police Service, and the voluntary and community sector (Third Sector). All organisations that are part of the LSP are signed up to this way of working.

Please contact 01752 304026 if you would like this document in another format or language.
What status does this Statement have?
This Statement is the Code of Consultation for the LSP Compact. It is also a statutory document for Plymouth City Council’s Local Development Framework.

What is a community?
A community is defined as a group of people who have common characteristics. Communities can be defined by location (such as a street or a neighbourhood), race, ethnicity, age, occupation, a shared interest (such as cycling or local businesses) or affinity (such as religion, faith or belief) or other common bonds.

What is involvement?
This is the wide variety of communication and interaction that takes place between decision-makers and communities to identify issues and exchange views. Any involvement should be accessible, meaningful, worthwhile and enjoyable for all those taking part.

Please note: Words that you may be unfamiliar with are defined in the glossary.

2 Commitments and standards
2.1 Involvement commitments
Involvement is a two way process. This statement sets out eight commitments that all are asked to respect.
These commitments ensure that:
• Involvement is effective and influential
• People are linked to decisions being made
• Decisions better relate to community aspirations and needs
• There is trust and confidence in engagement processes
### Involvement Commitments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Commitments</th>
<th>When asking people:</th>
<th>For people responding:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Be honest and open</strong></td>
<td>• Honest, accurate and unbiased information should be provided.</td>
<td>Anyone claiming to represent a group of people should clearly state their role Chair, secretary etc), and should be able to demonstrate the scale and remit for their group. For example, by providing an attendance list or number of members.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Be clear about what can be influenced and changed and how decisions will be made.</td>
<td>Any conflicts of interest should be declared. It should be clear if your organisation or group stand to benefit financially or otherwise from the outcome.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Be clear when consulting other organisations whether you expect the person to ask their members/staff about it, or use their own expertise.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Listen to each others’ views</strong></td>
<td>• Listen to other opinions and ensure everyone has a chance to contribute.</td>
<td>Listen to other opinions and ensure everyone has a chance to contribute.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Recognise and respect differences of opinion and work to resolve them.</td>
<td>Recognise and respect differences of opinion and work to resolve them.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Be willing to learn new things</strong></td>
<td>• Be prepared to learn about people’s views and opinions.</td>
<td>Learn about how you can get involved and influence decisions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Help people to learn about the processes involved and how best to contribute.</td>
<td>Learn about the information being used to make decisions.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Include collecting, considering and using views as an important and valuable part of the decision making process.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Include everyone</strong></td>
<td>• Understand and accommodate the different ways people want to get involved.</td>
<td>Play an active role in advising or supporting involvement processes to help involve different communities.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Monitor who is taking part and take any necessary steps to ensure everyone has a chance to contribute if they want to.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Commitments</td>
<td>When asking people:</td>
<td>For people responding:</td>
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| **Communicate effectively** | • Provide clear and accessible information, publicity and guidance to help people prepare in advance.  
• Give adequate time and resources to ensure people have a fair opportunity to contribute.  
• Any racist or inflammatory language should not be tolerated. | Where possible, make contributions on time and ensure comments state clearly how the plan, policy or decision can be improved.  
Any racist or inflammatory language should not be tolerated. |
| **Consider and use all information available** | • Have clear processes in place to consider all the views and ideas expressed in an objective and unbiased way.  
• Demonstrate the difference made as a result of comments, including why and how decisions have been made. | Make full use of all the information provided and use this to help get involved and contribute in a meaningful way.  
Where appropriate gather evidence to help inform ideas. |
| **Work together** | • Work with other organisations where possible to save time and resources. This might mean sharing information or looking at ways to cooperate to help reduce consultation fatigue.  
• Invest in building relationships with communities to help them get involved. | Work with or establish groups to increase your capability to contribute.  
Work with organisations to advise on and develop the ways they involve people. |
| **Keep in touch** | • Keep people in touch with progress on decisions, feedback results, show how views have been used.  
• Let people know if they can or need to get involved again. | Keep organisations informed where necessary. For example, updating your contact details or contacting them if you know something that might be useful. |
2.2 Involvement standards

Taking part in influencing decisions should be a rewarding and enjoyable process.

