



Statement of Community Involvement

How Brentwood Borough Council will consult with the community and other stakeholders on planning issues

Adopted December 2012

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1 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 This Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) sets out how and when the community and other stakeholders will be consulted on the preparation of the documents that will make up the Local Plan and how the community will be consulted on planning applications. The SCI seeks to ensure the active, meaningful and continued involvement of local communities and stakeholders throughout the process. The Council first adopted a SCI in 2007 and this document has been updated to comply with new legislation.
- 1.2 You can download and view the Statement of Community Involvement on the Planning Policy Future webpage - www.brentwood.gov.uk/consultingyou. For more information you can contact us via email planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk, or telephone 01277 312620 or write to us:
- Planning Policy
Brentwood Borough Council
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex
CM15 8AY
- 1.3 The Council's website also contains more information about the Local Plan process, please visit www.brentwood.gov.uk/planning.

2 The Local Plan

2.1 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) introduced the system of Development Plan Documents (DPDs). The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced changes to national policy and guidance replacing all previous Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) and Planning Policy Statements (PPS). The NPPF refers to the collection of documents that make up the statutory plan for a Local Planning Authority (LPA) as the 'Local Plan' which is broadly synonymous with the Local Development Framework (LDF) set out in the now superseded PPS12.

2.2 The documents that will make up the Local Plan will set out the spatial plan for how growth and development will be managed in the Borough. These documents will form the statutory development plan for the Borough. As part of this process the Council has prepared this *Statement of Community Involvement*. The various elements of the system are explained below.

- **Local Development Documents** – These include Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which together make up the Local Plan. The new Local Plan once adopted will constitute the statutory development plan for the Borough and will be a DPD. SPDs can provide further detail and guidance on policies set out in DPDs.
- **Local Development Scheme** – The project plan for preparing the Local Plan documents, such as the Local Development Plan.
- **Statement of Community Involvement (this document)** – Sets out the Council's arrangements for involvement of the public and other stakeholders in the preparation of LDDs and in consultation on planning applications for development proposals.
- **Monitoring** - The progress of the Local Plan is monitored to record and assess the effectiveness of key policies and progress with targets and milestones for the preparation of the plan, including any requirement to amend the LDS. Annual Monitoring Reports can be found on the Council's website - www.brentwood.gov.uk/planning. Once the Local Plan is adopted, the Annual Monitoring Report will be called the Authorities Monitoring Report in line with the Planning Regulations 2012.
- **Community Infrastructure Levy** – The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a new charge that will allow the Council to raise funds from new developments in the Borough. The money collected from the levy will be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods want. Charges will be based on the size, type and location of new development and be set out in a charging schedule.
- **Neighbourhood Plans** - The Localism Act (2011) introduced reforms to the planning system and enables communities, through the establishment of Neighbourhood Forums to create Neighbourhood Plans for their area with the support of the Council. The Neighbourhood Planning (General)

Regulations 2012 provide further detail to the process of Neighbourhood Planning, including the consultation and publication of neighbourhood areas, forums and plans.

- 2.3 Consultation will be conducted on the broad subject of each DPD as appropriate. The Council will then publish a draft of each document (called the 'Publication' version) for consultation and will make revisions based on the responses before these documents are submitted to the Secretary of State. The documents will then be subject to independent scrutiny with a Planning Inspector considering the soundness of each DPD including the procedures followed, the required conformity with other documents, and taking into account any representations received. Following the examination, the Inspector will write a report and may make recommendations if the Council requests this. The Council can also suggest their own modifications to the Inspector during the examination, as well as making minor non material changes themselves. Where necessary, the Council will amend the document taking into account the Inspector's recommendations prior to adoption. Following this the DPD can be formally adopted and published along with the Sustainability Appraisal on the Council's website.
- 2.4 There is a statutory requirement for local authorities to carry out a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and this must comply with the European Union Directive. The Council will undertake the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating the requirements of SEA. This ensures that documents fully take into consideration environmental, social and economic factors. The SA will be published for consultation.

3 Brentwood's Local Plan

Local Development Plan

- 3.1 Brentwood Replacement Local Plan (2005) is the Borough's current development plan. The plan provides a comprehensive statement of land use policies and proposals for the Borough.
- 3.2 The Council is required to produce a new Local Plan for the Borough which, once adopted, will supersede the current [Replacement Local Plan \(2005\)](#). The Council will approve the Local Development Plan through the Policy and Resources Board and Full Council. To assist in this process, a Local Development Plan Members Working Group has been set up. This is a cross party group meet informally in order that Members are engaged while the plan is drafted.
- 3.3 Previously work had begun on several DPDs including the Core Strategy, Site Allocations and Gypsies and Travellers. However at the Policy, Performance & Resources Board on 8 December 2010, the Council decided to cease work on a separate Gypsy and Traveller DPD and, subject to the permission of the Secretary of State, cover the issue together with the Core Strategy and Allocations as part of a new Local Plan. The "Brentwood Local Development Plan" will set out a vision, strategic priorities, core policies, development management policies and site allocations for the Borough.
- 3.4 Several consultations have taken place as part of producing a Local Development Plan, as set out below:

Issues and Options Consultation (2009)

- 3.5 The first stage of consultation for the Core Strategy *Issues and Options: Pathway to a Sustainable Brentwood* ran between 11th November and 23rd December 2009. Consultation findings are set out in the following two reports available online:
- Part 1 Analysis of Pathway to a Sustainable Brentwood (February 2010)
 - Part 2 Analysis of Pathway to a Sustainable Brentwood (May 2010)

Neighbourhood Consultation (2011)

- 3.6 The Neighbourhood Consultation followed on from the Issues and Options consultation in 2009. It forms part of the Council's work towards a new Local Plan and reflected the localism agenda. The consultation ran from 7th May to 1st July 2011 and provided local residents, businesses and other members of the community an opportunity to put forward their views, aspirations and priorities for their area. This was to influence the Borough's planning policies and allow people to comment on housing numbers and potential sites. Consultation findings are set out in the following two reports available online:
- Report on Neighbourhood Consultation Events (October 2011, Allies and Morrison Urban Practitioners)

- Report on [Neighbourhood Consultation Findings](#) (November 2011, Brentwood Borough Council)

Gypsies and Travellers

3.7 As mentioned above, at the Policy, Performance & Resources Board on 8 December 2010, the Council resolved to cease work on a separate Gypsies and Travellers DPD and incorporate the issue of accommodation needs within the Local Development Plan. Consultations carried out to inform work on the Gypsies and Travellers DPD are set out below.

- **Issues and Options Stage 1 (2007)** Published for public consultation for 6-weeks during July-September 2007. As a result several sites were suggested to the Council as potential permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller sites.
- **Issues and Options Stage 2 Suggested Site Options (2008)** Consultation took place over an 8-week period during May-July 2008. The consultation paper set out details of 18 suggested sites and invited comments on the sites being considered to meet any requirement to provide additional permanent sites in the Borough.
- **Pre-Submission Draft - Proposed Sites Consultation (2010)** In March 2009, the Council resolved that it would be in the best interest of the Borough to provide 15 additional permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches by 2011, as required in the adopted Regional Plan. This was agreed on the basis that the Council would then be able to defend the Borough against further illegal developments and encampments. It was further agreed that it would be preferable to consider meeting that requirement from existing sites with temporary permission or other unauthorised sites. The Pre-Submission Draft Plan consultation on the proposed sites took place between December 2009 and February 2010. A Sustainability Appraisal of the Pre-Submission Draft Plan was published at the same time.

Proposals Map

3.8 The current Proposals Map will need to be updated once the Local Development Plan is adopted to reflect the policies and site allocations.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)

3.9 The Council has adopted the following SPDs:

- **Urban Place Supplement SPD (2007)** Providing additional guidance to the Essex Design Guide, this SPD is specifically for residential and mixed use areas of development at higher densities.
- **Shopfront Guidance for Brentwood Town Centre SPD (2010)** Produced to help improve the standard of design when altering or replacing shopfronts and associated signage within Brentwood Town Centre.

- **Vehicle Parking Standards SPD (2011)** Provides updated guidance for car parking requirements in new development.

Localism and the Duty to Co-operate

- 3.10 The Localism Act (2011) introduced a Duty to Co-operate which requires planning authorities and other public bodies to actively engage and work jointly on strategic matters. There are a number of issues such as transport, flood risk and waste management that have impacts that cross borough boundaries. The Council will explore constructive approaches to such issues jointly with neighbouring authorities and public bodies to ensure that strategic priorities are reflected and, where appropriate, addressed in the Local Plan.
- 3.11 The Local Development Plan is intended as a spatial plan and the mechanism by which all strategies and plans which affect development and the environment in Brentwood are delivered. As such it is important that the Local Development Plan is produced taking into account all the relevant strategies and plans that affect the Borough.

National Planning Policy Framework

- 3.12 The NPPF replaces all previous national Planning Policy Statements (PPS) and Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) documents; setting out the government's vision for the planning system and how policies should be applied. The NPPF stresses the importance of a plan-led system and re-iterates the role of early, meaningful engagement and collaboration with neighbourhoods, local organisations and businesses to produce a Local Plan that reflects the vision and aspirations of local communities. A wide section of the community should be proactively engaged as far as possible to reflect collective vision and priorities for the sustainable development of the area

4 Who Will We Consult With?

4.1 The Council is required by legislation to consult “specific consultation bodies” and other interest groups which cover the whole range of voluntary, community, special interest, amenity and business interests, referred to as “general consultation bodies”.