- For people who are getting involved these standards are what you should expect when taking part
- For organisations involving people, you should aim to meet the five standards of good practice below

1. Who should be involved

- List who needs to be involved, think about who will be directly affected by the decision, who has expertise to offer, and who may need extra help to get involved
- Take advice on who to involve and how from other relevant organisations or groups
- Resources should be focused on making sure the people identified have a chance to get involved
- Think about who could work with you to make involvement more comprehensive or to share resources with

2. Why people are being involved

- Be clear why people need to be involved in making a decision
- Be clear what decision is being made
- Make sure people are properly informed of the facts and background
- Be clear what can and can not be changed
3. When people will be involved

- Resources should be focused towards early involvement when people can really influence the process
- It is recommended that consultation should be open for 12 weeks unless there are clear reasons such as statutory guidelines that say otherwise
- Any events should be at held at a range of times to ensure a wide range of people have a chance to attend

4. How people will be involved

- Consultation should be planned in an environmentally sensitive way; for example, using local suppliers for refreshments and making sure that the venue is accessible by public transport
- Consultation should be planned in a culturally sensitive way; for example, being aware of religious festivals and dietary requirements
- Involvement should be at an appropriate scale depending on the impact the decision or policy will have. This needs to be carefully considered, it should not result in less involvement
- Accessible venues should be used where ever possible. Consideration needs to be given to physical access, proximity to those most affected by a decision, and access to services such as buses and childcare
- Use a range of methods to inform, consult and involve people (see table of methods below. Those in bold are suggested as a minimum)
- Creative and interactive methods should be used where possible to encourage people to take part, particularly seldom heard groups
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method recommended when:</th>
<th>creating a plan/major decision</th>
<th>finalising a plan/major decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Informing - making sure people find out about it</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Advertise locally</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>Create and update web pages</td>
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<td>Articles in local paper and other publications</td>
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<td>Newsletters, leaflets or summaries</td>
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<td>Exhibitions</td>
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<td>Posters, fliers and promotion</td>
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<td>Briefings</td>
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<tr>
<td>E-mail notification</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Consulting - asking people for their views and evidence</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key stakeholder discussions and forums</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documents/information available in offices and on-line</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Documents/information sent directly to stakeholders</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Structured feedback form included with documents</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with community groups</td>
<td>✔</td>
<td>✔</td>
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<td>Interactive exhibitions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public workshops</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Questionnaire/ survey</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online consultation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Councillor’s public meetings or surgeries (e.g. area committees)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Involving - discussions to develop ideas together</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Key stakeholder workshop to identify issues and shape options</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public visioning events</td>
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<td>✔</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public workshops</td>
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<tr>
<td>Online discussion forums</td>
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### 5. What happens to the results

- Agree how results will be reported on and when.
- Be clear how you have met the values and standards in this statement.
- Show how results have been used to influence final decisions.
- Any consultation or involvement does not finish until the results and the decision are fed back to those who took the time to get involved.
2.3 How are decisions made?

The information used to make decisions is called an evidence base. Consultation and individual comments are only part of the information used to make decisions. In addition there is a range of research and information collected from a variety of sources, including advice from experts in related fields. The diagram below shows the range of opinions that need to be considered. Creating a policy or making an informed decision requires consideration of all the information available. This often requires understanding conflicting opinions.

All of this information forms part of the evidence base, and should be made public so that everyone has a chance to see what information there is and how it is being used to influence a decision. This includes responses to people’s comments and an explanation of how they have been considered.

Top tip: For your comments to have the most impact you need to say how you would change the plan to meet your concerns.
2.4 Building capacity

To enable people to get involved, groups, communities and individuals need to have the opportunity to learn about the relevant processes, and develop skills and knowledge on how to influence decisions. This is called ‘building capacity’.

This can have added benefits, as organisations learn more about communities’ needs as well as communities learning more about the decision making process. Over time this helps to improve relationships and the quality of involvement that takes place. Opportunities to do this should be provided at appropriate times to ensure people can prepare for their involvement. This is particularly important for people representing community groups who often have very limited time and resources.

Top tip: If you want to run your own consultation about a plan, perhaps with a group of people you know, ask the people producing the plan whether there is any support, information or resources to help you.

2.5 Including everyone

There are some people that very rarely get involved with what is happening in their local area or in the city. These may be people who do not know anything about what’s happening, are not confident or able to get involved, may not wish to be involved or may be happy with the decisions being made. These people are sometimes called seldom heard groups.