4.2 The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 defines the following bodies as “specific consultation bodies”:

- The Coal Authority
- The Environment Agency
- English Heritage (Historic Buildings and Monuments Commission for England)
- Marine Management Organisation
- Natural England
- Network Rail Infrastructure Limited
- The Highways Agency
- County Council (Essex County Council)
- Adjoining Local Planning Authorities (London Borough of Havering, Epping Forest District Council, Thurrock Council, Chelmsford Borough Council and Basildon Borough Council) and neighbouring Parish and Town Councils (e.g. Billericay Town Council and Little Burstead Parish Council)
- Parish Councils (Blackmore, Hook End & Wyatts Green Parish Council, Doddinghurst Parish Council, Herongate and Ingrave Parish Council, Ingatestone and Fryerning Parish Council, Kelvedon Hatch Parish Council, Mountnessing Parish Council, Navestock Parish Council, Stondon Massey Parish Council and West Horndon Parish Council)
- Relevant telecommunications companies
- Primary Care Trust (NHS South West Essex)
- Relevant electricity and gas companies
- Sewage and water undertakers

4.3 The Regulations 2012 define the following as “general consultation bodies”:

- Voluntary bodies some or all of whose activities benefit any part of the local planning authority’s area; e.g. *Campaign to Protect Rural Essex, Brentwood Community Transport*;
- bodies which represent the interests of different racial, ethnic or national groups
- different religious groups; e.g. Essex Racial Equality Council, Gypsy & Traveller Law Reform Society;

- disabled persons; e.g. Access Group (Brentwood), Brentwood Club for Visually Impaired Persons; and
- persons carrying on business in the local planning authority’s area; e.g. Brentwood Renaissance, Brentwood First and The Federation of Small Businesses.

4.4 In order to ensure that Council engages with a wide range of organisations and individuals, the Council has an extensive consultation database. The consultation database is continually updated as consultations take place. Any group or individual can register to receive future notifications about forthcoming Local Plan consultations, the email address is planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk. Our database contains a large number of groups, organisations and companies from a range of categories, such as:

Table 1: Shows Examples of Consultee Categories

Examples of Consultee Categories			
Advice and information groups	Amenity groups	Sport and leisure groups	Disability Groups
House builders	Community groups	Conservation and heritage groups	Women’s groups
Land owners and developers	Education/children/young people’s groups	Elderly groups	Political Parties
Environmental groups	Tenants and residents groups	Health organisations	Architects, planners and other professionals
Housing associations	Police and other emergency services	Regeneration groups and partnerships	Transport Groups

‘Hard to Reach’ Groups

4.5 Whilst the Council wishes to engage with the community as a whole, there are so called ‘hard to reach’ groups that fail to get involved in the planning system. Some, but not all, ‘hard to reach’ groups are:

- Young People, in particular those aged 21-25 years old
- Black and other ethnic minority groups
- People with disabilities
- The elderly
- Rural communities
- People with learning difficulties
- Gypsies and Travellers

- 4.6 Consultation will be helped by ensuring, as far as possible, that documents are produced in a clear, concise and understandable manner. Documents can also be made available in different languages and formats on request, which will be made clear in each document published.
- 4.7 Wherever possible, and subject to the resources available, the Council will seek to hold meetings and exhibitions at times and locations to enable all who wish to, to be able to attend. This will include accessibility for people with disabilities, access to public transport and locations within the more rural parts of the Borough.
- 4.8 Parish Councils, Resident Associations, Amenity Societies and other local interest groups provide contact with many residents, particularly in rural communities. Other representative groups and organisations will also be directly consulted and invited to stakeholder meetings to enable engagement with hard to reach groups, such as ethnic minorities, the elderly, the young and disabled persons.
- 4.9 Children and young people will be encouraged to be involved by working with schools and colleges, the Brentwood Youth Council, the Youth Parliament and other appropriate agencies. The older residents of the Borough and people with disabilities will be involved through groups such as the voluntary services, Help the Aged, Age Concern, Access Group, Essex Disabled Peoples Association etc. Ethnic minority groups, including Gypsies and Travellers, will also be engaged through representative groups such as the Commission for Racial Equality, the Essex Racial Equality Council, the Gypsy Council and the Gypsy and Traveller Law Reform Group.
- 4.10 The Council will also seek to encourage individuals within such groups mentioned above to become involved as part of the wider consultation with residents and businesses.
- 4.11 The voluntary and community sector has an important role to play in helping to engage with communities, particularly those that require support and help in becoming involved. The Council has a successful and close working relationship with the Brentwood Council for Voluntary Services.

5 Types of Community Involvement

- 5.1 There are a range of possible methods and types of community involvement that the Council will use in the Local Plan process and for planning applications.
- 5.2 We will encourage electronic responses to our consultations. Similarly we will email everyone on our consultation database to inform them about our current consultations and how they can respond to them. However we do recognise that not everyone has access to the internet and our libraries provide a free way of accessing information and participating in consultations. We will provide hard copies of document for inspection at the Town Hall and local libraries. In addition our documents will also be available in a variety of formats on request.
- 5.3 The Council will make every endeavour to meet the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. Brentwood Borough Council aims to provide equality and fairness in all its dealings with members of the community and employees and will not discriminate on grounds of: age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation and marriage; and civil partnership. Therefore any consultation responses or representations received which are discriminatory will not be tolerated and these will not be considered as part of the consultation process.
- 5.4 In accordance with the Freedom of Information Act, the Data Protection Act and the Environmental Information Regulations, original written or electronic representations will be available online. All responses published will include only the respondee's name and reference number, with other personal information such as addresses, email addresses, phone numbers and signatures deleted.
- 5.5 The consultation methods the Council will use are set out below.