Resources need to be directed towards monitoring and identifying those who are not involved and steps should be taken to make sure that they have the opportunity to do so if they wish. This is particularly important where a specific community may be directly affected by the decisions made.

There may be different seldom heard groups depending on the plan being considered. An Equality Impact Assessment (defined in the Glossary) would identify this and the resulting action plan should explain how this will be addressed.
Top tip: Let us know how we can include you or people that you know in any involvement we organise in the future.
This might include telling us where you meet, whether you have a newsletter or a way of sharing information, the types of venue you are happy going to, or producing information in a format that suits you e.g. large print.

2.6 Who can you turn to for more support?

If you want to raise issues or have support getting involved in influencing decisions, the following people may be worth contacting.

• Your Ward Councillor
Your ward councillor is your elected representative. They are regularly updated on the progress of community issues from a range of sources. They can raise matters directly with organisations on your behalf if appropriate. They can also tell you about local meetings that are happening that might be useful, for example the local area committee.
All councillors are keen to encourage involvement at a local level. Local councillors attend exhibitions and drop-in sessions organised by the Council wherever possible within their area.
They can support you if you feel that consultation has not been carried out in accordance with this Statement of Community Involvement.
Find out who your local councillor is by going to:
www.plymouth.gov.uk/councilanddemocracy or by calling 01752 304489.

• Your MP
The job of an MP is to represent the people of his or her constituency (constituents) in Parliament. You only have one MP so even if you voted for another candidate and you disagree with the views of your MP’s party, your MP is still there to help you with all matters for which Parliament or central government is responsible.
Find out how to contact your local MP by going to:
www.parliament.uk or by calling 020 7219 4272
Change Up Consortium

Change Up is a national initiative launched by the government in July 2004. The initiative is driven by the vision of front line community and voluntary organisations playing their full potential in improving the quality of life of the communities they serve.

Plymouth's Change Up programme is organised and operated through a consortium of local infrastructure organisations and organisations who, at a citywide level, represent the interests of a diverse community. The similarity between these organisations is that they are all involved in working directly with local people.

Membership of the Consortium

Plymouth Guild, Ernest English House
Buckwell Street, Plymouth PL1 2DA.
Tel: 01752 201766
Email: guild@plymouthguild.org.uk

Other members include: Fata He BME Development Ltd, Plymouth Race Equality Council, Routeways Centre Ltd, Neighbourhood Learning Consortium, The Zone, Wolseley Trust.

Top tip: There may be specific support groups or organisations that can support you influencing decisions. Ask the person who is involving you for suggestions. For example, the Local Involvement Network (LINk) supports people getting involved in health and social care issues:
www plymouth-link.co.uk
If you can’t find one you could always start your own!
3 Is this Statement working?

3.1 Is it working?

I'm not happy with how I have been involved in making a decision.

What can I do?

You can:

• Go to the relevant organisation in the first instance and raise your concerns
• Use formal complaint procedures if necessary
• Register your concern where statutory procedures have not been followed correctly

An example of when you might want to take these steps could be when an organisation does not properly inform you of the decision being made and what processes are being used to make the decision, or when they do not adequately publicise results or feedback to you.

If you would like more support with this it may be worth contacting the people suggested in section 2.6.

A person, group or organisation has not complied with the commitments or standards when getting involved in making a decision. What can I do?

You can consider:

• How much weight the comments should be given
• If the relevant comments or information should be included for consideration at all
• Removing contact details so they are not included in future consultations

An example of a person whose comments should be considered in this way could be if they have misinformed other people to encourage support for their view, or if they have used inappropriate or racist language

Top tip: Some organisations may have a customer charter which sets out standards of service you can expect. This will usually include a complaints procedure.
Is this statement making a difference to people?

The LSP will monitor whether people are getting involved and whether they feel they are having an influence by looking at two National Indicators:

NI 3 Civic participation in the local area - this looks at how often people get involved in volunteering or unpaid work such as residents groups and community projects.

NI 4 Percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality - this looks at how well people feel they can influence decisions and if they would like to be more involved.

Both of these are measured by the Place Survey which will be completed every year. This survey is posted to a sample of people in the City. It asks for opinions about aspects of the quality of life in your local area (such as community safety, local services etc) which we know are important to local people. The findings from this research will be used to see how well the LSP are doing at delivering the services that matter to you and to decide what needs to be done differently in the future.

The baseline for these indicators was set by the responses received after the first survey in Autumn 2008.