Table 2: Methods of Community Involvement

Method of Consultation	Main Considerations
Documents available for inspection at the Town Hall and local libraries	This is a minimum requirement as set out in the Regulations 2012 (but there is no requirement for inspection copies to be in a hard copy format). However the Council will provide hard copies of the main documents for inspection at the Town Hall and local libraries. The availability of these documents will be advertised by a variety of ways, including by letter, website and email. All locations are accessible to people with disabilities.
Letters/emails to specific and general consultation bodies as stated in the Regulations	This is a minimum requirement (again there is no requirement to provide these categories of consultees with hard copies of the documents). The relevant bodies will be notified at the appropriate time during the preparation of each Local Plan document. Under Regulation 36, we must provide a copy of any document as soon as reasonably practicable after it has been requested. The format in which the document should be provided is not specified. Regulation 36 (3) allows us to make a reasonable charge for a copy of

	any document provided. If hard copies are requested, these would be printed on demand, and upon receipt of the cost of printing, packaging and postage, which would be advised beforehand.
Internet to be used for publishing documents and supporting information, newsletters and progress updates	Planning applications and development plan documents are viewable and can be downloaded from Council website (www.brentwood.gov.uk). The progress of Local Plan can be viewed online and anyone interested in being consulted on Local Plan documents can register for updates by sending their email address to planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk . Consultation response forms will be available online which can be printed off and returned to the Council by post. Planning applicants can follow the progress of current planning applications online.
Email	Email is a fast and accurate way of communicating with the public and key stakeholders. The Local Plan database contains details of all consultees and is regularly updated. Where possible the Council will use email for consultation in preference to using hard copies of documents and letters. The Council will therefore not send notifications by post where we have an up to date email address on the database.
Printed Media (local press, leaflets, newsletters and consultation response forms)	Whilst it is no longer a requirement for local authorities to publish notices in the local press, in order to ensure that consultations reach the maximum number of people possible the Council will continue to place notices in the local press for any major consultations on Local Plan documents. Leaflets can publicise the proposed document or application and inform the public about how to get involved. Consultation response forms will be used when appropriate and these will be provided with the documents for inspection at the Town Hall and in local libraries.
Public exhibitions/displays/drop-ins	Locally targeted exhibitions and displays allows for participation and direct exchange of views. They will be held in accessible locations, over number of days whilst drop-ins will be held for short periods of time. They will be held at varying times to ensure all sections of the community have an opportunity to attend. However these methods can be resource intensive.
Stakeholder Meetings/Workshops	This brings together key stakeholders and is a useful way of identifying key issues and achieving alignment with other strategies. The Council will engage with key stakeholders, local residents, businesses and others (such as hard to reach groups) where appropriate. Workshops are useful for identifying and focusing discussion around difficult issues and key themes.
Public Meetings	Open and inclusive way for people to engage in debate on the issues. However this can be resource intensive.

Pre-existing Panels and forums	Panels provide a forum for authorities to disseminate information and canvass professional opinion on proposed documents or planning applications.
Questionnaires	Questionnaires enable engagement with the public on specific planning issues.

6 Community Involvement in the Local Plan Process

- 6.1 This section of the SCI discusses how the community can get involved and influence the drafting of policies and proposals in relation to the Local Development Plan. The planning process starts with a preparation stage to seek comments and views on what the real planning issues are facing the Borough and the choices that have to be made. This requires the Council to carry out of the preliminary stages of evidence gathering and scoping exercises. As well as consultation with stakeholders on the broad subject and issues of each document, this could involve the presentation of Issues & Options and the setting out of the Preferred Options/Approach including preferred sites and an accompanying consultation before Publication stage.
- 6.2 The next stage is **Publication**:
- Publication of the proposals for a Local Plan - this is the proposed submission of what is considered to be the best strategy for the Borough
 - Publication Consultation - it is important that those wishing to influence the Local Plan should comment at this stage. Those seeking changes at this point have to present evidence as to why the Local Plan is unsound
- 6.3 Followed by **Submission**:
- Consideration of consultation responses/representations leading to preparation of Submission document
 - Submission of document to the Secretary of State with a summary of the main issues arising from the consultation and how these have been taken into account in the Submission document
 - Independent Examination
- 6.4 And then **Adoption**:
- Receipt of the Inspector's report
 - Consideration of Inspector's report
 - Adoption by the Council
 - Monitoring and review
- 6.5 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the timetable for the preparation of each DPD. This can be viewed on the Council's website www.brentwood.gov.uk/planning.
- 6.6 A sustainability appraisal will accompany each of the DPDs at appropriate stages, with concurrent consultations. The stages of production are as prescribed by regulation and a key feature of sustainability appraisal is that it is an iterative exercise which informs each stage of the plan preparation. The legislation prescribes stakeholder involvement in the plan making process as early as possible.