Is this statement being used properly?

There will be a logo that organisations can use to show they are complying to this statement. Anyone who has signed up to the Compact will be listed on the LSP website www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouth2020. The LSP will be proactive in encouraging their members to use the Compact.

The LSP has a procedure in place to resolve any disputes as part of the Compact. This will be used if someone is challenged on whether they are conforming to the Compact.

For further information about the dispute resolution procedure and the Plymouth Compact please contact:

Plymouth 2020 Local Strategic Partnership, First floor, Civic Centre, Armada Way, Plymouth PL1 2AA. Tel: 01752 304026
Email: lsp@plymouth.gov.uk www.plymouth2020.co.uk

The performance of the Statement of Community Involvement will be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (this is a group of Councillors that advise and monitor decisions made in the city’s Cabinet or Council, or hold enquiries on matters of local concern).
Appendix

Glossary

Community:
This is very difficult to define as there are lots of varied interpretations. In this statement it is considered as a group of people who have common characteristics. Communities can be defined by location (such as a street or a neighbourhood), race, ethnicity, age, occupation, a shared interest (such as cycling or local businesses) or affinity (such as religion and faith) or other common bonds.

Consultation:
A more structured form of participation. A dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, and normally with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.

Engagement:
Actions taken to establish effective relationships with individuals or groups so that more specific interaction can then take place.

Equality Impact Assessment: This looks at what we are doing and makes sure that it meets the rules and regulations we have to meet. It is one of the ways to make sure we talk with people from a range of backgrounds and gather information to do the very best that we can to deliver services in a fair, equitable and needs-sensitive way. The six equality strands – age, disability, faith and belief, gender, race and sexual orientation are covered in EIAs. By completing them, we get a better idea of what impacts there might be on those groups. We can then make sure we have thought about and put in place a plan of action to address any negative impacts identified.

Involvement:
Applies to a wide variety of interactions between decision makers, individuals and representative stakeholders to identify issues and exchange views on a continuous basis.
Key Stakeholders:
Organisations selected on the basis of their interest in the outcomes.

Local Strategic Partnership:
Plymouth has a Local Strategic Partnership called Plymouth 2020. Based on the principle that many issues facing the city and its community today can only be tackled and resolved if all parts of the community work together, the Partnership brings together many organisations and groups that are involved in making decisions that affect the future well-being of the people of Plymouth. The voluntary, community, business and public sectors are all represented within Plymouth 2020 Partnership. Go to www.plymouth.gov.uk/plymouth2020 to find out who is involved and for more information.

Participation:
An all round term that describes the extent and nature of activities undertaken by those who take part in public or community involvement.

Place Survey:
A survey carried out across the country to find out people’s opinion on a wide variety of local issues. The survey will be held annually in Plymouth. Stakeholder (see Key Stakeholder).

Statutory:
Required by law (statute), usually through an Act of Parliament.

Third Sector:
This is made up of organisations that are not in the private or public sector, for example, voluntary organisations and community groups.
More information

If you are interested in getting involved in decision making you may find the following link informative:

Communities in Control:
• Real People, Real Power - www.communities.gov.uk
• The Empowerment Fund - www.communities.gov.uk/empowermentfund
‘How We Consult With You’ – Plymouth’s Statement of Community Involvement and Compact Code of Practice – sets out a minimum standard of consultation practice. Plymouth’s Local Strategic Partnership has agreed to adopt this in April 2009.

The ‘Plymouth Compact’ is an agreement between the local public sector bodies and the third sector to support and improve partnership working.

This statement sets out how Plymouth City Council’s Planning Service will involve people in decision making. It should be read as an appendix to ‘How We Consult With You’.

For more information about Plymouth2020, Local Strategic Partnership and the Plymouth Compact visit the website:

www.plymouth.gov.uk/tspcompact
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Involving you in Planning Services

Planning affects all our lives.

The homes we live in, the open spaces we enjoy, the leisure facilities we use, and the roads we travel on are all the result of planning decisions. For many people planning is something they only get involved with when a development directly affects them. Even then, often their involvement is frustratingly too late to really influence the process.

This statement sets out how Planning Services implement the commitments set out in ‘How We Consult With You’. It includes a brief explanation about how planning works and what you can expect when you get involved. It also provides a basis against which all planning consultation can be measured.

This statement is a legal requirement as set out in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Planning is a continuous learning process, seeking to understand and influence the future of the city.

1. Planning Policy: Policies are produced to guide the city’s future development. Policies need to take into account local, regional and national needs and interests. This includes developing policies for the historic environment, green spaces and tall buildings for example. They also need to consider how changes will be delivered and monitored.

   The Local Development Framework (LDF) forms the main planning policy for the city. This is a set of documents that contain the policies and guidance for how the city will develop in the future.

2. Planning Applications: Planning applications are considered using the LDF and lots of other advice and information. This is where specific, detailed decisions are made about what happens to a piece of land or a building.

   Top tip: The earlier you can get involved in planning decisions the more influence you can have.

   Planning Services support this approach by investing time and resources at the early stages when comments and ideas can best be considered and included.
Local Development Framework

The LDF is central to delivering Plymouth's vision for the future. It sets out how the city will grow and develop over the next 15 years.

There is a range of documents included in Plymouth's LDF, including a Core Strategy and Area Action Plans for areas that will be going through significant change in the coming years. These are known as local Development Plan Documents. The scope and detail of Plymouth's LDF is outlined in the latest Mini Guide.

Top tip: The Local Development Scheme sets out the timetable and processes for each part of the LDF that is being developed or reviewed. Have a look at the latest copy so you know what is happening when. It is updated every year.
There are two different types of Local Development Framework documents:

**Development Plan Documents:** These are formal plans for a geographical area or on a subject (for example Waste). They are subject to rigorous procedures including several consultation stages and an independent examination. They also require a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) – an assessment of the economic, social and environmental impacts of a plan.

**Supplementary Planning Documents:** These can provide further details to the Development Plan Documents where required. These need to be consulted on and are agreed by Council (all of the elected local councillors).

**Top tip:** As well as commenting on the document, don’t forget you can also comment on the Sustainability Appraisal.
To produce a document for the Local Development Framework these are the main stages:

Creating a Local Development Framework Plan

**Inform**
- Highlight issues
- Consider opinions
- Collect evidence
- Discuss Alternatives
- Work with groups and organisations

**Involve**
- Discussions to develop the plan further and research ideas.

**Consult**
- 6 weeks for anyone to comment on ideas so far and opinions about the direction the plan is taking.

**Involve**
- Discussions to develop the plan further and research ideas.

**Consult**
- 6 weeks to comment on a draft plan, the sustainability appraisal and evidence base. Any changes can be made.

**Inspect**
- A final plan is submitted to the Secretary of State (or Plymouth City Council for SPDs for adoption).

**Monitor**
- The final plan is regularly monitored to make sure changes are being delivered.

This process seeks to build consensus between all the different ideas and issues to create the best plan possible.
Who are we talking to?

The following list sets out the people Planning Services consult at statutory stages in preparing their LDF.

This list is not prescriptive but shows the broad range of people that are consulted.

An up-to-date list of all the organisations on the database is available on the web: www.plymouth.gov.uk/sci

This list is constantly updated. Organisations, groups and individuals that wish to be added can do so by going to www.plymouth.gov.uk/ldfgetinvolved or by contacting Planning Services directly.

Please note this list relates to successor bodies where re-organisation occurs.

The following groups will be consulted as required throughout the preparation of the LDF. They are also indicated in the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

- South West Regional Assembly (Regional Planning Body)
- Natural England
- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage
- National Rail
- Highways Agency
- Relevant Strategic Planning Authorities (Cornwall, Devon, Dartmoor and Torbay)
- Relevant District Councils (Caradon, South Hams, West Devon)
- Relevant Parish Councils and Town Councils
- South West Regional Development Agency – SWRDA (Regional Development Agency)
- Relevant electronic communication companies
- Strategic Health Authority
- Relevant electricity and gas companies; such as SWEB, British Gas
- Relevant sewerage and water undertakers; such as South West Water
- Government Office for the South West (GOSW)

Top tip: All documents, and their supporting evidence base, are available for free on the website and for you to read in libraries, Housing Offices and the Civic Centre.

Planning Services are committed to using material wisely to protect the environment and costs. Consequently, we have to charge for paper documents at the more formal stages of plan production. You can find out more about this in the Planning Services Fees Policy.

A range of methods to involve, consult and inform will be used throughout the plan making process.