- 6.7 The extent to which the various types and methods of community involvement are pertinent will differ as to what stage the process of DPD or SPD production has reached. The Regulations 2012 (specifically Regulations 18 to 19 and 35 to 36) are less prescriptive about the minimum consultation requirements at the different stages of the production of the Local Plan. The consultation process will also need to reflect the best use of resources and the need to keep to the programme for preparation of each document set out in the LDS. Where appropriate and feasible the Council will consider joint consultation working with other local authorities.

How long will consultations last?

- 6.8 Brentwood proposes to consult in future for the statutory six weeks. The 2012 Regulations (Regulation 17) confirms that the period for consultations must be not less than six weeks from the day on which a statement of the representations procedure is published. If the consultation period unavoidably runs over the Christmas Holiday Period or in conjunction with another major consultation, consideration would be given to extending this period.

Supplementary Planning Documents

- 6.9 Similar procedures will apply for consultation on the production of a SPD. The Council will seek to engage with residents, local stakeholders and other agencies/bodies as appropriate on SPDs in order to feed other views into the final adopted document. SPDs are not subject to the same process of submission and examination as DPDs and do not require Sustainability Appraisals where they relate to a DPD that has undergone a Sustainability Appraisal. All representations will be dealt with by the Council through the appropriate Committees and how those comments have influenced the final SPD will be made clear through the 'Feedback' process set out below. SPDs involve at least one formal round of consultation lasting a minimum of four weeks in accordance with the Local Plan Regulations.

Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders

- 6.10 Neighbourhood Plans and Neighbourhood Development Orders are taken forward by communities themselves through Neighbourhood Forums and with the support of the Council. Neighbourhood Plans can establish policies for the development of land in a neighbourhood if the majority of voters in the neighbourhood give approval; these plans must be in conformity with the strategic policies in the Local Plan documents produced by the Council and national planning policy.
- 6.11 Consultation procedures for Neighbourhood Plans and Development Orders are set out in the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012. Neighbourhood Forums are required to undertake pre-submission consultation themselves as set out in the Regulations. Following submission to the Council, the Council then publishes the plan or order for formal submission consultation. This is then followed by an independent examination and a referendum of the local neighbourhood.
- 6.12 At each stage in the Neighbourhood Planning process where publicity is required, in addition to publicising on the Council website, the following be undertaken:

- publish the matter on the Applicant's website and/or Parish newsletter (if there is one);
- request the parish post a notice on the Parish Notice Board or, in the absence of such a board, in a prominent position in the Parish/neighbourhood stating where the application, order or plan can be inspected; and
- issue a press release stating where the application, order or plan can be inspected
- publish a notice in the local press
- notify neighbouring parish councils

Community Infrastructure Levy

- 6.13 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) allows local authorities to set charges which developers must pay when bringing forward new development in order to contribute to the delivery of infrastructure to support development. Brentwood will be producing a charging schedule which sets out the tariff for different types of development across the Borough.
- 6.14 The Localism Act includes provisions to make regulations which will require a meaningful proportion of these funds to be allocated according to the wishes of the neighbourhoods where the development has taken place. The Council will meet the consultation requirements for allocating the spending to be prioritised by the local neighbourhood which are expected to be set out in the 2012 amendments to the CIL Regulations.
- 6.15 The Council will need to prepare an evidence base and this will involve an informal consultation with relevant stakeholders and interested parties to gain views on matters to take into account when setting the CIL. The Council will consult on the preliminary draft charging schedule based on the evidence collected. Any representation made will be considered and amendments made to the charging schedule where required. Following this the final draft charging schedule will be published for consultation and comments raised will be considered. Once the council are satisfied with the CIL, it will be subject to an independent examination and assessed on its soundness.

Providing Feedback on Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents Consultation

- 6.16 The Council is committed to 'reporting back' on the responses to consultation. The Council's website will be updated regarding progress on the Local Plan documents. Following each stage of public consultation we will:
- Give full consideration to all representations received and engage in further discussions where this will assist the Council in developing the document. Consensus will not always be achievable and where this is the case, the Council's reports will make clear the reasons for its decision, which can be subsequently challenged through the examination process.

- Make all responses to Publication or Submission stage documents available on our website.
- Produce a consultation report which will give an overview of the consultation process, a summary of the main issues raised and information on how these will be taken into account and affect the development of policy where appropriate. Consultation reports will be posted on our website.
- When submitting a document for examinations in public, the Council is required to submit a statement setting out which bodies/persons the authority invited to make representations, how they were consulted and a summary and number of main issues raised.