Statutory requirements at all stages and for all LDF plans

Planning Regulations contain minimum requirements for consulting on Development Plan Documents and the SCI. The Council has to make all consultation documents available at the Council Offices and other places (such as libraries and Housing Offices) for a period of six weeks. Documents and supporting information need to be published on the website (which will include information on when and where people can see the documents). As well as sending documents to the ‘specific consultation bodies’, a notice needs to be placed in the local newspaper with detailed information on the six week consultation period and where comments can be sent to.

Once a plan is adopted it is still constantly monitored to make sure changes are being delivered. It may be reviewed, where necessary, to accommodate unexpected changes or circumstances.
There are many other groups and organisations that have an interest. Listed below are some of the people that we will keep informed and involve where appropriate.

- The Local Strategic Partnership
- Organisations involved in the management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- Developers and Agents
- Environmental groups (local and regional)
- Voluntary bodies
- Business groups and forums
- Marine and maritime related organisations
- Sport and open space organisations
- Transport representatives and organisations
- Local civic and amenity societies
- Health organisations including the relevant Primary Care Trust
- Fire and Police services
- Youth organisations
- Relevant Community Groups/Organisations
- Plymouth City Centre Company

Please note: All those on the database will be requested to update their details once a year. If there are any changes to your contact details please let Planning Services know. If you are signed on to the on-line consultation system you can amend your own details.

In addition, a range of discussions will be had with the following:

Cabinet and Council

Cabinet (which consists of the Leader of the Council and other Council Members with specific responsibility for certain services) will be consulted at a number of stages in the development of LDF documents.

Council (all elected Councillors) approves all statutory documents produced for the LDF. This includes the Core Strategy and Area Action Plans.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel, is a group of Councillors that advises and monitors decisions made in Cabinet or Council, or holds enquiries on matters of local concern.

They may consider some documents during their preparation.

The Local Development Scheme sets out the management arrangements for each document that forms part of the LDF. Any revisions are discussed and agreed by Cabinet annually.

Internal Consultation

Formal and informal consultation and discussion with other departments within the Council also take place wherever relevant. Every effort is made to update and include officers across the Council.
Seldom heard groups

Planning Services are committed to providing fair and equal access to our services. Resources will be directed towards seldom heard groups that are identified in Equality Impact Assessments. This is important to ensure that people who are most affected by plans have a chance to be involved, and to ensure we are meeting our statutory obligations under equalities legislation. This will be reviewed against a published baseline to monitor changes required.

Other Planning Policy

There is a range of other planning policies developed by the Council that support the Local Development Framework and are used to inform and guide planning applications. For example, policies on:

- Historic Environment
- Coastal matters
- Design
- Nature Conservation
- Transport
- Planning Briefs
- Sustainability
- Employment
- Housing

These policies will be developed in accordance with the values set out in Plymouth’s Statement of Community Involvement. In addition to local policies, there are also national and regional policies and guidance.

Planning Applications

The Council’s Planning Service is responsible for making decisions on all development proposals within the city. These can range from supermarkets and new offices to a simple house extension.

This includes determining the Council’s own applications (for example, a new school or waste disposal site) and applications affecting historic areas (for example, Conservation Areas and listed buildings). These need to follow special procedures, but the consultation requirements are the same as for other applications.

There are two distinct stages for community involvement in planning applications.

1. Pre-application consultation: this is consultation run by a developer prior to putting in a formal planning application. Planning Services strongly recommend that this is carried out for any major or significant planning application.

2. Application consultation: once a planning application has been submitted the Council takes over responsibility for carrying out consultation through statutory publicity and notification.

Developers have to provide additional community benefits to offset the impact of a development. It can include the need to provide affordable housing, transport changes and other local community benefits. These are called planning obligations or Section 106 agreements. This is set by a tariff outlined in the Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document.

Occasionally there are additional planning obligations that are negotiated. Often these will be set out in LDF documents showing how changes should be delivered. These are subject to several stages of consultation. Developers are also encouraged to consult on larger applications prior to putting in their planning applications. This can identify specific impacts or opportunities that their development could have.
Pre-application Consultation (by developers)

Developers running pre-application consultation on major or significant applications are strongly advised to conform to the commitments set out in Plymouth's Statement of Community Involvement.

In particular, Planning Services expects developers to:

- Set clear objectives and agree the consultation approach with the Planning Service.
- Inform people about the details and scope of the scheme and be clear what can be influenced by making comments.
- Adopt a range of methods recommended in Plymouth's Statement of Community Involvement.
- Consider what is required to involve seldom heard groups or groups that will particularly be affected by the changes.
- Clearly identify any changes made as a result of comments based on sound planning reasons.
- Submit a statement outlining the community involvement that has been carried out with the Planning Application to enable the process and outcomes to be validated.

Application Consultation (by the Council)

- Once a planning application has been submitted there will be a statutory consultation period of 21 days.
- The Council will publish applications on-line.
- The Council will be advertised on the Council website, with a site notice, neighbour letters and press advert if appropriate.
- All comments must be received in writing within the specified consultation period.
- Comments can be submitted either by letter or e-mail.
- Comments made outside of this formal consultation period will only be considered if circumstances allow.

Top tip: Comments should consider planning considerations, examples include:
- Loss of light or overshadowing
- Overlooking/loss of privacy
- Strategic views
- Transport problems
- Noise and disturbance resulting from use
- Hazardous materials
- Smells
- Loss of trees
- Effect on listed building and Conservation Areas
- Layout and density of building
- Design, appearance and materials
- Landscaping
- Local, strategic, regional and national planning policies (for example, the LDF)
- Disabled persons’ access
- Previous planning decisions (including appeal decisions)
- Nature conservation
- Archaeology

Examples of issues that are not planning considerations include the loss of value on a property or the loss of a person's private view.

Who makes the decisions?

Once the consultation period has been completed, a recommendation on the planning application is made by a Planning Officer. The final decision is then made in accordance with the Council’s Scheme of Delegation, either by a Senior Planning Officer, or by Planning Committee.

In some circumstances where there is an appeal, the final decision will be made by an Independent Planning Inspector.
Pre-application Consultation
Consultation by developers

Agree process
Developer agrees process of involvement with Planning Services.
Developers will be asked to follow Plymouth’s Statement of Community Involvement.

Consult
Developers consult with relevant communities, organisations and Council representatives.

Review
Developer produces a report explaining what consultation they have done, the issues raised and how those issues have been considered in the final application.

Application is validated by Planning Services and recorded on the Planning Register – this is available for the public to view.

Failure to consult adequately or not including a detailed report may result in an invalid application.

Application Consultation
Statutory for ALL planning applications

Consult
By law the Planning Application is publicised (e.g. site notice, neighbour letter, website and press adverts).

21 days for you to make comments

Review
The Council examine all the material considerations including comments made.
If new issues are raised there may be an additional 14 days to comment on amended plans.

Decision
For smaller applications a delegated decision will be made by the Head of Planning Services; otherwise the decision will go to Planning Committee.
Planning Committee is made up of 12 Councillors. It is a public meeting with the opportunity for people to speak by prior arrangement.

Decision made

Inform
Information about the decision is sent to interested parties.

Please note:
Appeals against the decision or conditions may be made to the Planning Inspectorate.
The Planning Service will notify those who commented so they can make further comments.
The Planning Inspector decides to allow or dismiss the Appeal. Planning Inspectorate notifies interested parties of the decision.
Are we doing what we have promised?

Planning Services are committed to good quality engagement and opportunities for you to be involved. If you have any comments about how Planning Services are involving you, or how the SCI can be improved, please get in touch.

You can do this by:
- Contacting us directly;
- Going through the Council’s formal comment procedure ‘Have your say’;
- Comment formally as part of the planning process that we, or a developer, have not met the commitments outlined in this document.

The SCI will be reviewed at least every 5 years. It may be reviewed sooner if regulations or circumstances require.

Top tip: You may also be interested in the Planning Services Customer Charter which sets out generally the standard of service you can expect.

Where will the resources come from?

Community involvement has clear implications for resource management. Planning Services will seek to run all consultation as effectively as possible. It will also seek to maximise return from other consultation or existing networks to avoid duplication and reduce consultation fatigue.

Consultation carried out for LDF documents, and once a planning application has been submitted, will be resourced by Planning Services.

Pre-application consultation will be resourced by the applicant, with the assistance of the Development Management Unit where necessary.

Planning Services may also work together with organisations to jointly fund or support events where appropriate.

Further help

Planning Aid

Planning Aid is a service offering free professional advice and support on town and country planning matters (e.g. Development Plan Documents and planning applications) to community groups and individuals who cannot afford to pay the fees of a consultant.