7 Community Involvement in the Planning Application Process

- 7.1 This section of the SCI deals with how bodies and individuals can become involved in the decision making process on individual planning applications.
- 7.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 Section 38(6) requires that all development should be in accordance with the policies and proposals set out in the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise.
- 7.3 The existing procedure used by the Council for advertising and consulting on planning applications is set out below, and in many instances will exceed the minimum standards. However, consultation needs to have regard to government targets to determine major applications within 13 weeks, and all other applications within 8 weeks.
- 7.4 Once the Council receives an application, it must:
- Publicise all development proposals that it receives
 - Report to Members of the Council any representations it receives
 - Take into account any relevant comments received when making a recommendation on an application.
- 7.5 For more information about notification, publicity and consultation methods which are used for different types of application see Table 2 at the end of this section.
- 7.6 Engagement with applicants, developers and landowners will take place within the established Development Team structure. The Development Team meet monthly to discuss issues related to planning applications or pre-application advice on proposed schemes. Applicants can be invited to present their scheme to the Team, made up of Officers across the Council services. Local Ward Members may also be involved in discussions where relevant.

Pre-application Stage

- 7.7 The Localism Act places a requirement on developers to involve the local community in meaningful pre-application consultation (as agreed with the local planning authority), and to demonstrate how they have taken account of the responses to that consultation in the submitted application. Whilst the NPPF stresses that although developers are not obliged to consult the planning authority before submitting an application, the planning authority should pro-actively encourage take-up of pre-application assistance. The Council cannot insist on pre-application consultation but does advise developers of major applications to consider carrying out some form of consultation at this stage.
- 7.8 The Council offers a Pre-Application Advice Scheme for specific advice on development proposals. This is done on an appointment based system with a Planning Officer for which a fee may be required. Further details and a pre-application advice form are available at www.brentwood.gov.uk/planning. Fees are based on a sliding scale depending on the nature of the proposal.

- 7.9 Advice on specific development proposals will only be provided by appointment with a Planning Officer. Initial meetings with existing Brentwood residents and businesses (including their agents) concerning extension or alteration of their houses or business premises will be free of charge.
- 7.10 The Council has a protocol in place for Member Engagement in Pre-Application discussions to ensure that elected Members can take part without prejudicing their decisions or compromising the integrity of the process. Members will be invited to engage in pre application discussions at the earliest opportunity and all pre-application discussions are treated as private and confidential. Where applicant/developers give consent, plans will be made available for Members to inspect. Once a pre application discussion is confirmed the following Members will be invited to attend such meetings:
- The Chairperson of the Planning Committee.
 - Local Ward Members or a nominated substitute.
- 7.11 If the Ward Member considers wider engagement is appropriate, the request should be e-mailed along with the reasoning for the request. The justification for wider engagement shall be recorded and response will be kept as a record on the planning file. The Chair will record the pre-application meeting and the note of the meeting will be placed on the public file at the earliest opportunity and maintained on the planning record.

Publicising Planning Applications

- 7.12 The Council keeps a statutory register of planning applications and past decisions which are publicly available to view online at the Town Hall. Members of the public can also view planning applications at the Town Hall however they should give at least 48 hours notice by calling the Planning Services Reception on 01277 312620.
- 7.13 Planning applications are also available for inspection at the Town Hall. Subject to copyright restrictions, copies of plans and supporting information may be purchased from the Council Offices. As well as being able to visit or telephone the Planning Officer dealing with an application, a Duty Planning Officer is available to deal with any general queries. The Duty Planning Officer's times of availability can be found on the Council's website www.brentwood.gov.uk/planning.
- 7.14 The Council's Public Access web site also provides a planning application 'tracker' facility. Progress on the determination of current planning applications can be viewed on line, with a search facility by application number, address, street name or post code. The facility also allows application forms and plans to be viewed and comments to be made electronically.
- 7.15 Weekly lists of all planning applications received, planning application recommendations and planning application decisions per week can be viewed at the Town Hall Planning Services reception. These lists are also available to view and print on the Council's website at www.brentwood.gov.uk/planning and are sent to every Member of the Council, each Parish Council, the local press as well as a number of other bodies and organisations.
- 7.16 The list of planning application recommendations [The Weekly Report] includes the planning officer's report, which sets out a summary of the development proposal; the relevant site history; a summary of consultation and neighbour responses; a

summary of the issues; and the recommendation (together with reasons for refusal or conditions as appropriate).

- 7.17 All neighbouring properties which immediately adjoin/about an application site will be notified of a planning application. Other properties will be notified where the development has the potential to affect a wider area, however, this will depend upon other factors such as the scale of the development proposed and its relationship with nearby properties (see Table 2 above on types of application and consultation processes).
- 7.18 Clearly, in more rural areas with isolated proposals, there may well be no neighbouring properties, or they may be located so far away as to render the proposal extraneous to direct notification. In such cases, it is left to the Planning Officer's judgment as to how far the neighbour notification should extend, taking into account the statutory requirements.
- 7.19 Such notification will take the form of a letter, giving the address of the development, setting out the description of the development, giving details of how to make representations and providing the name and telephone extension number of the Planning Officer dealing with the application. A period of 21 days in which to make representations on the application is given, although any representation received after this date will usually be accepted if received before the application is determined.
- 7.20 The Council, where relevant, will seek the views of other organisations on planning applications (e.g. English Heritage, Environment Agency) and any other interest groups who the Council would wish to receive comments from.
- 7.21 For applications defined as major development, 'departures' from the Development Plan, or more sensitive in some way e.g. the application involves a Listed Building or the application site falls within a Conservation Area, the Council will publicise the application by way of a Site Notice and/or advertisement in the local paper, in addition to the Council's standard notification procedure.
- 7.22 If the Planning Officer considers that the changes proposed by an applicant on a planning application comprise significant alterations to the original proposal then re-consultation will occur. A further period of time will be given to comment; this will be a minimum of 7 days but may be extended where the amendments are judged to be more considerable.