Planning Aid is not part of central or local government but an independent source of advice and support which complements the assistance given by local authorities. The Council’s Planning Service works closely with Planning Aid to enable them to offer training opportunities and support wherever possible.

You can contact them at:

South West Planning Aid
The Architecture Centre, Narrow Quay, Bristol BS1 4QA
Helpline: 0870 850 9807 or 0117 929 729
Email: swco@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk
Glossary

Community – This is very difficult to define as there are lots of varied interpretations. In this statement it is considered as a group of people who have common characteristics. Communities can be defined by location (such as a street or a neighbourhood), race, ethnicity, age, occupation, a shared interest (such as cycling or local businesses) or affinity (such as religion and faith) or other common bonds.

Consultation – A more structured form of participation. A dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, and normally with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.

Engagement – Actions taken to establish effective relationships with individuals or groups so that more specific interaction can then take place.

Equality Impact Assessment – This looks at what we are doing and makes sure that it meets the rules and regulations we have to meet. It is one of the ways to make sure we talk with people from a range of backgrounds and gather information to do the very best that we can to deliver services in a fair, equitable and needs-sensitive way. The six equality strands – age, disability, faith and belief, gender, race and sexual orientation – are covered in EIAs. By completing them, we get a better idea of what impacts there might be on those groups. We can then make sure we have thought about and put in place a plan of action to address any negative impacts identified.

Involvement – Applies to a wide variety of interactions between decision makers, individuals and representative stakeholders to identify issues and exchange views on a continuous basis.

Key Stakeholders – Organisations selected on the basis of their interest in the outcomes.

Local Strategic Partnership – Plymouth has a Local Strategic Partnership called Plymouth 2020. Based on the principle that many issues facing the city and its community today can only be tackled and resolved if all parts of the community work together, the Partnership brings together many organisations and groups that are involved in making decisions that affect the future well-being of the people of Plymouth. The voluntary, community, business and public sectors are all represented within Plymouth 2020 Partnership.

Major Application – Applications for larger scale housing, retail and commercial developments.

Participation – An all round term that describes the extent and nature of activities undertaken by those who take part in public or community involvement.

Place Survey – A survey carried out across the country to find out people’s opinion on a wide variety of local issues. The survey will be held annually in Plymouth.

Planning Committee – The planning committee is responsible for making decisions on the bigger and more sensitive planning applications received by the council. The planning committee is made up of 12 city councillors who are responsible for deciding planning applications, listed building and conservation area consents, as well as enforcement cases. Which items are considered by the committee is decided through the Council’s Scheme of Delegation.

Planning Consideration – The councillors or council officers who decide your application must consider whether there are any good planning reasons for refusing planning permission or for granting permission subject to conditions. They are not permitted to reject a proposal simply because people oppose it. They will look at whether your proposal is consistent with the development plan for the area. The types of planning issues they can additionally consider include the effect on amenity, impact upon the appearance of surrounding areas and potential traffic problems. Personal circumstances of the applicant, moral issues or the effect the development may have on nearby property prices are not relevant to planning and will not usually be taken into consideration by the council.
Planning Inspector/Inspectorate – The Planning Inspectorate may get involved in a variety of work; for example, the processing of planning and enforcement appeals and holding inquiries into local development plans. They also deal with a wide variety of other planning-related casework including listed building consent appeals, advertisement appeals, and reporting on planning applications.

Scheme of Delegation – Sets out the roles and areas of responsibilities carried out by cabinet members.

Significant Application – Significant applications are major planning applications that are a departure from the Local Development Framework; applications where an Environmental Impact Assessment is required; large scale retail proposals; large scale residential developments on greenfield land and developments proposed on playing fields.

Stakeholder (see Key Stakeholder)

Statutory – Required by law (statute), usually through an Act of Parliament.

Third Sector – This is made up of organisations that are not in the private or public sector, for example, voluntary organisations and community groups.

Abbreviations

DPD – Development Plan Document
EIA – Equality Impact Assessment
LDF – Local Development Framework
LDS – Local Development Scheme
SCI – Statement of Community Involvement
PPS – Planning Policy Statement
RSS – Regional Spatial Strategy
SPD – Supplementary Planning Document
SA – Sustainability Appraisal

More information

If you are interested in getting involved in decision making you may find the following link informative:

Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power – www.communities.gov.uk

The Empowerment Fund – www.communities.gov.uk/empowermentfund