How can representations be made?

- 7.23 Representations on a planning application may be submitted either in writing or electronically through the Council's website.

What is the Council's procedure for determining a planning application?

- 7.24 The Planning Development Control Committee has full powers under its terms of reference to determine planning applications. However, most planning applications are dealt with under 'delegated powers' which means that the final decision to approve or refuse an application will be in line with the Chief Planning Officer's recommendation made in the 'Weekly Report' of recommendations unless the

application is referred to Planning Development Control Committee by a Borough Councillor or a Parish Council.

- 7.25 If an application is reported directly to or referred to Planning Development Control Committee, the Committee will debate the merits of the application and the ultimate decision to approve, refuse or defer the application to Ordinary Council lies with them.
- 7.26 The Council currently operate a system of public speaking at the Committee and there is the opportunity for one objector, an amenity society and one supporter (in addition to the applicant) to address the Committee. Any person having made representations on an application that is subsequently referred to Committee is notified of their right to address the Committee and the procedures involved. In cases where petitions are received, where indicated, the originator of the petition will be notified.

Will I be notified of the final decision on the application?

- 7.27 Individuals that have made representations on an application will be notified of the Council's decision on the planning application. Those that have not made representations can find out the decision on an application by viewing the Council's website or by visiting or telephoning the Planning Department.

If an application is refused, is that the end of the matter?

- 7.28 If an application is refused, or is approved with conditions that the applicant objects to, or the application is not determined within the statutory period, there is a right of appeal to the Secretary of State against the Council's decision (or lack of decision). Where an individual was notified or has made representations on such an application, the Council will inform them of the appeal and the right to submit representations to the Secretary of State. At the time of notifying of the appeal, the Council will set out the procedures involved in making representations to the Secretary of State. Thereafter, any correspondence will need to be addressed to the Planning Inspectorate (whom deal with planning appeals on behalf of the Secretary of State). Individuals that make representations on an appeal can request to be notified by the Planning Inspectorate of the final outcome.
- 7.29 Whilst an applicant may appeal, there is currently no 'third party' right for individuals to appeal the Council's decision (for example, if a neighbour wished to appeal the Council's decision to approve an application).
- 7.30 If the applicant decides not to appeal, there is also the ongoing opportunity to resubmit the application, possibly with amendments, to seek to make the proposal more acceptable. The planning application process will therefore 'restart' and neighbours and consultees (where applicable) will be consulted once again.

Table 3: Showing Notification, Publicity and Consultation Methods by Planning Application Type

Method	Major and Departure Applications ¹	Sensitive or Controversial Applications ²	Other Applications	Appeals
Notification				
Neighbour notification letter	Always where neighbours can be identified	Always where neighbours can be identified	Always where neighbours can be identified	Always where neighbours can be identified
Site Notice	Always	As appropriate ³	As appropriate	Only Public Inquiries
Local Newspaper notice	Always	Where affects Listed Building, Conservation Area or Right of Way	Where affects Listed Building, Conservation Area or Right of Way	N/A
Listed on website	Always	Always	Always	Always
Publicity				
Available to view on website	Always	Always	Always	No
Participation/Consultation				
Pre-application consultation (Depends on nature of application)	Internal consultation	Internal consultation	Internal consultation	Internal consultation
Available through Parish Councils	Dependent on Parish Council	Dependent on Parish Council	Dependent on Parish Council	N/A
Able to comment on website	Always	Always	Always	No
Opportunity to Speak at Committee	Usually	By following representations procedures	By following representations procedures	N/A

¹ Residential Sites of 10 or more homes or, where the number of homes is unknown, 0.5 hectares or more; commercial development of 1000sqm or more or sites of 1 hectare or more (including change of use).

² Applications that have a wide area of interest or impact due to the nature or extent of the proposal.

³ Where the adjacent land owners can not be identified and/or where recent previous experience would suggest wider interest.

8 Review of the Statement of Community Involvement

- 8.1 The SCI will be kept under review and revised when necessary, only if significant changes have occurred in the types of groups which we wish to engage, or different techniques for engagement are to be employed or if there are changes to national legislation which requires a review.

9 Further Information

- 9.1 Further information can be obtained by email planning.policy@brentwood.gov.uk Or telephone the Planning Policy Team 01277 312620 Or write to us

Planning Policy Brentwood
Borough Council
Town Hall
Ingrave Road
Brentwood
Essex
CM15 8AY

Planning Aid England

- 9.2 Planning Aid England provides free, independent and professional planning advice to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay professional fees. It is provided by the Royal Town Planning Institute.

- Website: www.rtpi.org.uk/planningaid
- Email: advice@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

The Planning Portal

- 9.3 The Planning Portal is the Government's online 'one-stop-shop' for planning and building services. It provides information on the planning system, allows you to submit a planning application, find out about development in your area, appeal against a decision and research government policy.

- Website: www.planningportal.gov.uk
- Email: support@planningportal.gsi.gov.uk

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

- 9.4 The DCLG provides general information on the planning system including the latest national planning policy, decisions on planning appeals, research and statistics and reform of the planning systems.

- Website: www.gov.uk/government/topics/planning-and-building

Appendix 1

Glossary of terms

Adopted: Final agreed version of a document or strategy accepted through a formal resolution.

Annual Monitoring Report (AMR): Document produced each year recording and presenting progress on all elements of the local development framework where measurement is required.

Community Infrastructure Levy and Charging Schedule (CIL): A new levy that local authorities can choose to charge on new developments in their area. The money can be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council local community and neighbourhoods want. The Charging Schedule sets out the rate of the levy.

Development Plan Document (DPD): Spatial planning documents that are subject to independent examination, and will form the development plan for a local authority area. Each authority must set out the programme for preparing its Development Plan Documents in the Local Development Scheme.

Development Management Policies: These will be a suite of criteria-based policies which are required to ensure that all development meets the spatial vision and spatial objectives set out in the Local Plan. They may be included in any Development Plan Document or may form a standalone document.

Inspector's Report: Document produced by an independent inspector from the Planning Inspectorate. It assesses the soundness and robustness of Development Plan Documents and Community Infrastructure Levy.

Local Development Document (LDD): These include Development Plan Documents (which form part of the statutory development plan) and Supplementary Planning Documents (which do not form part of the statutory development plan). LDDs collectively deliver the spatial planning strategy for the local planning authority's area.

Local Development Framework (LDF): The collection of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) setting out the overall planning strategy, policies and proposals for Chelmsford City. New planning legislation in 2012 requires authorities to prepare a single 'Local Plan' to replace Development Plan Documents. However, until adopted documents are reviewed, we shall continue to refer to them as DPDs and SPDs.

Local Development Scheme (LDS): The document that sets out Brentwood Borough Council's proposals for new Local Development Documents and the timetable for producing them.

Localism Act: The Localism Act has devolved greater powers to local government and neighbourhoods and given local communities more rights and powers over decisions about housing. It also includes reforms to make the planning system more democratic and more effective.

Local Plan: The new term for a local planning authority's local development framework. The Local Plan comprises all the DPDs for a local planning authority's area.

Material Consideration: A factor to be taken into account when making a planning decision.

Monitoring and Review: Regular measurement of progress towards targets, aims and objectives. It also involves scrutiny, evaluation and, where necessary, changes in policies, plans and strategies.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF): A document setting out the Government's national planning requirements, policies and objectives. It replaces much of the national advice previously contained within Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance and Circulars. The NPPF is a material consideration in the preparation of LDDs and when considering planning applications.

Neighbourhood Plan: A duty under the Localism Act 2011 which gives authorised groups the power to prepare a development plan for their area. This plan could include general planning policies and allocations of land for new development.

Proposals Map: Illustrates on a base map all the policies contained in Development Plan Documents, together with any saved policies. It should always reflect the up-to-date planning strategy for the area.

Section 106 Obligations: Requirements of developers as part of planning permissions. These are agreed in the planning application process, to provide contributions (usually financial) to develop facilities / amenities for the local community (e.g. education, open space).

Site Allocations: Designation of land in a Local Development Documents for a particular land use (e.g. Housing)

Stakeholder: A person, group, company, association, etc. with an interest in, or potentially affected by, planning decisions in the borough.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI): A document which sets out the standards which an authority will achieve with regard to involving local communities in the preparation of Local Development Documents.

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA): An environmental assessment which complies with the EU Directive 2001/42/EC. The environmental assessment involves the preparation of an environmental report, the carrying out of consultations, the taking into account of these in decision making, the provision of information when the plan or programme is adopted and showing that the results of the environmental assessment have been taken into account.

Supplementary Guidance (SPG): Guidance to assist the delivery of development and may be prepared by another body such as a County Council. These do not form part of the Development Plan but will be used to explain and supplement the Council's policies and proposals.

Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): Documents which local planning authorities may prepare which will provide additional supporting information in respect of policies in development plan documents (DPDs). They do not form part of the Development Plan and are not subject to independent examination but they will be treated as a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Sustainability Appraisal (SA): A tool for appraising policies and documents to ensure they reflect sustainable development objectives. All policies and documents must be subject to a sustainability appraisal.

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